

Arlington Public Schools is dedicated to providing all students with a healthy learning environment that is free from alcohol, tobacco, including e-cigarettes, and illegal substances. The Arlington Public Schools 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. The school district works cooperatively with other county agencies to provide assistance for individuals to receive counseling and referral services; provide a safe, healthy learning environment for students and staff; and take appropriate action when individuals are found to be in violation of this policy.

The Arlington School Board prohibits the use of defined substances on school property, including walking to and from school, on school buses, during off-campus lunch privileges, and at school-sponsored or school-supervised activities. A student who engages in prohibited substance use is subject to discipline pursuant to School Board Policy J-7.4 Discipline and to this policy.

Prohibited substance use, as used 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. The wrongful, extreme, or improper use of an otherwise legal substance, such as sniffing glue, taking non-recommended amounts of over-the-counter medications, or taking medicine prescribed for another person; and/or
3. Any possession of drug paraphernalia, including any equipment, products, and materials or any of their parts that are designed or intended for packaging, storing, repackaging, containing, concealing, injecting, ingesting, inhaling, or otherwise introducing into the body a controlled substance or imitation controlled substance.

Staff Reporting Requirement

All Arlington Public Schools staff are required to timely report to the Principal of the school that a student attends, or the Principal's designee, any prohibited substance use, as defined in this policy. The Principal is required to timely report any prohibited substance use to the Superintendent. Certain school and Arlington County personnel whose licensure requires adherence to confidentiality may follow a different course of action depending on the situation.

Parental Notification of Prohibited Substance Use

Because Arlington Public Schools believes that parents are integral partners in preventing and intervening in student prohibited substance use, Arlington Public Schools administrators will notify parents, as set forth in this policy, if a student is suspected of or found to have engaged in prohibited substance use as defined in this policy.

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. Additionally, the substance abuse counselor assigned to the school will be notified. If the Principal or designee is made aware or believes that parental notification will place the student at risk, the Principal will consult with Child Protective Services to determine whether concern about the risk is valid.

Arlington Public Schools staff shall inform the student of the pending parental notification; the benefits of parents as allies in addressing substance abuse issues; and external and internal resources that may be helpful. In the course of their counseling duties, substance abuse counselors and all other staff will routinely encourage students to disclose substance abuse to their parents or guardians.

Discipline for Violation of Prohibited Substance Use Policy

A student who violates the prohibited substance use policy is subject to discipline pursuant to School Board Policy J-7.4 Discipline and to the following:

Expulsion

Pursuant to Code of Virginia §22.1-277.08, a student who has brought a controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or marijuana onto school property or to a school-sponsored activity shall be expelled, unless the Superintendent or his designee determine, based on the facts of the particular case, that special circumstances exist and that another disciplinary action is appropriate.

Suspension

A student who violates the prohibited substance use policy and who is not expelled may be subject to other disciplinary measures, up to and including suspension.

“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. This is an intensive, early intervention program designed to educate students and their parents 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 Discipline.

A student who has been suspended for a violation of the prohibited substance use policy may be referred to the “Second Chance” program to have the benefit of this early intervention program.

References

- Code of Federal Regulations 42 Part 2
- Code of Virginia §22.1-279.3:1 (as it relates to substance abuse)
- Code of Virginia §54.1-2969 (as it relates to substance abuse)
- School Board Policy J-7.4 Discipline

Policy Adoption and Revision History

Adopted December 4, 2014, Effective December 4, 2014
Renumbered (former Policy 25-1.16) effective July 1, 2018