



APS Handbook 2020-21

Arlington, Virginia
www.apsva.us

*See inside cover for the
APS 2020-21 Calendar*

2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER	
7 Mon	Holiday - Labor Day
8 Tue	First Day of School PreK-12
16 Wed	Elementary School Back-to-School Night
17 Thu	Middle School Back-to-School Night
23 Wed	High School Back-to-School Night
OCTOBER	
12 Mon	No School for Students (Professional Learning for Staff)
22 Thu	Elementary Early Release for Parent-Teacher Conferences
23 Fri	No School for Elementary & Middle School Students - Parent-Teacher Conferences
NOVEMBER	
3 Tue	No School for Students (Grade Preparation Day)
11 Wed	Holiday - Veterans Day
25-27 Wed-Fri	Holiday - Thanksgiving Break
DECEMBER	
21-31 Mon-Thu	Winter Break
JANUARY	
1 Fri	Winter Break
18 Mon	Holiday - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
FEBRUARY	
1 Mon	No School for Students (Grade Preparation Day)
15 Mon	Holiday - Presidents Day
25 Thu	Elementary Early Release for Parent-Teacher Conferences
26 Fri	No School for Elementary & Middle School Students - Parent-Teacher Conferences
MARCH	
29-31 Mon-Wed	Spring Break
APRIL	
1-2 Thu-Fri	Spring Break
12 Mon	No School for Students (Grade Preparation Day)
MAY	
31 Mon	Holiday - Memorial Day
JUNE	
2 Wed	Elementary Early Release
9 Wed	Elementary Early Release
16 Wed	Last Day of High School - Early Release
18 Fri	Last Day of Elementary/Middle School - Early Release
JULY	
5 Mon	Holiday - Independence Day (Observed)
6 Tue	First Day of Summer School
30 Fri	Last Day of Summer School (Elementary)
AUGUST	
7 Fri	Last Day of Summer School (Middle/High)

Religious Observances (regular school days unless otherwise indicated above):

Sep 18 (sunset)–Sep 20: Rosh Hashanah	Mar 27 (sunset)–Apr 4: Passover
Sep 27 (sunset)–Sep 28: Yom Kippur	Apr 2: Good Friday
Nov 14: Diwali	Apr 4: Easter
Dec 10 (sunset)–Dec 18: Hanukkah	Apr 12 (sunset)–May 11: Ramadan
Dec 25: Christmas	May 12 (sunset)–May 13: Eid al-Fitr
Dec 26–Jan 1: Kwanzaa	Jul 19 (sunset)–Jul 20: Eid al-Adha

Note: School Year dates specific to Barcroft, Campbell, H-B Woodlawn, Eunice Kennedy Shriver and Summer School can be found at apsva.us/calendars.

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APS Policies and Procedures

The official policies, rules and regulations of Arlington Public Schools are contained in the Arlington Public Schools School Board Policies (SBP) and Policy Implementation Procedures (PIPs). The policies and procedures are available for public review in each school office, each school library, Arlington public libraries, the School Board Office and the Department of School and Community Relations at the Syphax Education Center, located at 2110 Washington Blvd., Arlington. They are also available on the website at apsva.us/school-board-policies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

While not all material in the policies and procedures section apply to students in a distance learning environment, APS is required by the Commonwealth of Virginia to have parents and legal guardians review the rules and regulations of their children's schools according to Virginia School Law 22.1-279.3. "Within one calendar month of the opening of school, each school board shall, simultaneously with any other materials customarily distributed at that time, send to the parents of each enrolled student (i) a notice of the requirements of this section; (ii) a copy of the school board's standards of student conduct; and (iii) a copy of the compulsory school attendance law. These materials shall include a notice to the parents that by signing the statement of receipt, parents shall not be deemed to waive, but to expressly reserve, their rights protected by the constitutions or laws of the United States or the Commonwealth and that a parent shall have the right to express disagreement with a school's or school division's policies or decisions.

Each parent of a student shall sign and return to the school in which the student is enrolled a statement acknowledging the receipt of the school board's standards of student conduct, the notice of the requirements of this section, and the compulsory school attendance law. Each school shall maintain records of such signed statements."

This 2020-21 Arlington Public Schools (APS) Handbook contains items on APS School Board policies, including student conduct and compulsory school attendance. The APS Handbook is provided to all families as a part of the Annual Online Verification Process that requires families acknowledge they are in receipt of the APS Handbook. The APS Handbook is also available on the website at apsva.us/publications.

ADMINISTRATIVE PLACEMENT

An administrative placement falls under School Board Policy J-5.3.32 – Appeals. This includes any medical and/or psychological related requests, submitted along with required documentation. Decisions regarding administrative placement requests are made by the Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services who works with the appropriate staff from the Department of Teaching & Learning, Student Services and Special Education. For more information, contact the Department of Administrative Services at 703-228-6008.

In the event that a student is admitted through the appeal process, enrollment will be continuous through the grade levels of that school/program, unless there is cause to discontinue.

Any change in placement for a student with a disability due to special education-related reasons would be made by the Individualized Education Programs (IEP) team with consultation from the Office of Special Education (OSE) staff. For more information, contact OSE at 703-228-6040.

Students with IEPs may require placement at a school other than the neighborhood school in order to access necessary special education services. In such cases, the IEP team will consider the student's disability-related needs and identify the least restrictive environment in which the services can be provided. Students with IEPs who request placement at a school other than their neighborhood school due to needs or concerns which are not specifically related to their identified disability may request an Administrative Placement, following the same process as their non-disabled peers. In such cases, the Office of Administrative Services will consult with the Office of Special Education in order to ensure the availability of special education services at the potential new placement. In cases where it is unclear whether there is a relationship between the disability and the reason for the request, the student's IEP team will convene to hear the concerns which comprise the basis of the request and determine whether additional actions (such as reevaluation or changes to the IEP) are necessary under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and special education regulations. In those situations, the IEP processes should be completed before the request for Administrative Placement is addressed.

