APS Policy Review Team
2110 Washington Blvd
Arlington, VA 22204

TO: Arlington School Board
FROM: Policy Review Team
THROUGH: Dr. Francisco Durán, Superintendent
DATE: July 17, 2026
RE: Proposed Amendments to Policy J-5.1.30 Attendance

This policy is being amended to comply with state law and is scheduled for the Board's Consent Agenda on August 27.

Staff are proposing the following amendments to J-5.1.30 Attendance.

- Add an excused absence for member of tribal nation to attend a pow wow gathering.
- Add up to 5 excused absences to visit with a family member on active duty who is bein sent on deployment, is on leave from deployment, or is returning from deployment.
- Add up to 5 school days to participate in a 4-H educational program or activity.
- Add definition of 4-H.

This policy was reviewed by the Policy Review Team and Policy Subcommittee.

Students learn best when they attend school regularly. 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 under provisions of the law. All students must attend all regularly scheduled classes unless excused in writing by a parent/guardian or verified by a school official. Schools shall monitor and record the absences of all students.

Excused Absences

The following are considered excused absences:

1. Illness (to include mental health), quarantine of student, doctor, therapy, or dentist appointment;
2. Injury;
3. Funeral;
4. Observance of a religious holiday;
5. Summons to a court of law or other legal obligation;
6. Medical procedures;
7. Military obligations;
8. Violent storms or state emergencies;
9. Suspensions;
10. Severe family emergency
11. Middle and high school students for one school day for the purpose of engaging in a civic event;
12. Students who are members of a state- or federally-recognized tribal nation that is headquartered in Virginia shall be granted one excused absence per academic year to attend such nation's pow wow gathering provided that the student's parent/guardian provides the student's school advance notice of the absence in the manner required by the school;
13. A student whose immediate family member is an active duty member of the uniformed services as defined in § 22.1-360, and whose family member has received orders for, is on leave from, or has recently returned from deployment outside the United States, shall be allotted five excused absences to visit with the family member in connection with such leave or deployment, provided that the student provides written documentation verifying such leave or deployment if requested;
14. A maximum of five school days per academic year for participation in a 4-H educational program or activity; no credit will be provided for a student whose participation in a 4-H educational program or activity occurs during scheduled Standards of Learning assessments or during any period of time that the student is suspended or expelled from school; the student's principal or assistant principal shall request a representative of 4-H to provide documentation of a student's participation in order for the student's absence to be excused;
15. High School Seniors, with prior approval from the principal or designee, for the purpose of college admission visitations, or to apply for post-graduation jobs; and
16. All others approved in advance by principal or designee.

High school students participating in High School to Work Partnerships established pursuant to guidelines developed by the Board of Education who miss a partial or full day of school are not counted as absent for the purposes of calculating average daily membership.

Excessive Unexcused Absences

When a student has received five unexcused absences, the school principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to ensure that direct contact is made with the parent/guardian. The parent shall be contacted in a face-to-face conference, by telephone, or through the use of other communication devices. During the direct contact with the parent/guardian and the student (if appropriate), reasons for nonattendance shall be documented and the consequences of nonattendance explained. An attendance plan shall be made with the student and parent(s) or guardian(s) to resolve the nonattendance issues. The student and parent/guardian may be referred to a school-based multi-disciplinary team for assistance in implementing the attendance plan and case management.

When the student accrues a seventh unexcused absence, the school principal or principal's designee shall schedule a face-to-face attendance conference or an interaction that is conducted through the use of communication technology. The attendance conference must be held within 10 school days from the date of the 10th unexcused absence.

The principal or principal's designee shall make reasonable efforts to contact the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) to attend the attendance conference either in person or via communication technology. If the principal or principal's designee, after reasonable efforts have been made, is unable to contact the student's parent/guardian, the conference shall be held regardless of whether the student's parent/guardian approves of the conference. The conference shall include the principal or principal's designee and a representative from the multi-disciplinary team.

The multi-disciplinary team shall monitor the student's attendance and, as necessary, meet again to address concerns and plan additional interventions if the student's attendance does not improve. If additional meetings are necessary, the principal or principal's designee shall make reasonable efforts to contact the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) to schedule a face-to-face meeting or an interaction that is conducted through the use of communication technology. If the principal or principal's designee, after reasonable efforts have been made, is unable to contact the student's parent/guardian, the conference shall be held regardless of whether the student's parent/guardian approves of the conference.

In circumstances in which the parent/guardian is intentionally noncompliant with compulsory attendance requirements or the student is resisting parental efforts to comply with compulsory attendance requirements, the school principal or principal's designee shall make a referral to the attendance officer. The attendance officer shall schedule a conference with the student and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) within 10 days of receiving the referral. The attendance officer may initiate one of the following actions:

> (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 § 16.1-228 of the Code of Virginia; or
>
> (ii) Institute proceedings against the parent/guardian pursuant to § 18.2-371 or 22.1-262 of the Code of Virginia. In addition to written documentation of the efforts to comply with the notice provisions of § 22.1-258 of the Code of Virginia, all records of intervention regarding the student's unexcused absences, such as copies of the conference meeting notes, attendance plan, and description of the supports offered or made available

Arlington Public Schools will provide parents/guardians with a copy of Arlington's attendance policy, implementation procedures, and pertinent sections of the state code each school year.

Definitions

4-H-The youth development program of the Virginia Cooperative Extension.

References

Policy J-5.1.31 Full Day Attendance
Code of Virginia §§ 22.1-227.1, 22.1 254, 22.1-258, 22.1-260, 22.1-279.3, 46.2-323, 46.2-334.01 and 54.1-3900
Virginia Administrative Code 8VAC 20-730-10. Virginia Administrative Code 8VAC20-730-20

Policy Adoption and Revision History

Adopted August 15, 2006. Effective September 5, 2006
Renumbered (former Policy 25-1.1) effective July 1, 2018
Revised May 12, 2022. Effective May 12, 2022

Students learn best when they attend school regularly. 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 under provisions of the law. All students must attend all regularly scheduled classes unless excused in writing by a parent/guardian or verified by a school official. Schools shall monitor and record the absences of all students.

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