

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Background

The Division believes regular and punctual school attendance is a significant contributing factor to student learning, student success (academic & social-emotional) and maximizing the benefits of effective educational opportunities and available resources in schools. In accordance with the *Education Act*, regular school attendance is required and expected of all students attending Division schools. Schools are legally required to have accurate attendance for all students for all instructional days. Accurate attendance is required to support funding allocations and must be retained by the Division.

Specific provisions regulating, monitoring and reporting the attendance of students will be developed by schools in consultation with students, parents and/or guardians, teachers, and school administrators as appropriate.

It will be the responsibility of parents and/or guardians to ensure compliance with student attendance requirements and the responsibility of schools to ensure that parents and/or guardians are informed promptly when the attendance of students is unsatisfactory.

The responsibility for the supervision of student attendance rests with the principal and teachers and will be incorporated into school attendance plans and procedures.

Procedures

Parents/Guardians

1. Regular student attendance is the responsibility of the parent and/or guardian and the student.
 - 1.1 All students are legally required to attend school and classes regularly and punctually throughout the school year unless they are excused from attendance under the *Education Act*.
 - 1.2 Students who attend school and are over the legal compulsory age of school attendance will be expected to attend regularly and punctually.
 - 1.3 At the start of each school year, parents and/or guardians will be informed about the school's expectations for consistent student attendance, including the school's definition of regular and punctual attendance.
 - 1.4 The school attendance plan, established to support unexcused student absences will be accessible to students, parents and/or guardians, and other stakeholder groups in a school handbook and on the school website.

Students

2. As per the *Education Act*; a student, as a partner in education, has the responsibility to:
 - 2.1 attend school regularly and punctually; and
 - 2.2 be ready to learn and actively engage in and diligently pursue the student's education.

Schools

3. Notification

- 3.1 Principals will develop procedures for parents and/or guardians to notify the school if their child will be absent.
- 3.2 Documentation related to any student absence or attendance matters will include either a written explanatory note, signed and dated by the parent and/or guardian, or a logged record of a phone call or verbal communication from the parent and/or guardian, noting the date and time the absence was reported.
 - 3.2.1 The school will keep an electronic record of any parent and/or guardian communication.
 - 3.2.2 The school will retain accurate electronic absence/attendance documentation for seven (7) years after the student or child ceases to attend a Division school and will make this record available to parents and/or guardians upon request.
- 3.3 When the school is not informed about the absence in advance, the student will be marked as inexcusably absent until additional information is provided by the parent and/or guardian.
- 3.4 Principals will develop procedures for the school to confirm the nature of the absence with parents and/or guardians. Parental involvement in achieving regular attendance will be requested.

4. Monitoring

- 4.1 School monitoring of student attendance will include verifying reasons for non-attendance.
- 4.2 All grades will report absences to the office.
- 4.3 All unexcused absences for students from ECS to Grade 6 will be immediately reported to the school office upon detection.
 - 4.3.1 Teachers will make an effort to verify the location of students who have been reported absent.
 - 4.3.2 The school office will immediately notify parents and/or guardians if their student in grade ECS to 6 is not located, so that the parent and/or guardian can help locate the child.
- 4.4 Parents and/or guardians will be notified of all unexcused absences for students in grades 7-12, except for students with independent status. The office will report morning absences to parents and/or guardians by noon and afternoon absences by early evening on the day of the absence.

5. Role of the Principal

- 5.1. Principals are required to establish school-level attendance plans that encourage regular attendance, monitor student attendance, involve the parent and/or guardian in resolving attendance problems and develop school measures that address poor attendance. This plan will be posted on the school website.

- 5.2 The principal shall follow and implement the Division's *Student Attendance Protocol* (see *Appendix*) to ensure the school's plan offers a continuum of universal, targeted and individualized supports as needed.
- 5.3 The principal will develop and maintain an accurate daily system for monitoring and reporting student attendance in compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements.