ADMISSION

All students enrolled in Arlington Public Schools must reside in Arlington County for admission on a tuition-free basis. Arlington Public Schools reserves the right to periodically request proof of residency. Students in grades K–12 who move out of Arlington County after the fourth quarter begins may complete the school year without paying tuition. Students who move before the fourth quarter begins must request permission to complete the school year in Arlington as a non-resident tuition-paying student. Seniors who move out of Arlington County after the third marking period ends may be allowed to complete the school year tuition-free. State legislation passed in 2005 created a Class 4 Misdemeanor charge for knowingly making false statements concerning the residency of a child in a particular school division or school attendance zone. For more information, see School Board Policy J-5.3.30 at apsva.us/school-board-policies.

ATTENDANCE

DISTANCE LEARNING ATTENDANCE

Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) requires that attendance be taken daily. In order to consider "in attendance," students are expected to interact and respond to "meaningful interactions" with their teachers every day. This may include any of the following:

- Online form, question, survey (i.e. exit ticket, SEL video question, etc)
- Chat participation (directly with teacher or as part of a teacher facilitated group chat)
- Phone call from teacher to student (especially relevant for students with connectivity issues)
- Participation in a MS Team meeting related to the class

Attendance is not based on assignment completion. Attendance will be documented in Synergy. Families will be contacted if students are marked absent because they did not complete a check-in that day.

Grades K-5 Daily Attendance

- Grade level teachers will provide specific check-ins for each day of class Monday-Friday.
- Parents of students who are having connectivity issues need to report no later than 11 a.m. to their school's attendance hotline.
- All students need to complete the instructional check-in by 4 p.m. or be counted absent for the day.
- Attendance phone calls will be sent at 7 p.m. (Students experiencing connectivity challenges should make the effort to complete this check-in, if possible.)
- If a student is ill and cannot attend to complete the check-ins, parents should email and/or call the attendance office (provide email address of attendance person and school attendance hotline) to report the absence

Middle School and High School Daily Attendance

- Students must check-in to "Homeroom/TA period" course daily (M-F).
- This will mark them as present for the whole day. The student will be marked as absent if the check-in is not completed.
- Students who are having connectivity issues need to report no later than 11 a.m. to their school's attendance hotline
- If a student is ill and cannot attend to complete the check-ins, parents must email and/or call the attendance office (provide email address of attendance person and school attendance hotline) to report the absence
- Attendance phone calls will now be done at the same time for all school levels. The call will go out at 7 p.m.

Middle School and High School Period Attendance

Period attendance will be documented in Synergy.

Teachers can use any of the following methods for monitoring period attendance:

- Online form, question, survey (i.e. exit ticket, SEL video question, etc)
- Chat participation (directly with teacher or as part of a teacher facilitated group chat)
- Phone call from teacher to student (especially relevant for students with connectivity issues)
- Participation in a MS Team meeting related to the class

ABSENCES

Regular school attendance is critical to students' success in school; therefore, except when ill or excused, students are expected to attend scheduled classes and other required school

activities. Parents are discouraged from planning trips or vacations that will cause their child to be absent from school. Parents should check with each school regarding specific attendance policies. To assist school staff in monitoring the safety of students, parents should notify the school in advance if their child will be absent from school.

School division staff is obligated to file a court petition when students continue to be absent without a legitimate (excused) reason. In such cases, parents are held liable for their minor child's school attendance. In cases where a student is exhibiting mental health issues that prevent regular school attendance, the school counselor, school social worker, student and parent should work as a team to address the issue. At the high school level, school attendance specialists are also available to assist with attendance concerns.

EXCUSED ABSENCES (ALL OTHERS ARE UNEXCUSED)

- Illness, quarantine of student, doctor or dentist appointment
- Death in the family
- Observance of a religious holiday
- Summons to a court of law
- Suspensions
- Violent storms or state emergencies
- Severe family emergencies
- Other special cases approved by the school principal

Parents/guardians must make a verified contact with the school office or forward a written explanation of absences to the school no later than two days following the return to school. Students are expected to make up any school work they miss because of absences. Students forfeit (lose) daily class grades for the day(s) they were absent if the absence is unexcused.

State regulations require that students who are absent for fifteen (15) or more consecutive days be dropped (withdrawn) from school rolls. If this happens, the student is expected to return as soon as possible to school. Parents must accompany students when they return and new enrollment forms must be completed.

If students are absent without indication of parents' awareness and support for five (5) days, the Code of Virginia requires school staff, parents and students to jointly develop a plan to resolve the student's nonattendance. If the pattern of non-attendance continues, school staff will work collaboratively with the Arlington County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court and other county agencies to promote school attendance. The school social worker in each school is available to assist the parents and students with school attendance problems. At the high school level, school attendance specialists are also available to assist with attendance concerns.

TARDINESS (COMING TO SCHOOL LATE)

In the elementary and middle schools, teachers will report unexcused tardiness to the school principal for appropriate intervention. In the high schools, three unexcused tardy arrivals in one grading period equal one unexcused absence.

For more information about attendance expectations, see School Board Policy J-5.1.30 at apsva.us/school-board-policies.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Arlington Public Schools is committed to creating a safe, caring, respectful learning environment for all students.

Bullying or harassment of students, including bullying or harassment based on an actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, national origin, creed, color, religion, gender, age, economic status, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information, gender identity or expression, and/or mental, physical or sensory disability, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Bullying is defined as “any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma.” Bullying includes cyberbullying. Harassment is defined as “intimidation or abusive behavior toward a student that creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student’s participation in, or receipt of, benefits, services, or opportunities.” Harassment may include “verbal acts and name-calling; graphic and written statements, which may include use of cell phones or the internet; or other conduct that may be physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating. Harassment does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents.” Students who engage in bullying or harassing behaviors will be subject to disciplinary action. School Board Policy J-6.8.1 applies to school buildings; school grounds; school-sponsored social events such as trips and sporting events; and to buses and bus stops. Bullying or harassment which occurs off of school premises, including misuse or inappropriate use of technology, is also prohibited and subject to school discipline when the order, safety or welfare of the school or its students is affected as a result of such out-of-school actions. Students who experience bullying or harassment should tell an adult so that the matter is addressed immediately.

