STUDENTS

Short-Term Suspension of Students

I. General Provisions Relating to Short-Term Suspensions

A. The rules governing short-term out-of-school suspensions are set forth in this regulation and are summarized in the Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) “Code of Behavior.” Conduct viewed as just cause for suspension includes that which is identified in the “Code of Behavior,” but is not limited to such conduct.

The provisions of the PWCS “Code of Behavior” apply whenever students are involved, such as:

- At school activities on property owned by the School Board;
- When going to and from school and bus stops;
- On school buses and at bus stops;
- In cases involving off-site, school-sponsored activities such as field trips, sporting events, and club activities; and
- When conduct by a student occurring off school grounds or school property has a material effect on the operation or general welfare of the School Division; impacts the integrity of the educational process; threatens the health, safety, and welfare of students and staff; impacts school property; occurs when the student is under the school’s authority in loco parentis; or otherwise invades the rights of students or staff.

B. Any short-term suspension determination shall be based upon the special circumstances of each student, to include:

- The nature and seriousness of the violation;
- The degree of danger to the school community;
- The student’s disciplinary history, including the seriousness and number of previous offenses;
- The student’s age and grade level;
- The results of any mental health, substance abuse, or special education assessments;
- The student’s attendance and academic records; and
- Such other matters as deemed appropriate.
C. The length of suspension shall be related to the specific breach of conduct. Short-term suspensions for minor breaches of conduct may range from one to 10 school days. Long-term suspensions are for greater than 10 school days, but less than 365 calendar days. Expulsions are for 365 calendar days. Long-term suspensions and expulsions, for more serious breaches of conduct, are addressed in Regulation 745-1, “Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students,” and Regulation 747-1, “Office of Student Management and Alternative Programs (OSMAP).”

D. As used throughout this regulation, principal is defined as principal, assistant principal, or any teacher serving as the principal’s designee with the principal’s authority.

E. Students who are suspended from school are prohibited from school property and school-related activities (teams, clubs, and all other school-sponsored activities, including practices) for the duration of their suspension and may be arrested for trespassing, as provided in §§ 18.2-119 and 18.2-128 of the Virginia Code.

F. For purposes of this regulation, the term “school day” means any day that school is in session for instructional purposes, and the term “business day” means any day that the offices of the Level Associate Superintendents are open. Where this regulation calls for a request to be made in writing or a paper to be filed with any agent, employee, or department of the School Division by a specific day, such writing or paper must be transmitted to such agent, employee, or department prior to 4 p.m. on said school or business day.

II. Short-Term Suspension Procedures

A. A principal may initially suspend a student for five school days or less. In order to lengthen the short-term suspension beyond five days and up to 10 days, the principal must have prior approval of the Level Associate Superintendent. Written notification of the extension of the suspension must be provided to the parent(s)/legal guardian(s).

B. In the event that the principal, or the principal’s designee, intends to suspend a student for five school days or less, the student shall be given oral or written notice of the infraction against the student and if the student denies the infraction, an explanation of the facts known to school personnel, and an opportunity to present the student’s version of the events. The principal/designee shall make all reasonable efforts to contact the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) to advise them of the impending suspension and to make appropriate arrangements for the student to be returned to the student’s home.
Written notice of the charges against the student, outlining the cause(s) for suspension, length of suspension, and the procedure for appeal, shall be provided to the student and parent(s)/legal guardian(s) without unreasonable delay. The notice shall also provide information regarding the student’s right to return to regular school attendance upon the expiration of the suspension.

C. During a short-term suspension, students are afforded the opportunity to make up missed schoolwork and receive credit for the assignments.

D. Appeal of Short-Term Suspension. Students who appeal a short-term suspension may attend school unless they pose a safety risk. The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) shall be notified in writing of the status of the principal’s decision within five school days of having received the written appeal. If the principal’s decision is appealed, a written request appealing the decision must be received by the appropriate Level Associate Superintendent or other designee of the Superintendent within three business days of the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) having been notified of the principal’s decision. The appeal must include the student’s account of the incident and the reasons for believing the suspension is unjustified. Written notification of the decision of the Level Associate Superintendent or designee of the Superintendent shall be sent to the emancipated student or parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of a minor. The decision of the Level Associate Superintendent or designee of the Superintendent shall be provided in writing to the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) within five business days and is final.

E. As appropriate, schools should consider sanctions other than out-of-school suspension.

F. In the event that a further recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion is made during the imposed short-term suspension, the procedures governing long-term suspension and expulsion shall be applicable as set forth in Regulation 745-1, “Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion of Students” and Regulation 747-1, “Office of Student Management and Alternative Programs (OSMAP).”

III. Short-Term Suspension of Students with Disabilities

As provided in Regulation 745-2, “Discipline of Special Education Students,” for students with disabilities, a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) must be reviewed and/or conducted immediately following the second short-term removal occurring during a school year.
A. If there is no Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) in place, one shall be developed and implemented as indicated by the FBA to address the student’s need.

B. If a BIP is already in place, the BIP shall be reviewed. As indicated, modifications shall be made to address the student’s behavioral needs.

The Associate Superintendent for Student Learning and Accountability (or designee) is responsible for implementing and monitoring this regulation.

The Associate Superintendent for Student Learning and Accountability (or designee) is responsible for reviewing this regulation in 2020.