
STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Background

Regular and punctual school attendance is a significant contributing factor to student learning, success 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, teachers, school administrators and school councils, as appropriate.

It will be the responsibility of parents to ensure compliance with student attendance requirements and the responsibility of schools to ensure that parents 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 will be filed with the Office of the Superintendent and any/all amendments will be forwarded to the Office of the Superintendent.

Procedures

1. The principal will ensure student attendance procedures are developed for the school.
 - 1.1 Such procedures will be included in the School's Handbook and must state that attendance be taken daily for all students K-12
 - 1.2 The definition of regular and punctual attendance will be contained in such school procedures for the method or methods of educational delivery utilized by the school.
2. Regular student attendance is the responsibility of the parent and the student.
 - 2.1 All students legally required to do so will attend regularly and punctually throughout the school year unless he/she is 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 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, and other stakeholders 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 using a monitoring system.
 - 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 Reasonable efforts must be made to determine the whereabouts of the student(s) reported absent.
 - 3.2.2 Parents will be immediately notified if the child is not located so that the parent can help to locate the child.
 - 3.3 For Grade 7 -12 students, unless the student is an independent student, school staff will make reasonable efforts to notify parents of unexplained absences.
4. Notification by Parents
 - 4.1 Principals will establish procedures for parents 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, or a logged phone call and/or verbal communication from the parent that indicates the date and time the parent called to report the absence.
 - 4.2.1 Logging parent contact via electronic means.
 - 4.2.2 Absence/attendance documentation will be retained by the school for a minimum of one (1) year 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. Parental involvement in achieving regular attendance will be sought.
5. The staff in each school will make every effort to ensure that the school provides an environment which encourages students to attend.
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 appropriately contact and inform the parent 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, counselor, Indigenous workers, 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 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 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 student's parent in order to investigate and determine the underlying cause(s) for the student's absence(s). Written notes resulting from the consultation process are to be retained on student's file.

7. Referral to the Office of the Superintendent

- 7.1 The principal will, following the contact with the parent, complete and submit a referral letter to the Office of the Superintendent and provide copies of the following within the letter:
 - 7.1.1 Student demographic information;
 - 7.1.2 A statement of explanation by the parent, i.e., letter of response from parent, or principal/parent meeting notes;
 - 7.1.3 The date and time of any/all parent meeting(s)/contact(s);
 - 7.1.4 Commitments made by school personnel, student and parent; and
 - 7.1.5 Action(s) taken by the principal.
- 7.2 The Office of the Superintendent will send a formal letter to the parent/guardian:
 - 7.2.1 Directing that the student attend school; and
 - 7.2.2 Notifying the parents/guardian that action in accordance with the Education Act may be taken if satisfactory attendance does not resume.
- 7.3 The parent/guardian will be provided with the opportunity to respond to the directive from the Office of the Superintendent.

8. Referral to Attendance Board

- 8.1 Where the resolution to the attendance problem has failed, the principal, in collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent, will make a referral for:
 - 8.1.1 A hearing by the Attendance Board for action, in accordance with the Education Act and accompanying Regulations.

Reference: Section 1,7,8,9,31,32,33,46,47,48,49,50,197 Education Act

Approved: November 2005

Amended: November 5, 2008; March 21, 2018; July 1, 2018; May 4, 2020, March 6, 2024