Students who believe that they have been the victim of bullying or harassment have the right to file a complaint by talking to school staff and/or completing a Bully Incident Form. School staff will investigate the matter immediately by collecting information such as the date of the incident, place, witness names and other information about the incident.

Parents/guardians of the victims of bullying or harassment and the alleged bully or harasser will be notified within two days of the incident. The confidentiality of all parties will be protected to the extent possible. Students who are victims of bullying or harassment will be offered counseling services, as appropriate. In addition to disciplinary actions, school staff will offer assistance to students who bully or harass others, including, as appropriate, behavior intervention plans, referrals to multidisciplinary assistance teams, or referrals to counseling services. For more information, visit apsva.us/student-services/bully-prevention/.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

PRINTED MATERIALS

Arlington Public Schools are not a public forum and, therefore, are not a place where written materials that are not a part of the curriculum or other school activities may be distributed, except as specifically provided by School Board Policy K-6 which governs the distribution of printed materials.

APS distributes only those printed materials, surveys, and

questionnaires to students, parents, and staff that are created by or on behalf of the schools, the Arlington County government, parent teacher organizations of APS schools or Non-Profit Organizations as provided in the policy. Only the following four methods are available to distribute non-curriculum related material within the schools: (1) backpack mail, (2) posting and/or making available flyers, (3) distribution as part of authorized use of school facilities, and (4) distribution by outside entities on school property. Except as part of the school curriculum, no printed materials may be distributed on school property except as set forth in the policy.

Backpack mail is used to distribute only those materials that are: produced by, or on behalf of, Arlington Public Schools and directly related to school business; produced by, or on behalf of, the Arlington County government and directly related to County business; produced by, or on behalf of, the parent teacher organizations of APS schools and that are directly related to PTA/PTO business; or produced by non-profit organizations (defined as entities that have provided evidence of their non-profit status, for federal tax purposes, to the Superintendent or designee) as outlined in the policy. No other entities are permitted to access the APS backpack mail system. Backpack mail may not be used to distribute materials that advocate the passage or defeat of any referendum question or advocate the passage or defeat of any matter pending before a local school board, a local governing body, the General Assembly of Virginia, or the Congress of the United States.

Backpack mail is now distributed electronically each week with an email service vendor, and available for viewing on each school’s website and on the APS mobile app. Paper copies are also maintained by school offices for review by families.

Each principal may designate a location or locations at which the school will post notices and/or make available flyers that outside groups request to be posted or made available to students. For all materials that are not permitted to be distributed by a method stated above, the Superintendent shall designate for each school building, the time, place, and manner for the distribution of such materials on school grounds by any person or group outside of the school building, only at times that will not disrupt the school day or other school-sponsored events, and only in the manner designated for each school building.

Materials produced by students as required course work (such as newspapers, yearbooks and literary magazines produced as part of a class) may be distributed under the direction and supervision of the teacher or sponsor. Materials students wish to distribute that are not part of the regular curriculum shall be distributed in accordance with such reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions as may be imposed by the principal. Before distributing materials at school, students shall obtain the approval of the principal that the distribution complies with the printed materials policy.

For more information about distribution of printed materials or distribution via the email flyer service, contact the Assistant Superintendent of School and Community Relations at 703-228-6005.

SPEECH

During class discussions, students have the right to express their views on topics being discussed. Students have a respon-

sibility not to interfere with the rights of other students or staff to hold and express their own views.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Schools may not conduct religious exercises nor may they support or sanction any particular religious beliefs or practices. Students have the right to observe their own religious beliefs and practices in school, provided such activities neither violate the rights of others nor disrupt or interfere with school activities.

Legislation passed by the Virginia Legislature in 2008 provides that “students may express their beliefs about religion in homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments free from discrimination based on the religious content of their submissions. Such home and classroom work shall be judged by ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance and against other legitimate pedagogical concerns identified by the school.”

HAZING

The Virginia Code of Conduct prohibits hazing. No student shall engage in hazing. Hazing means to recklessly and intentionally endanger the health or safety of a student or students or to inflict bodily harm on a student or students in connection with or for the purpose of initiation, admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition for, continued membership in a club, organization, association or student body, regardless of whether the student or students so endangered or injured participated voluntarily in the activity. Hazing is prohibited in school buildings; school grounds; school-sponsored events and with transportation. Students who experience or witness hazing, should inform an adult to allow for appropriate follow-up. Hazing is a Class 1 misdemeanor which may be punished by confinement in jail for up to 12 months and a fine of up to \$2,500, or both, in addition to any disciplinary consequences which may be imposed. In addition, any person receiving bodily injury by hazing has a right to sue, civilly, the person or persons guilty thereof, whether adults or minors. The principal of any school at which hazing occurs that causes bodily injury shall report the hazing to the local Commonwealth Attorney. See Virginia Student Conduct Policy Guidelines at www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/guidance/safety/student_conduct.pdf.

PARENTAL RIGHT TO INFORMATION ABOUT TEACHERS

The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) guarantees parents in Title I schools the right to request certain information about their child’s teachers. The information that you have a right to request about your child’s teacher is:

- Whether the teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subjects for which the teacher is responsible.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualifications for licensing have been waived.
- The baccalaureate degree major of certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.

- Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

If you would like to receive additional information about this topic, please contact the principal of your child’s school.

PARENTAL RIGHT TO REQUEST INFORMATION ON ASSESSMENT OPT-OUT

The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) Section 1112(e)(2) guarantees parents of students in Title I schools the right to request information about state or division policies regarding student participation in any assessments mandated by ESSA, including any policy, procedure, or parental right to opt students out of such assessments. All students enrolled in Virginia public schools are expected to take the applicable state tests. Virginia regulations do not provide for what is sometimes referred to as an “opt-out policy” for students regarding the Virginia assessments. If parents refuse to have their student participate in one or more of the required Virginia assessments, they should be aware that their student’s state assessment score report will reflect a score of “0” for any test that is refused. If you would like to receive additional information about this topic, please contact the principal of your child’s school.