6. Role of the Teacher

- 6.1 When absences by any student begin to interfere with the education of that student, the following steps will be taken:
 - 6.1.1 The teacher will ensure early communication about attendance requirements with the student whose attendance is irregular and with their parents and/or guardians.
 - 6.1.2 The teacher will follow up with efforts to effect and maintain improved attendance.
 - 6.1.3 When these measures are unsuccessful, the teacher, parent and/or guardian, and student will meet to discuss the absences and establish a plan to achieve satisfactory attendance.
 - 6.1.4 If the teacher is not able to establish contact with the parent and/or guardian or the plan is unsuccessful, the teacher will communicate the concern to the school administration.
7. As determined and outlined in the school's attendance plan for cases of numerous unexplained absences, suspected truancy or occurrence of excessive absences, the parent and/or guardian will be contacted as soon as a pattern of poor student attendance becomes evident.
8. When absences by any student begin to interfere with the education of that student, the following steps will be taken:
 - 8.1 The teacher(s) of the student will contact the student's parent and/or guardian to discuss the attendance concerns and to generate strategies to support the student to attend more regularly. This communication shall be documented by the teacher in PowerSchool.
 - 8.2 Should the student's attendance not improve, the teacher and school administration will meet to discuss the absence and establish a plan to achieve satisfactory attendance. School administration will attempt to meet with the parent and/or guardian at the school or virtually to discuss the student's absences and establish a plan to achieve satisfactory attendance. This plan shall be documented in writing and shared with the parents and/or guardians.
 - 8.3 If no improvement in attendance occurs, the principal shall contact the Director of Inclusion for support in determining next steps with regards to accessing other Division supports or referrals to Community Partners.
 - 8.4 After all possible school level, Division level and community partner remediation avenues have been exhausted, subsequent absences by the same student will result in a referral to the Division's Attendance Officer.
9. Communication to parents and/or guardians regarding poor attendance, and attempts to resolve the poor attendance are to be documented through formal written correspondence that has been included in the student record.

- 9.1 Written correspondence to parents and/or guardians will reference the *Education*

Act, outline school action taken to date, and include the number of days absent.

10. Referral to the Attendance Officer.

10.1 The Director of Inclusion is the Attendance Officer for the Division.

10.2 Principals are encouraged to report students with chronic attendance issues to the Attendance Officer if Division protocol is followed and no improvement in attendance is seen. This is discretionary given the wide range of issues that may be present (i.e. loss in the family, accident, medical issues, etc.). The Attendance Officer or designate will:

10.2.1 review the measures taken by the school with the school administration.

10.2.2 review the commitments made by school personnel, student and parent and/or guardian; and the action(s) taken by the principal.

10.2.4 compile all written documentation (e.g. correspondence to parents and/or guardians, the record of attendance, etc.);

10.2.5 advise the parents and/or guardians formally of their involvement;

10.2.6 explore barriers to attendance and recommend additional measures or support services to the student and family

10.2.7 assist the student and family in accessing support services.

10.2.8 direct the student to attend school;

10.2.9 notify the parents and/or guardians that legal action in accordance with the *Education Act* may be taken if satisfactory attendance does not resume.

10.3 The student and parent and/or guardian will be provided with the opportunity to work with the Attendance Officer or designate.

10.3.1 The Attendance Officer or designate will determine if a referral to the Attendance Board is recommended.

Reference: Section 1,7,8,9,31,32,33,46,48,49,52,53,55,196,197,222 Education Act

Related APs: Healthy Schools and Worksites (160)

Appendix: Student Attendance Protocol

STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

1. **Universal interventions** benefit all students. At this level, school staff must communicate clear expectations with the students and their families about the importance of regular attendance. The school provides an environment which encourages students to attend and will use reengagement or restorative practices to support students with attendance. These types of activities and strategies are based on consistent school-wide expectations for regular attendance for all students.
2. **Targeted interventions** provide early intervention for students with attendance issues. In these cases, a systematic approach to reinforcement, either at the class or individual level, regarding school attendance and participation in learning. We need to engage the students and parents and/or guardians in efforts to increase attendance. This includes collaborating on strategies that could be used at home, school, and in the community.
3. **Specialized interventions** benefit a small number of students who require intensive, individualized support and services. In these cases, it is advisable to develop an individual plan that includes or focuses specifically on attendance. When chronic attendance is significantly affecting the student's learning, it may be necessary to access additional community support. School, home, and community involvement is vital for success in these situations.

4.

Universal	Targeted	Specialized
a) Review Attendance Dashboard in PowerSchool. b) Promote the importance of attendance with staff, students & families. c) Display promotional materials in schools (Attendance Posters and Fact Sheet).	a) Implement school re-engagement activities, incentives, contracts, mentors, differentiation, connections, extra-curricular / engaging activities, alternative schedules, school or home visits, etc. b) Discuss and review attendance information in Collaborative Response Meetings. c) Refer students to Division supports (MHCB/SWF targeted groups).	a) Refer to Attendance Officer or designate; discuss and revise strategies. b) Consider implementing a multi-disciplinary team including parent or guardian; have a meeting to plan (review & revise existing plan). The Attendance Officer or designate meets with the parent or guardian, student and the principal. c) Attendance Officer or designate considers referral to <u>Attendance Board</u> (if necessary).