

STUDENT ABSENCES/EXCUSES/DISMISSALS

1
2
3 Student attendance is a cooperative effort and the Alexandria City School Board (Board) involves
4 parents/legal guardians and students in accepting the responsibility for good attendance.

5
6 Each parent/legal guardian or person having control or charge of a child within the compulsory
7 attendance age is responsible for such child’s regular and punctual attendance at school as required
8 by law.

9
10 Parents/legal guardians of students who are absent must inform the school of the reason for the
11 absence no later than upon the student’s return to school. Reasons for excused absences are listed
12 in Regulation JEA-R. Unexcused absences are handled in accordance with Regulation JEA-R.

13
14 The Superintendent, by regulation, establishes procedures for appropriate interventions when a
15 student engages in a pattern of absences for less than a full day, the explanation of which, if it were
16 a full-day absence, would not be an excused absence. These procedures are in Regulation JEA-R

17
18 The Superintendent’s regulations include procedures for excusing students who are absent by
19 reason of observance of a religious holiday. Such regulations ensure that a student is not deprived
20 of any award or of eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award, or of the right to take an
21 alternate test or examination, which the student missed by reason of such absence, if the absence
22 is verified in an acceptable manner. These procedures are in Regulation JEA-R

23
24 Students must attend school for a full day unless otherwise excused by the principal or designee.

25
26 High school students may spend a maximum of 90 school days, or the equivalent number of hours,
27 each academic year participating in High School to Work Partnerships established pursuant to
28 guidelines developed by the Virginia Board of Education. Students who miss a partial or full day
29 of school while participating in Partnership programs will not be counted as absent for the purposes
30 of calculating average daily membership. The Superintendent’s regulations implementing the High
31 School to Work Partnership include procedures by which students may make up work missed
32 while participating in a Partnership.

33
34 An attendance officer, or the Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee when acting as an
35 attendance officer pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-258, may complete, sign, and file with the intake
36 officer of the juvenile and domestic relations district court, on forms approved by the Supreme
37 Court of Virginia, a petition for a violation of a school attendance order entered by the juvenile
38 and domestic relations district court pursuant to Va. Code § 16.1-278.5 in response to the filing of
39 a petition alleging the student is a child in need of supervision as defined in Va. Code § 16.1-228.

40
41 Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit in any way the authority of any attendance officer
42 or the Superintendent to seek immediate compliance with the compulsory school attendance law.

43
44 **Compulsory Attendance Procedures**

45
46 Whenever a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no information

47 has been received by school personnel that the student's parent/legal guardian is aware of and
48 supports the absence, or the parent/legal guardian provides a reason for the absence that is
49 unacceptable to the school administration, the school principal, principal's designee, attendance
50 officer or other school personnel or volunteer notifies the parent/legal guardian by phone, email or
51 other electronic means to obtain an explanation. A log of these notifications is maintained by the
52 school. School staff record the student's absence for each day as "excused" or "unexcused." Early
53 intervention with the student and parent(s)/legal guardian(s) takes place for repeated unexcused
54 absences.

55

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

57

58 If: (1) a student fails to report to school for a total of five scheduled school days for the school
59 year; and (2) there is no indication that the student's parent/legal guardian is aware of and supports
60 the absence; and (3) a reasonable effort to notify the parent/legal guardian has failed, then the
61 principal or designee makes a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the
62 parent/legal guardian, either in person, through telephone conversation, or through the use of other
63 communication devices to obtain an explanation for the student's absence and to explain to the
64 parent/legal guardian the consequences of continued nonattendance. The school principal or
65 designee, the student, and the student's parent/legal guardian jointly develop a plan to resolve the
66 student's nonattendance. The plan must include documentation of the reasons for the student's
67 nonattendance.

68

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

70

71 If the student is absent for more than one additional day after direct contact with the student's
72 parent/legal guardian and the school personnel have received no indication that the student's
73 parent/legal guardian is aware of and supports the student's absence; the school principal or
74 designee schedules a conference with the student, the student's parent/legal guardian, and school
75 personnel. The conference may include the attendance officer and other community service
76 providers to resolve issues related to the student's nonattendance. The conference must be held no
77 later than 10 school days after the 10th absence of the student, regardless of whether the
78 parent/legal guardian approves of the conference.

79

80 The conference team monitors the student's attendance and may meet again as necessary to
81 address concerns and plan additional interventions if attendance does not improve. In
82 circumstances in which the parent/legal guardian is intentionally noncompliant with compulsory
83 attendance requirements or the student is resisting parent/legal guardian efforts to comply with
84 compulsory attendance requirements, the principal or principal's designee makes a referral to the
85 attendance officer. The attendance officer schedules a conference with the student and student's
86 parent/legal guardian within 10 school days and may (i) file a complaint with the juvenile and
87 domestic relations district court alleging the student is a child in need of supervision as defined in
88 Va. Code § 16.1-228, or (ii) institute proceedings against the parent/legal guardian pursuant to Va.
89 Code § 18.2-371 or § 22.1-262. In filing a complaint against the student, the attendance officer
90 provides written documentation of the efforts to comply with the provisions of this Policy. In the
91 event that both parents/legal guardians have been awarded joint physical custody pursuant to Va.
92 Code § 20-124.2 and the school has received notice of such order, both parents/legal guardians

93 will be notified at their last known addresses.

94

95 **Report for Suspension of Driver's License**

96

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

101

102 **Attendance Reporting**

103

104 Student attendance is monitored and reported as required by state law and regulations. At the end
 105 of each school year, each public school principal reports to the Superintendent the number of
 106 students by grade level for whom a conference was scheduled. The Superintendent compiles this
 107 information and provides it annually to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

108

109 **Dismissal Precautions**

110

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

119

120 **Parents/Legal Guardians with Joint Custody of Students**

121

122 If the student's parents/legal guardians have joint physical custody of the student and the school
 123 has notice of the custody agreement, then both parents/legal guardians must be notified of
 124 attendance issues at their last known addresses and, if available, through other contact information
 125 the parent/legal guardian has made available to Alexandria City Public Schools.

126

127

128 Adopted: December 5, 1996

129 Amended: June 18, 1998

130 Amended: June 23, 1999

131 Amended: June 21, 2001

132 Amended: June 4, 2004

133 Amended: June 18, 2009

134 Amended: January 8, 2015

135 Amended: September 10, 2020

136 Amended: October 21, 2021

137 Amended: February 22, 2024

138

139

140 Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-227.1, 22.1- 254;
141 22.1-258, 22.1-260, 22.1-279.3, 46.2-323, 46.2-334.01, 54.1-
142 3900.

143 8 VAC 20-730-10.

144 8 VAC 20-730-20.

145

146 Cross Refs.: IGAJ Driver Education

147 JEA Compulsory Attendance

148 JEA-R Attendance Regulations

149 JFC Student Conduct

150 JFC-R Standards of Student Conduct