OPENING EXERCISES

All Arlington Public Schools provide for a daily observance of the Pledge of Allegiance and a minute of silence in accordance with Virginia Code sections 22.1 - 2.02 and 22.1-2.03. Each classroom displays the flag of the United States of America. During the Pledge of Allegiance, students must either recite the Pledge while facing the flag with their right hands over their hearts or remain quiet and not disrupt or distract others. No student can be compelled to recite the Pledge if the student, parent or legal guardian objects on religious, philosophical or other grounds. During the period of silence, students are to remain quiet and not disrupt or distract others. This time may be used by students to engage in any lawful silent activity and as an opportunity for a time of silent reflection.

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND ABUSE

One of the goals of Arlington Public Schools is to provide its students with a safe and supportive learning environment, including protecting students from sexual misconduct and abuse. The responsibility for protecting students from sexual misconduct and abuse is shared by the division superintendent, the school board, teachers and all other school employees, school volunteers, state and local social services agencies, law enforcement, and parents.

Physical contact between school division employees and students should be public, nonsexual, and appropriate to the circumstances. Conversations by Arlington Public Schools staff and volunteers with students that could be interpreted as flirtatious, romantic or sexual are prohibited. The sharing of sexually explicit or obscene jokes and verbal “kidding” of a sexual nature between school division employees, volunteers and students is prohibited.

The Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Policy G-2.3 is available online at apsva.us/school-board-policies.

PROHIBITED SUBSTANCE USE

Arlington Public Schools (APS) is dedicated to providing all students with a healthy learning environment that is free from alcohol, tobacco (including e-cigarettes, vaping and juuling) and illegal substances. APS provides activities and strategies that are designed to promote developmental assets and educate students about the harmful effects of the use of illegal drugs and alcohol and the misuse of legal drugs and other legal substances. APS provides substance abuse counseling and referral services to secondary students exhibiting concerns related to substance abuse. APS also works cooperatively with other county agencies to provide assistance for individuals to receive counseling and referral services as needed. For information on substance abuse resources, please visit the Substance Abuse Prevention section of the APS website, at apsva.us/student-services/substance-abuse-counselors/.

The Arlington School Board prohibits the use of defined substances on school property, while walking to and from school, on school buses, during off-campus lunch privileges, at school-sponsored or school-supervised activities, and when the safety or welfare of the school or its students is affected as a result of out-of-school actions. A student who engages in prohibited substance use in any of these instances is subject to discipline pursuant to School Board Policies J-7.4 (Discipline) and J-6.3.6 (Prohibited Substance Use).

Prohibited substance use, as defined in this policy, includes: (1) any use, possession, sale, dispensing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, such as cocaine, k-2 (spice), marijuana, heroin and other drugs defined by law as controlled substances, or imitation controlled substances, and/or; (2) using tobacco and other substances that are deemed harmful to young people including e-cigarettes, vaping or juuling, and/or; (3) the wrongful, extreme, or improper use of an otherwise legal substance, such as sniffing glue, exceeding the recommended amounts of over-the-counter medications, or taking medicine prescribed for another person; and/or (4) any possession of drug paraphernalia, including any equipment, products, and materials or any of their parts that are designed or intended for pack-aging, storing, repackaging, containing, concealing, injecting, ingesting, inhaling, or otherwise introducing into the body a controlled substance or imitation controlled substance. Upon receipt of a report of prohibited substance use, the Principal or designee will ensure that the parent or guardian of the student is or has been notified.

Violations of this policy may result in expulsion, suspension or referral to an alternative substance abuse program. A student who has violated the prohibited substance use policy for the first time and whose conduct would constitute a misdemeanor under Virginia law is eligible for placement in the Second Chance Program (www.secondchancearlington.org) in lieu of a suspension remaining on their record. This is a three-day, early intervention program designed to educate students and their parents and to prevent future substance use. An eligible student who successfully completes the program, including all requirements for follow-up assessments and good behavior, will not be subject to suspension for that particular violation of the substance use policy. However, if a student placed in the program in lieu of suspension fails to successfully complete the program, including all requirements for

follow-up assessments and good behavior, that student will be suspended pursuant to School Board Policies J-6.3.6 and J-7.4.

For updated information about the APS Prohibited Substance Use Policy J-6.3.6, visit apsva.us/school-board-policies.

STUDENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION - TITLE IX

Arlington Public Schools shall provide learning environments that are free from all forms of sexual discrimination and sexual harassment. No student shall suffer reprisals for reporting any incident, making a good faith complaint, or participating in the investigation of an incident or complaint of discrimination or harassment. Confidentiality shall be maintained to the maximum extent possible. Substantiated complaints shall result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Students who are discriminated against or harassed by peers or adults should immediately report such conduct to a school administrator. The school principal or designee will promptly investigate any complaints of discrimination and harassment and will take appropriate action to resolve such complaints, and any interim measures will be taken as appropriate. Any student who discriminates against or harasses another person will be subject to appropriate discipline.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature, as well as harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression that has the effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning environment, constitute sexual harassment. Sexual harassment includes conduct that is also criminal in nature such as rape, sexual assault, stalking, and similar offenses. See School Board Policy J-2 at apsva.us/school-board-policies.

The Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services is designated as the Compliance Officer for all student discrimination complaints, as well as the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator provides oversight of all investigations related to sexual harassment/sexual discrimination allegations, as well as implementation of the APS Title IX monitoring and compliance program. The Supervisor, Health and Physical Education, serves as the Title IX Coordinator related to student athletics. The Assistant Superintendent and/or Director of Administrative Services serve as the compliance officer for any complaints of sexual harassment/sexual discrimination.

