

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

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

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51 **II. Compulsory Attendance Procedures**

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

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

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

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

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

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

97 domestic relations district court alleging the student is a child in need of supervision as defined in
 98 Va. Code § 16.1-228, or (ii) institute proceedings against the parent/guardian pursuant to Va. Code
 99 § 18.2-371 or § 22.1-262. In filing a complaint against the student, the attendance officer shall
 100 provide written documentation of the efforts to comply with the provisions of this policy. In the
 101 event that both parents/guardians have been awarded joint physical custody pursuant to Va. Code §
 102 20-124.2 and the school has received notice of such order, both parents/guardians shall be notified
 103 at their last known addresses.

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105 **III. Report for Suspension of Driver's License**

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

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112 **IV. Attendance Reporting**

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

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120 **V. Dismissal Precautions**

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

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131 Adopted: December 5, 1996

132 Amended: June 18, 1998

133 Amended: June 23, 1999

134 Amended: June 21, 2001

135 Amended: June 4, 2004

136 Amended: June 18, 2009

137 Amended: January 8, 2015

138 Amended: September 10, 2020

139 Amended: October 21, 2021

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142 Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-227.1, 22.1- 254;
 143 22.1-258, 22.1-260, 22.1-279.3, 46.2-323, 46.2-334.01, 54.1-3900.

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145 8 VAC 20-730-10.

146 8 VAC 20-730-20.

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148	Cross Refs.:	IGAJ	Driver Education
149		JEA	Compulsory Attendance
150		JEA-R	Attendance Regulations
151		JFC	Student Conduct
152		JFC-R	Standards of Student Conduct