

Disciplinary Hearings

What if I don't agree with the initial suspension?

If you disagree with the initial suspension, then you would prepare a letter of appeal. Please follow the procedures outlined below. Appeals are not considered until receipt of a formal letter of appeal (outlined below). The student will begin serving the suspension until the appeal letter is received. In general, once a written appeal request has been received, the suspension will be placed on hold until the appeals process has ended. An exception to this applies if the student is determined by the principal to be a danger to himself or herself, to others, or deemed to be so destructive or disruptive that the education of other students cannot continue in a safe and orderly manner. If this is the case, the student shall not be allowed to attend school during the appeal process.

Appeal Procedure for Short-Term Suspensions (one to ten school days)

- A notice of short-term suspension may be appealed directly to the school administrator who suspended the student. The letter of appeal must be mailed, emailed or delivered to the school administration within 24 hours of the first notification of the student's suspension, which is most often a phone call from a school administrator, followed by a letter.
- If the appeal is denied by the administrator who suspended the student, it may then be appealed in writing to the principal. The appeal letter must be mailed, emailed or delivered to the school within two (2) school days of the day the administrator's (who suspended the student) response was received.
- If the appeal is denied by the principal, it may then be appealed directly to the Executive Director of Student Services within three (3) school days of the day the principal's response was received.
- If the appeal is denied by the Executive Director of Student Services, a final appeal may be submitted to the Office of the Superintendent within five (5) school days of the day the response from the Executive Director of Student Services was received. A written letter of appeal must be submitted to the:

Office of the Superintendent
Attn: Superintendent's Designee for Suspension Appeals
Alexandria City Public Schools
1340 Braddock Place, 6th Floor
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

- The Superintendent or designee promptly reviews the action taken by the principal or assistant principal upon a petition for review by any party in interest, and confirms or disapproves the suspension based on an examination of the record of the student's behavior.
- The parent/guardian is notified that the final decision regarding such an appeal is made by the Superintendent or designee, and may not be appealed to the School Board.

Suspension with Discipline Hearing Recommendation

Each student has the right to expect an educational environment in which he or she can strive to achieve his/her intellectual potential. The student is expected to attend school regularly, be diligent in his/her studies and conduct him/herself in such a way that the rights and privileges of others are not violated. The student is expected to accept and demonstrate the obligation of good citizenship to help prevent problems from happening and help solve problems if they occur.

Student disciplinary hearings are conducted when the school administrator believes a student has violated the ACPS Student Code of Conduct and additional consequences, to include long-term suspension (10 or more days) or expulsion should be considered.

How does this happen?

When a violation of the Student Code of Conduct occurs that is considered to be especially serious (i.e., weapon at school, drugs or alcohol, physical altercation), the principal will make a determination as to whether or not the violation warrants consideration for long-term suspension or expulsion. Prior to this determination, your child has the right to due process, which means they will:

1. Be informed of the rule violation and evidence
2. Be provided with an opportunity to present his/her side of the situation
3. Be provided with an opportunity to appeal the decision

Once this has occurred, and your child has been suspended with a recommendation for expulsion or a disciplinary hearing, a representative from the Department of Student Services and Equity will contact you to schedule a hearing. Parents are encouraged to proactively contact the Department of Student Services and Equity at 703-619-8108 to establish a date and time for the hearing.

Suspension days prior to the hearing

Your student will be suspended from ACPS until the time of the hearing. During that time, he or she is not allowed on any ACPS campus or allowed to attend any ACPS events.

Why a hearing?

A hearing is used to determine the appropriate consequence of the significant violation.

What happens at the hearing?

During the hearing, which is facilitated by a Department of Student Services and Equity administrator, the number of steps that is followed to ensure that all pertinent information is presented. Below is a sample agenda of a hearing:

1. Introductions

2. Review of hearing structure
3. Administrative presentation of incident
4. Student presentation
5. Parent/guardian presentation
6. Additional statements
7. Summary
8. Closure/determination (note: determination may not occur at hearing)

As part of the disciplinary hearing review process, student records will be reviewed. Such records may include but are not limited to: academics, behavior, attendance/truancy, residency, career plans and risk/threat assessments.

Who attends the hearing?

The principal and/or assistant principal, or dean of students from your child's school will attend the hearing. The hearing officer also has the discretion to invite additional school personnel. **It is important that both you and your child attend the hearing so that your child has an opportunity to provide his/her version of the incident.** You are allowed to have witnesses come and testify on your child's behalf. You are also allowed to have an attorney if you choose. In addition, the Department of Student Services and Equity administrator will facilitate the session and if needed, a translator or interpreter may also be present.

What are possible outcomes from the hearing?

The Department of Student Services and Equity administrator has a wide range of outcomes at his/her discretion, including, but not limited to:

- Alternative education program placement
- Alternate instructional support (AIS)
- Counseling
- Court action
- Detention at school
- Expulsion from ACPS schools
- In-school suspension (ISS)
- Mediation/Restorative Practices
- Out-of-school suspension (OSS)
- Parent conference
- Restitution
- Return to school with or without probationary requirements
- Saturday School
- School/community service projects
- Suspension or loss of student privileges
- Other tasks assigned by administration

The Department of Student Services and Equity administrator also has the authority to suspend your child for up to one year and recommend expulsion to the Alexandria City School Board.

Instructional Supports

Students are provided access to school work and given the opportunity to complete school work when they are suspended. In order to maintain pace with their peers, stay on track with on time graduation and lessen the likelihood of frustration with falling behind in coursework that could potentially lead to additional behavior concerns, each student is provided access to graded school work during and after a suspension.

Further Questions

If you have any additional questions, please contact the Department of Student Services and Equity at 703-619-8108.