STUDENT GENDER IDENTITY NON-DISCRIMINATION

APS is committed to providing a safe, welcoming school environment where students are engaged in learning and are active participants in the school community because they feel accepted and valued. It is important that all staff members and students recognize and respect matters of gender identity including students who identify as transgender or gender nonconforming, and such students feel comfortable expressing their gender identity. To the extent possible, schools need to consider gender neutral uniforms or dress codes for physical education classes, music ensembles, yearbook photos, honor society ceremonies, promotion ceremonies, dances, etc.

In accordance with School Board Policy J-2, APS prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, creed, color, religion, gender, age, economic status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, gender identity or expression, and/or disability.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

(DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL)

Students are required by Virginia Law to attend school from age 6 until their 18th birthday. Students who wish to withdraw early should contact the Director of Student Services at 703-228-6058. Students working toward graduation may continue in the public schools through the school year (September to June) in which they reach their 20th birthday. Students receiving special education services may remain in school until age 22, if they reach age 22 after Sept. 30. Students who do not speak English as their first language and entered school in Virginia for the first time after reaching age 12 and have not reached 22 years of age on or before Aug. 1 of the school year may also remain in school. Families who move out of Arlington County should inform their child's school of their new address and telephone number. For more information, call the Office of Student Services at 703-228-6058.

APS Student Rights and Responsibilities and Disciplinary Policies During Distance Learning and Hybrid/In-Person Learning

During Distance Learning and/or Hybrid/In-Person Instruction, the Arlington Public Schools student responsibilities and rights along with behavior and disciplinary responsibilities outlined in this Handbook and in the School Board Policy J-7.4 Discipline remain in effect. Students are still expected to behave in the distance learning instructional or hybrid/in-person instructional models as they would if classes were conducted full-time in school buildings. Students in Arlington Public Schools are expected to demonstrate responsibility and self-discipline every day by their positive behavior in the distance learning and/or hybrid learning environment, at school-sponsored events and before and after school hours. They should understand the importance of learning and the need for mutual respect in their learning environment.

For those specific students whose behavior interferes with a positive learning environment or who experience difficulty following clear expectations, disciplinary actions may be necessary. All APS staff have authority to maintain the orderly behavior of students. Discipline shall be imposed in a way that is proportional to the conduct that gives rise to the need for that discipline. All administrators, teachers, and other staff members of Arlington Public Schools should carry out their disciplinary responsibilities to ensure an orderly and safe environment appropriate for student learning. Any responsible school staff member present may take such disciplinary actions as are necessary, reasonable and equitable, in accordance with State law, in accordance with the regulations of the Arlington School Board, and in keeping with the APS Student Behavior and Disciplinary Responsibilities.

Arlington Public Schools has authority to discipline students:

1. While engaged in approved and supervised school activities, which includes distance learning and/or hybrid instruction, on or off school premises; and
2. When the good order, safety or welfare of the school or its students is affected as a result of out of school action.

It is important that the school and parents/guardians work closely together and be supportive of steps taken to bring about desired changes in conduct. It is expected that school staff will impose appropriate and fair disciplinary consequences and will communicate effectively with parents/guardians to explain the misbehavior, the actions taken, the due process procedure, and the goal of working together to see positive results. Classroom teachers have the primary responsibility for the discipline of their students during the school day. Students need to be made aware of behavioral expectations by any responsible staff member present whether or not that person is the staff member to whom the student is assigned. Consideration should be given to developmental stages, language, and students receiving special education services.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

In developing student self-discipline, it may be necessary to adopt measures designed to assist students in developing self-control and self-reliance. Possible consequences associated with disciplinary actions are identified here as a guide. In handling disciplinary cases, school administrators may use a range of activities depending on the seriousness of the situation.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Conferences with parents/guardians should be scheduled promptly to inform and to discuss with parents the appropriate behavior of a student.

ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION

Alternatives to suspension is a school-based, tiered intervention approach. Certain minor offenses may result in an assignment to an alternative to suspension. This is not a suspension, but rather an alternative approach for a specific period of time for less than two periods. The parents/guardians of students assigned to an Alternatives to Suspension Program should be notified. The disciplinary appeals process does not apply to Alternatives to Suspension.

- The student must be under the supervision of a school staff member during this time.
- No elementary school student should be kept beyond the regular dismissal time unless the parent/guardian has been notified.
- If the parent/guardian, when contacted, requests a written notice, it must be sent the day before the student is kept after school.
- If a student is regularly transported by school bus, he or she should not be kept beyond the time that school transportation is available unless alternate transportation is arranged.

DENIAL OF TRANSPORTATION

Students who are otherwise eligible for transportation may be denied such transportation by school administrators when the student's conduct represents a threat to the safe operation of the school bus, to the student, or to others on the bus.

Students with disabilities who receive transportation as a related service under their IEPs or as an accommodation under a Section 504 Plan and who are subject to disciplinary action because of misconduct on the bus, must receive an IEP review to determine if the student's actions are the result of the disability. When the behavior for which the student is to be denied school bus transportation is the result of the student's disability, the student must be provided alternative transportation.

REMOVAL OF A STUDENT FROM CLASS

Every effort is made to keep a student in class, to minimize loss of instructional time. However, as provided in the Code of Virginia, section 22.1-276.2, a teacher may remove a student from class for a violation of regulations governing student conduct that obstructs the learning environment. This removal will occur only after teacher and/or administrative interventions have failed to end the student's disruptive behavior or the behavior is endangering the physical safety of those in the class. The teacher shall complete a "Discipline Referral

Form" and submit it to the school principal. Notification that this form has been completed, together with a copy of the form, and notification of an opportunity to discuss the student's behavior, will be sent by the principal to the parent or guardian, as appropriate.

The principal shall determine the appropriate placement of the student during the period of removal. The principal has several options regarding the placement of a removed student including, but not limited to:

1. Returning the student to class. (See procedures below.)
2. Sending the student to the principal's office or other supervised area. If the principal chooses this option, the teacher shall provide and evaluate appropriate make-up work for the student.
3. Assigning the student to an alternative area on a temporary basis.
4. Assigning the student to another class or program.
5. Suspending or recommending expulsion of the student. If the principal chooses this option, alternative instruction and assignment, if any, shall be provided according to School Board policy and in accordance with applicable law.

