

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 maximization of the benefits of effective educational opportunities and resources available in schools. In accordance with the *Education Act*, regular school attendance is required and expected of all students attending Division schools.

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

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

The responsibility for the supervision of student attendance rests with the principal and will form part of school procedures. School attendance procedures and any/all amendments will be forwarded to the Director of Inclusion.

Procedures

1. The principal will ensure a student attendance policy is developed for the school.
 - 1.1 This policy will be included in the School's Handbook and on the School Website.
 - 1.2 The definition of regular and punctual attendance will be contained in such school policy for the method or methods of educational delivery utilized by the school.
2. Regular student attendance is the responsibility of the parent/guardian and the student.
 - 2.1 All students legally required to do so will attend school and classes regularly and punctually throughout the school year unless they are excused from attendance under the *Education Act*.
 - 2.2 Students who attend school and are over the legal compulsory age of school attendance will be expected to attend regularly and punctually.
 - 2.3 Parents/guardians will be notified of the Division's expectations for regular student attendance and the school's definition of regular and punctual attendance, at the beginning of each school year.
 - 2.4 School administrative procedures established to deal with inexcusable student attendance matters will be accessible to students, parents/guardians, and other stakeholder groups.
3. The principal will develop and maintain an accurate daily system for monitoring and reporting student attendance in compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements. Monitoring of student attendance will include verifying reasons for non-attendance.
 - 3.1 For all grades, absences are reported to the school office.

- 3.2 For ECS to Grade 6 students, all unexplained absences during the school day will be reported to the school office immediately after the absence becomes apparent.
 - 3.2.1 All efforts must be made to determine the whereabouts of the student(s) reported absent.
 - 3.2.2 Parents/guardians will be immediately notified if the child is not located so that the parent/guardian can help to locate the child.
 - 3.3 For Grade 7 -12 students, unless the student is an independent student, school staff will notify parents/guardians of unexplained absences. Morning absence will be reported to parents/guardians at noon and afternoon absences will be reported by 3:30 pm.
4. Notification by Parents/Guardians
 - 4.1 Principals will establish procedures for parents/guardians to notify the school if their child will be absent.
 - 4.2 Documentation related to any student absence/attendance will be in the form of an explanatory note, signed and dated by the parent/guardian, or a logged phone call and/or verbal communication from the parent/guardian that indicates the date and time the parent/guardian called to report the absence.
 - 4.2.1 Logging parent/guardian contact via electronic means.
 - 4.2.2 Absence/attendance documentation will be retained by the school for seven (7) years after the student or child ceases to attend a BRSD school and will be available upon request.
 - 4.3 If the school is not notified prior to the absence, the student will be considered inexcusably absent until further information is received.
 - 4.4 Principals will develop procedures to confirm the nature of the absence with parents/guardians. Parental involvement in achieving regular attendance will be sought.
 5. The staff in each school will ensure that the school provides an environment which encourages students to attend and will use restorative practices to support students with attendance.
 6. As determined and outlined in the school's attendance procedures for cases of unexplained absences, suspected truancy or occurrence of excessive absences, the school staff will contact and inform the parent/guardian as soon as a pattern of poor student attendance becomes evident.
 - 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 internal school resource personnel (such as, homeroom teacher, Equity Coordinator, Director of Inclusion, administration, etc.) will meet to discuss the absence and establish a plan to achieve satisfactory attendance.
 - 6.1.2 The principal will notify the parents/guardians of the concern and the steps to be taken to rectify the situation in person and/or in writing.
 - 6.1.3 Principals will utilize all resources (Restorative Practices, Community Partners, Division Staff) available to them to re-establish regular attendance.
 - 6.1.4 After all possible school level remediation avenues have been exhausted, subsequent absences by the same student will result in consultation with the student's parent/guardian in order to investigate and determine the underlying cause(s) for the student's absence(s). Written notes/Attendance Action Plan resulting from the consultation process are to be retained in the student's file.

7. Referral to the Chief Attendance Officer.

- 7.1 The Director of Inclusion is the Chief Attendance Officer for the Division.
- 7.2 The principal will, following the contact with the parent/guardian, complete and submit a referral letter to the Chief Attendance Officer and provide copies of the following within the letter:
 - 7.2.1 Student demographic information;
 - 7.2.2 A statement of explanation by the parent/guardian, i.e., letter of response from parent, or principal/parent meeting notes and Attendance Action Plan;
 - 7.2.3 The date and time of any/all parent/guardian meeting(s)/contact(s);
 - 7.2.4 Commitments made by school personnel, student and parent/guardian; and
 - 7.2.5 Action(s) taken by the principal.
- 7.3 The Chief Attendance Officer may include communication mediums such as a formal letter and/or a meeting with the student and parent/guardian:
 - 7.3.1 Direct that the student attends school; and
 - 7.3.2 Notify the parents/guardians that that legal action in accordance with the *Education Act* may be taken if satisfactory attendance does not resume.
- 7.4 The student and parent/guardian will be provided with the opportunity to respond to the directive from the Chief Attendance Officer.

8. Referral to Attendance Board

- 8.1 Where the resolution to the attendance problem has failed in the use of the Division's Chief Attendance Officer referrals and documented process, the principal, in accordance with Division procedure(s) and in collaboration with the Division's Chief Attendance Officer, will make referral for:
 - 8.1.1 A Court Order served by a Judge or Justice of the Peace to the student in the presence of the parent/guardian; or
 - 8.1.2 A hearing by the Attendance Board for action, in accordance with the *Education Act* and accompanying Regulations.

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)

Amended: June 2023