

# COMPULSORY STUDENT ATTENDANCE

## Background

Students are required to attend school in accordance with the Education Act and this Administrative Procedure. When students are absent from school, the Division provides support, determines underlying reasons for non-attendance and implements appropriate intervention strategies. For the purpose of this administrative procedure Chronic Absenteeism will be defined as 10% absenteeism.

The Division believes regular and punctual attendance is necessary for students to maximize their learning and achievement. The Division also:

- Believes in a collaborative approach between the school and the parent/guardian in expecting and supporting regular attendance of students;
- Requires that schools track and record student attendance consistently on a daily basis and investigate reasons for non-attendance;
- Requires that schools enroll and withdraw students in the Student Data System according to standards of practice outlined by the Ministry;
- Requests that parents/guardians communicate to the school with prior notice of a student's unavoidable absence;
- Understands that ongoing collaboration may be needed to support students when avoidable absences/tardiness negatively impacts their learning and achievement.

## Procedures

### 1. Tracking and Recording Protocol

#### 1.1 The Principal shall:

- 1.1.1 Implement school-based tracking, recording and reporting procedures (SIRS) that are consistent with the legislation and other directives issued by the Ministry, Board policy and this Administrative Procedure.
- 1.1.2 Ensure that investigations regarding all student non-attendance are conducted in a timely manner.
- 1.1.3 Ensure that students are enrolled and withdrawn from the Student Data System.

### 2. Follow-Up Protocol – School Level

- 2.1 When a student is recorded absent without permission or notification from the parent/guardian, the Principal or designate shall:

- 2.1.1 Ensure that parents/guardians are contacted by phone each time the student is absent. When necessary, alternative contact methods such as a letter home, email or text may be used.
- 2.1.2 For all students with higher than 10% absenteeism, a record of all contact (and attempts) and intervention strategies should be kept for each student on the Appendix A – Form 340-1 - Attendance Monitoring Checklist and attached to the yearend attendance summary that is kept in the cumulative records.
- 2.1.3 Investigate reasons for non-attendance with a focus on intervention and prevention. The Principal may involve other school or system personnel such as vice principals, school counsellors, community education liaison, Elders, guidance/career counsellors, and, through referral, the Division support services and Superintendents.
- 2.1.4 Mail or email attendance summary information to parents/guardians of students with attendance problems of over 10% every month.
- 2.1.5 Students with Chronic Absenteeism may be referred to the School Support Team
- 2.1.6 As part of the intervention and support, the school counsellor will set up home visits to students with severe absenteeism of 20% and over to support the family and student into reintroducing regular attendance.
- 2.1.7 On students with absenteeism of 20% the school is to ensure that meetings or conferences occur with the student, parent/guardian and administration, community education liaison, school counsellors, elders, guidance/career counsellors, to determine supports that could be in place for student success. Intervention plans are to be implemented.
- 2.1.8 The student who has absenteeism of 20% or over may be referred to the HUB once the school has exhausted all other avenues of support.
- 2.1.9 The Appendix A – Form 340-1 - Attendance Monitoring Checklist for all students with an absenteeism of 20% or over is completed and attached to attendance summary at the end of the year
- 2.1.10 In accordance with the Education Act, the Principal shall:
  - 2.1.10.1 Report to the local attendance counsellor, students of compulsory school age who are absent four (4) or more days out of twenty (20) school days, where the Principal deems these absences as unjustified;
  - 2.1.10.2 Refer to the local attendance counsellor students of compulsory school age with chronic attendance problems such as habitual tardiness, avoidable irregular attendance, apparent neglect or disregard of the rules with respect to school attendance.
- 2.1.11 After receiving the Principal's report, the local attendance counsellor (in consultation with the Principal, teachers, counsellor or consultants employed by the Division) shall consider what further action shall be taken. During this process, parent/guardian and student are informed, consulted and given reasonable opportunities to cooperate in resolving attendance problems.

### 3. Follow-Up Protocol – Division Level

- 3.1 The Superintendent of Schools will be the local attendance counsellor.
- 3.2 After receiving an attendance report/referral, the local attendance counsellor or designate shall:
  - 3.2.1 Further investigate the student's attendance/tardiness issues and may make a formal referral for the involvement of the school counsellors and/or the family liaison workers.
  - 3.2.2 Report findings to the Principal, parent/guardian and student.
  - 3.2.3 If necessary and with the Director's approval, take appropriate action regarding the Principal's recommendation.
  - 3.2.4 In cases of unresolved chronic non-attendance, advise parents or guardians and other persons in charge by registered mail of their responsibilities.
  - 3.2.5 In cases where legal proceedings are being considered and following consultation with the Director or designate, inform the parents or guardians and other persons in charge by registered mail of such action to be carried out in accordance with the Education Act.

Reference: Sections 85, 87, 109, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 175 Education Act