The student will not be returned to class until the principal or a designee, in consultation with the removing teacher, has addressed the issue or action involved in the exclusion of the student. Whether the student will be returned to the same teacher will be considered in a discussion of the issues with such persons, including that teacher, as the principal deems appropriate. The principal shall determine the duration of the student's removal from class in consultation with the removing teacher. The principal shall notify the teacher of the decision to return the student to class. If the teacher disagrees with the principal's decision to return a student to the class, the teacher and principal shall discuss the teacher's objection to returning the student to class and the principal's reason for returning the student.

The principal shall, unless a student who has been removed from class by a teacher is suspended or expelled, ensure that such student continues to receive an education in accordance with school board policies.

SECOND CHANCE PROGRAM

A student who has violated the prohibited substance use policy for the first time and whose conduct would constitute a misdemeanor under Virginia law is eligible for placement in the Second Chance Program in lieu of suspension remaining on their record. This is a three-day, early-intervention program designed to educate students and their families and to prevent future prohibited substance use. An eligible student who successfully completes that program, including all requirements for follow-up assessments and good behavior, will not be subject to suspension for that particular violation of the prohibited substance use policy. However, if a student placed in the program in lieu of suspension fails to successfully complete the program, including all requirements for follow-up assessments and good behavior, that student will be suspended pursuant to this policy and to School Board Policy J-7.4.

A student who has been suspended for a violation of the prohibited substance use policy may be referred to the Second Chance program.

SUSPENSIONS

Suspension includes temporary removal from all school activities and exclusion from school grounds, including buses (violation would constitute criminal trespassing), for a specified period of time in accordance with APS guidelines. A student may be suspended by a school administrator or designee for no more than ten (10) days, or by the Superintendent or his designee for 11 to 45 days, if aggravating circumstances exist, but not exceeding 364 days. Failure to abide by rules of suspension may result in further suspension.

In all cases, contact should be made to a parent/guardian before a student is dismissed from school during the school day. If a student is sent home for disciplinary reasons during the school day for the remainder of that day, all regulations must be followed regarding a suspension.

1. Depending on frequency or severity, actions which may result in out-of-school suspension, assignment to In-School Suspension or and alternative to suspension for one or more periods include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Leaving school grounds
 - b. Truancy (Alternative to Suspension only)
 - c. Failure to serve detention
 - d. Disruptive use of electronic communication devices (for example: cell phones, pagers)
 - e. Misbehavior in buildings, on grounds, on the buses or on school-sponsored activities and field trips
 - f. Profane or obscene language, orally or in writing, or remarks that demean or are intended to demean a person's race, religion, sex, creed, national origin, disability, or intellectual ability, sexual orientation, or gender identity
 - g. Smoking or vaping on school property (property as described in III. B 1-6) or possession of tobacco products including e-cigarettes, vaping and juuling products
 - h. Forgery of notes or signatures, cheating, or plagiarism
 - i. Misuse or inappropriate use of technology (internet) including instant messaging
 - j. Possession of pornographic material
 - k. Sexual harassment of other students or staff
 - l. Gambling
 - m. Insubordination or verbal abuse
 - n. Verbal abuse of student or staff
 - o. Abuse or misuse of legal substances, such as over-the-counter non-prescription drugs and other substances
 - p. Willful destruction of property (Students may be required to make restitution for damaged property.)
 - q. Physical altercations or fighting
 - r. Bullying, including verbal or written threats or physical harm
 - s. Gang Activity, including disrupting school by use of gang symbols, hand signs, engaging in threatening behavior as a group or representing a group identified as a gang
 - t. Possession of look-alike weapons
 - u. Theft or extortion
2. Actions requiring immediate out-of-school suspension and possible referral to the police and/or fire marshal include:

- a. Being under the influence of a controlled substance
- b. Sale, possession, use, or being under the influence of alcohol
- c. Possession of weapons
- d. Physical assault on a member of the school staff
- e. Setting fires or use or possession of explosives or fire-works on school property
- f. False alarms and bomb threats
- g. Acting as a mob
- h. Other activities, which may violate law as well as school regulations
- i. Activities that threaten, or threats made against, the physical safety of students or staff members or school community
- j. Physical assault on members of school staff and/or students

Before the end of the suspension period and before a student involved in one of these violations is re-admitted, the school administrator shall determine if the action warrants recommendation to the Superintendent for expulsion. If such a recommendation is pending, the student will not be readmitted until after the review is heard by the Superintendent or a designee. The Superintendent or designee shall reach a decision on the recommendation within ten (10) working days after the conclusion of the hearing. If the Superintendent recommends expulsion to the School Board, the student will not be readmitted until after the case is decided by the School Board. The School Board shall decide on expulsion within 30 days following the Superintendent's recommendation.

Additional information, including definitions of infractions, is available at each school and on the Virginia Department of Education website under Data and Publications, Discipline, Crime and Violence section. Under the Annual Report for each year is an appendix which provides definitions of offenses.

LENGTH OF SUSPENSIONS

1. Students in preschool through grade three are prohibited from being suspended for more than three school days.
2. Minor infractions may result in a maximum of three (3) consecutive days out-of-school suspension.
3. Repeated minor infractions may result in a maximum of five (5) consecutive days out-of-school suspension.
4. Serious infractions may result in up to ten (10) consecutive days of out-of-school suspension.
5. Repeated serious infractions or serious infraction involving action by the police may also result in a maximum of ten (10) consecutive days out-of-school suspension, request for disciplinary hearing for additional suspension time and/or a recommendation for expulsion.
6. In very serious infractions, students may be suspended for 11 to 45 days by the Superintendent or his designee. More days, up to 364, may be sanctioned with aggravating circumstances. When suspending a student for more than ten (10) days, the following factors shall be taken into account:
 - a. The student's academic, attendance, and disciplinary record

- b. The nature and severity of the infraction
- c. An assessment of the student's acknowledgement of violation of school regulations and the student's expressed intent with regard to future conduct
- 7. Very serious infractions require local school consideration of:
 - a. Court involvement,
 - b. Alternative programs, and/or
 - c. A request to the Superintendent for the parent/guardian, student, and appropriate local school officials to meet with representatives of the Superintendent to decide the student's future educational program
- 8. Actions, which result in suspension or expulsion, shall be documented in the student's cumulative file.

