

STUDENT ABSENCES/EXCUSES/DISMISSALS

I. Student Attendance Policy

Student attendance is a cooperative effort and the School Board involves parents/guardians and students in accepting the responsibility for good attendance.

Each parent/guardian or person having control or charge of a child within the compulsory attendance age is responsible for such child's regular and punctual attendance at school as required by law.

A reasonable effort shall be made to contact a parent/guardian of each absent student every day, and to obtain an explanation for the student's absence, where there is no indication that the student's parent/guardian is aware of and supports the absence. A log will be kept of call attempts.

Parents/guardians of students who are absent must inform the school of the reason for the absence no later than the student's return to school. Unexcused absences are handled in accordance with Regulation JEA-R.

The regulation establishes procedures for appropriate interventions when a student engages in a pattern of absences for less than a full day, the explanation of which, if it were a full-day absence, would not be an excused absence. Regulation JEA-R also includes procedures for excusing students who are absent by reason of observance of a religious holiday. The regulation ensures that a student is not deprived of any award or of eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award, or of the right to take an alternate test or examination, which he/she missed by reason of such absence, if the absence is verified in an acceptable manner.

Students shall attend school for a full day unless otherwise excused by the principal or designee. Secondary students shall be scheduled for a full school day unless they are enrolled in a cooperative work-study program. All other exceptions to a full-day schedule must be approved on an individual basis by the Superintendent or designee.

High school students may spend time each academic year participating in High School to Work Partnerships established pursuant to guidelines developed by the Board of Education. Students who miss a partial or full day of school while participating in Partnership programs will not be counted as absent for the purposes of calculating average daily membership. Regulations implementing the High School to Work Partnership will include procedures by which students may make up work missed while participating in a Partnership.

Student attendance shall be monitored and reported as required by state law and regulations. In addition, an attendance officer, or the Superintendent or designee when acting as an attendance officer pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-258, may complete, sign, and file with the intake officer of the juvenile and domestic relations district court, on forms approved by the Supreme Court of Virginia, a petition for a violation of a school attendance order entered by the juvenile and domestic relations district court pursuant to Va. Code § 16.1-278.5 in response to the filing of a petition alleging the student is a child in need of supervision as defined in Va. Code § 16.1-228.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit in any way the authority of any attendance officer

or the Superintendent to seek immediate compliance with the compulsory school attendance law.

II. Compulsory Attendance Procedures

Whenever a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no information has been received by school personnel that the student's parent/guardian is aware of and supports the absence, or the parent/guardian provides a reason for the absence that is unacceptable to the school administration, the school principal, principal's designee, attendance officer or other school personnel or volunteer notifies the parent/guardian by phone, email or other electronic means to obtain an explanation. School staff record the student's absence for each day as "excused" or "unexcused." Early intervention with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) takes place for repeated unexcused absences.

A. Upon Fifth Absence Without Parent/Guardian Awareness and Support

If: (1) a student fails to report to school for a total of five scheduled school days for the school year; and (2) there is no indication that the student's parent/guardian is aware of and supports the absence; and (3) a reasonable effort to notify the parent/guardian has failed, then the principal or designee makes a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent/guardian, either in person, through telephone conversation, or through the use of other communication devices to obtain an explanation for the student's absence and to explain to the parent/guardian the consequences of continued nonattendance. The school principal or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian shall jointly develop a plan to resolve the student's nonattendance. Such plan shall include documentation of the reasons for the student's nonattendance. If the student's parents/guardians have joint physical custody of the student and the school has notice of the custody agreement, then both parents/guardians shall be notified at their last known addresses. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) fail to comply with the principal or designee's request within three school days, the principal or designee shall notify the attendance officer or Superintendent who shall enforce the compulsory attendance rules.

B. Upon Additional Absences without Parent/Guardian Awareness and Support

If the student is absent for more than one additional day after direct contact with the student's parent/guardian and the school personnel have received no indication that the student's parent/guardian is aware of and supports the student's absence; the school principal or designee shall schedule a conference with the student, the student's parent/guardian, and school personnel. The conference may include the attendance officer and other community service providers to resolve issues related to the student's nonattendance, and must take place no later than the tenth school day after the tenth absence, regardless of whether the parent/guardian approves of the conference.

The conference team shall monitor the student's attendance and may meet again as necessary to address concerns and plan additional interventions if attendance does not improve. In circumstances in which the parent/guardian is intentionally noncompliant with compulsory attendance requirements or the student is resisting parent/guardian efforts to comply with compulsory attendance requirements, the principal or principal's designee shall make a referral to the attendance officer. The attendance officer shall schedule a conference with the student and student's parent/guardian within 10 school days and may (i) file a complaint with the juvenile and

domestic relations district court alleging the student is a child in need of supervision as defined in Va. Code § 16.1-228, or (ii) institute proceedings against the parent/guardian pursuant to Va. Code § 18.2-371 or § 22.1-262. In filing a complaint against the student, the attendance officer shall provide written documentation of the efforts to comply with the provisions of this policy. In the event that both parents/guardians have been awarded joint physical custody pursuant to Va. Code § 20-124.2 and the school has received notice of such order, both parents/guardians shall be notified at their last known addresses.

III. Report for Suspension of Driver's License

In addition to any other actions taken pursuant to this policy, if a student who is under 18 years of age has 10 or more unexcused absences from school on consecutive school days, the principal (or his/her designee) may notify the juvenile and domestic relations court, which may take action to suspend the student's driver's license.

IV. Attendance Reporting

Student attendance shall be monitored and reported as required by state law and regulations. At the end of each school year, each public school principal reports to the Superintendent the number of students by grade level for whom a conference was scheduled pursuant to Part II (B) above. The Superintendent compiles this information and provides it annually to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

V. Dismissal Precautions

Principals do not release a student during the school day to any person not authorized by the student's parent/guardian to assume responsibility for the student. Students are released only on request and authorization of a parent or guardian. When custody of a child is limited by court order to one natural parent over the other, the child shall not be released to the non-custodial parent. The Superintendent establishes procedures for release of students who are not residing with or under the supervision of a parent/guardian. The burden of proof on the authority of the person to receive the student is on the requesting party. A formal check-out system is maintained in each school.

Adopted: December 5, 1996
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Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-227.1, 22.1- 254;
22.1-258, 22.1-260, 22.1-279.3, 46.2-323, 46.2-334.01, 54.1-3900.

8 VAC 20-730-10.

8 VAC 20-730-20.

Cross Refs.:	IGAJ	Driver Education
	JEA	Compulsory Attendance
	JEA-R	Attendance Regulations
	JFC	Student Conduct
	JFC-R	Standards of Student Conduct