NOTIFICATION AND HEARING

Students may be suspended for ten (10) days or less by a school administrator. The student will be given, in advance, oral or written notice of the charges against him or her and an explanation of the facts as known to the school personnel and, if the student denies those facts, an opportunity to present a version of what occurred. If the student's presence at school poses a continuing danger to persons or property, or an ongoing threat of disruption, the student may be removed from school immediately and the notice, explanation of facts, and opportunity to present the student's version shall be given as soon thereafter as is practical. They shall be informed of their right to appeal to the Superintendent. Oral or written notice to the parent/guardian shall include information regarding the availability of any community-based education programs, alternative education programs, or other educational options, and of the student's right to return to regular school attendance upon the expiration of the suspension. The costs of any such programs or options shall be borne by the parents.

Students may be suspended for more than 10 consecutive days by the Superintendent or designee. Such students and their parents/guardians shall be notified in writing, in advance of the proposed suspension, except in emergencies, when notice shall be at the earliest possible opportunity. Such notice shall state the charges against the student, the facts on which the suspension is based as known to school personnel, and the duration of the suspension. The student and/or parents shall be given, before the suspension (except in emergencies), an opportunity to present his or their version of what occurred. Such notice shall also include information regarding the availability of any community-based education programs, alternative education programs, or other educational options, and the conditions that must be met prior to the student's return to normal school activities, and of the student's right to return to normal school activities, and of the student's right to return to regular school attendance upon the expiration of the suspension, or to attend an appropriate alternative education program approved by the School Board during or upon the expiration of the suspension. The costs of any such options or alternative program shall be borne by the parents. A copy of this notice shall be sent to the Superintendent. In the case of a student known to be on probation with the juvenile court, the probation counselor of the juvenile court shall receive a copy of the letter.

As a condition for re-admission after an out-of-school

suspension, the school administrator may request the student's participation in a conference with the school psychologist, school social worker/visiting teacher, guidance counselor, school nurse, school physician, fire marshal or youth resource officer. Re-admission after out-of-school suspensions shall occur only after:

1. A conference has been held where the student, parent/guardian, and representative of the school arrive at a clear understanding of their mutual expectations in the area of student conduct and academic achievement. The re-admission conference for an identified student with a disability may take the form of an IEP meeting and/or may consider changes in the IEP's goals or objectives, or Section 504 Plan the location for implementation, and a more restrictive environment as appropriate.
2. The student, in the presence of the parent/guardian, has acknowledged the violation of school regulation and has given assurance that he/she will become acquainted with, and abide by, school regulations in the future.
3. The school administrator has determined that re-admission of the student will present no threat to the normal operation of the school or safety of students or staff.

APPEALS OF DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

1. Except where otherwise indicated, students or parents/guardians who have been aggrieved by any disciplinary action or failure to take action by the principal, assistant principal or principal's designee, may, within ten (10) working days of such event, file a complaint in writing with the Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services. In the case of a suspension appeal, a hearing will be held and the Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services shall give a response in writing within seven (7) working days after the conclusion of the hearing. Appeals of disciplinary actions taken by the Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services or Superintendent will be governed by procedures set forth in the section of School Board Policy J-7.4 governing the particular disciplinary action.
2. The decision of the Superintendent or designee will be final in cases involving disciplinary actions other than cases of more than ten (10) days or expulsion. For suspensions or alternative placements of more than ten (10) days, the Superintendent or designee's decision may be appealed to the School Board within ten (10) working days of the Superintendent or designee's decision. The School Board shall decide on an appeal within thirty (30) days of receipt of the appeal in the School Board office. The Clerk to the School Board will immediately provide a copy of any appeal to the Superintendent.
3. In deciding an appeal for suspensions or alternative placements of more than ten (10) days' duration, the School Board will follow these procedures: For suspensions or alternative placements (fewer than 365 days) (except as specifically provided below where the student's participation in the conduct is disputed), the Superintendent shall provide the School Board with a complete statement of reasons for the suspension accompanied by the complete written record of the disciplinary proceedings within five

working days of receipt of the appeal. A copy of that statement will be delivered to the student or his or her parents/guardians at the time it is delivered to the School Board. The student may provide the School Board with any response to that statement of reasons within five working days of receipt of the Superintendent's statement of reasons. The School Board will make its decision on the written record, which decision shall be final.

4. For expulsions (365 days or more), the Superintendent shall provide the School Board with a complete statement of reasons for the expulsion recommendation, accompanied by the complete written record of the disciplinary proceedings within five working days of receipt of the appeal. A copy of that statement will be delivered to the student or his or her parents/guardians at the time it is delivered to the School Board. The student may provide the School Board with any response to that statement of reasons within five working days of receipt of the Superintendent's statement of reasons. The Clerk to the School Board will notify the Superintendent and the parents/guardians of the date for hearing before the School Board (except as specifically provided below where the student's participation in the conduct is disputed). The specific procedures to be followed in such hearing may be determined by the School Board Chair, in consultation with other members of the School Board.
5. Notwithstanding the procedures set forth above, for suspensions or alternative placements of more than ten (10) days, or expulsions when the student claims he/she was not involved in the incident or conduct that led to the discipline, upon a request from the parent, the School Board will hold a hearing at which either party may present witnesses who have information relevant to the disputed information. The specific procedures to be followed in such hearing may be determined by the School Board Chair, in consultation with other members of the School Board.
6. When the building-level school administrator is notified of an appeal by the parent/guardian or student (if the student is eighteen (18) years of age or older), the school administrator, in the case of suspension, shall reinstate the student in school until the appeal has been finally decided. If the school administrator determines that the reinstatement of the student would pose a danger to persons or property, or would constitute an ongoing threat of disruption to the school's educational program, the student shall not be reinstated. A student being recommended for expulsion shall not be reinstated.
7. A record of disciplinary action against a student shall not become part of the student's school record if the appeal by the student or parent/guardian is sustained.

EXPULSION

When a student severely impairs the safe and supportive environment of a school, that student may be expelled.

Expulsion is the exclusion of a student from all services of Arlington Public Schools and from School Board property for a period up to 364 days. Only the School Board has the authority to expel a student and, in the most serious cases, may expel a student permanently.

1. The Superintendent or designee shall forward his/her recommendation for expulsion to the School Board for action.

2. Students may be expelled only after written notice to the student and the parent/guardian of the student of the proposed action, the reasons for the action, and the right to a hearing before the School Board. Such notice shall be given by the Superintendent or his designee and shall provide information concerning the availability of community-based educational, training, and intervention programs. The notice shall state whether or not the student is eligible to return to regular school attendance, or to attend an appropriate alternative education program approved by the School Board, or an adult education program offered by the school division, during or upon the expiration of the expulsion, and the terms or conditions of such readmission. Any alternative program that is not an APS approved program shall be at the cost of the family. Any notice, for a student who is expelled for more than a year, shall state that the student may petition the School Board for readmission to be effective one calendar year from the date of expulsion, and the conditions, if any, under which such readmission may be granted.

The School Board may make students eligible to return, with the Superintendent's approval, at the end of the expulsion. Any student expelled for more than 365 days may submit a petition for readmission to the School Board, up to ninety (90) days in advance of the date that is one year after the expulsion decision. The School Board shall make its decision, based on written materials submitted by the student, and any material submitted by the Superintendent in response, within forty-five (45) days after receipt of the petition in the School Board office. The School Board may elect to engage in further review of any circumstances, provided its decision on readmission is made at least thirty (30) days before the date that is the one-year anniversary of the expulsion.

3. Students may be expelled in the following circumstance:
 - a. Any student who brings a firearm onto school property or to a school-sponsored activity, or is in possession of a firearm on school property or at a school-sponsored activity, as prohibited by § 22.1-277 of the Code of Virginia shall be expelled from school attendance for a period of at least a year. However, the Superintendent or designee may determine, based on the facts of the particular situation, that special circumstances exist and another disciplinary action is appropriate.
 - b. Any student who has brought a controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or marijuana as defined in Code of Virginia § 22.1-277 onto school property or to a school-sponsored activity shall be expelled from school attendance. However, the Superintendent or his designee may determine, based on the facts of the particular case, that special circumstances exist and another disciplinary action is appropriate.
 - c. A recommendation for expulsion may be made for other conduct, including without limitation, conduct listed as a possible basis for suspension, based upon consideration of the following factors:

- i. The nature and seriousness of the violation;
- ii. The degree of danger to the school community;
- iii. The student's disciplinary history, including the seriousness and number of previous infractions;
- iv. The appropriateness and availability of an alternative education placement and program;
- v. The student's age and grade level;
- vi. The results of any mental health, substance abuse, or special education assessments;
- vii. The student's attendance and academic records; and
- viii. Such other matters, as the Superintendent deems appropriate.

EXCLUSION

The Superintendent may determine to exclude any student who has been expelled or suspended for more than thirty (30) days by a school board or a private school in Virginia or another state, or for whom admission has been withdrawn by a private school in Virginia or in another state. Such students may be excluded regardless of whether the student has been admitted to another school division or private school in Virginia or in another state subsequent to such expulsion, suspension, or withdrawal. The Superintendent shall make a determination to exclude if it is found that the student presents a danger to other students or staff of Arlington Public Schools after:

1. written notice to the student and his or her parent that the student may be subject to exclusion, the reasons therefore, and of their opportunity to participate in a hearing on such exclusion, and
2. a hearing of the case has been conducted by the Superintendent or his designee.

The Superintendent's decision after a hearing shall be final unless a petition is filed with the Clerk of the School Board within fifteen (15) calendar days after the Superintendent renders a decision. For exclusions (365 days or more): The Superintendent shall provide the School Board with a complete statement of reasons for the exclusion recommendation, accompanied by the complete written record of the disciplinary proceedings within five working days of receipt of the appeal. A copy of that statement will be delivered to the student or parents/guardians at the time it is delivered to the School Board. The student may provide the School Board with any response to that statement of reasons within five working days of receipt of the Superintendent's statement of reasons. The clerk to the School Board will notify the Superintendent and the parents of the date for hearing before the School Board. The specific procedures to be followed in such hearings may be determined by the School Board Chair, in consultation with other members of the School Board.

The School Board shall consider the exclusion, upon the petition and any response by the Superintendent, and provide its decision to the student and parent/guardian within forty-five (45) days after receipt of the petition.

For updated information about student behavior and disciplinary responsibilities, see APS Policy J-7.4 at apsva.us/school-board-policies.

Filing a Complaint

Parents or eligible students who believe that their rights have been violated may contact the local school administrator, the Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services, the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning, and/or the Director of Administrative Services. A parent or eligible student also has the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failure by Arlington Public Schools to comply with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) by writing to:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

No student shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity on the basis of race, national origin, creed, color, religion, gender, age, economic status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, gender identity or expression, and/or disability. Complaints of discrimination, on the basis of sex or any other listed characteristic, should be brought immediately to the attention of the principal. In addition, complaints of sex discrimination can be filed with the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights and/or the APS Title IX Coordinator, who is the Assistant Superintendent, Administrative Services at 703-228-6008 or administrative.services@apsva.us.

Arlington Public Schools is committed to providing the supports and services to enable every student to achieve maximum growth by providing individualized resources, services and strategies that enable students to excel academically, socially, emotionally, and physically.

Counselors, social workers, and substance abuse counselors provide specialized support to address the emotional well-being of a student. There are also related service professionals and county resources to support mental health.

