

Attendance Policy

(From Department of Education – Regulatory Framework System)

The Principal is responsible for the accurate recording and rigorous monitoring of the attendance of all students and for implementing appropriate strategies to restore attendance if there are attendance issues.

It is widely recognised that students need to attend school on a regular basis to gain the maximum benefit from schooling in order to optimise their life opportunities. It is also widely recognised that attendance problems are best managed by early identification and intervention.

The School Education Act 1999 requires compulsory aged students, as defined in the Act, to attend school, or participate in an educational program of a school, on the days on which the school is open for instruction unless an arrangement in writing has been entered into for a student.

Prosecution for non-attendance is only to be used as a last resort.

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

- The school Principal is to ensure that accurate attendance records are kept for each student enrolled at the school. This includes recording attendance at both morning and afternoon sessions for kindergarten, pre-primary and primary students, and recording attendance for every lesson or period for secondary students. NB: A continuous attendance by a child of not less than two (2) full hours' secular instruction is to be recorded as a half day's attendance. Students who arrive late but still meet this requirement are not to be included as a half day absence. Students who are on an excursion, participating in an off campus program or in some other school-approved activity or are not to be counted as absent. Students on suspension are to be recorded as absent during the period of suspension.
- Attendance records may be kept in electronic form, but must be capable of being reproduced in written form.
- Attendance records (eg, attendance registers, class rolls) must be kept for a period of seven years.
- Absentee notes that are separate from the student's records are to be kept for two (2) years from the date of receipt and then destroyed. This includes details recorded by the school when a parent provides the school with a verbal reason. If the absentee note is

included on a student's record file, then the note must be kept for 25 years from date of birth.

- Unsatisfactory attendance reports on students must be retained in a student's records for 25 years from date of birth.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

- Schools are responsible for developing and implementing an attendance monitoring and action system for systematic, consistent and effective identification and action for all students with attendance issues.
- When a student has been absent from school and an acceptable explanation has not been forthcoming, the school is to send a written request for an explanation to the student's family to establish the reasons for non-attendance.
- If it is established that the student was absent from school for a legitimate reason, the school need not do anything further unless the frequency and or number of absences gives the school cause for concern. As there is no requirement in the School Education Act 1999 for the reason to be provided in writing, schools must record all details when a parent or caregiver provides the school with a verbal reason, either in person or over the telephone, that the school believes is an acceptable reason in the context of the school.
- If a student's attendance rate falls below 90% over a ten-week period, the school must further investigate the reasons why the student is not attending school.
- Schools are to use a case management approach for attendance issues. Schools must be mindful of consulting with all stakeholders, and accessing support from other community groups and agencies if required.
- If a school is having difficulty or little success with restoring a student's attendance, prior to making a formal referral to the school attendance officer, the school must make informal contact with the school attendance officer who may be able to provide advice or alternative intervention strategies.
- Consistent with Departmental records management policies, the school must keep detailed records of all contact, or attempts to make contact, with the student's family and the intervention strategies implemented to restore a student's attendance. This documentation will need to be made available to the school attendance officer and/or the School Attendance Panel if the student is subsequently formally referred to the school attendance officer and/or the School Attendance Panel.

REFERRALS TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICER

- If a school has identified a student as being a regular or chronic non-attender, and the intervention strategies implemented by the school have not been successful in

restoring the student's attendance, the student is to be referred to the school attendance officer by the school Principal.

- The appropriate referral form must be completed by the school Principal and forwarded to the school attendance officer along with all documentation demonstrating the school has made reasonable and repeated efforts to restore the student's attendance.
- The school is to work collaboratively with the school attendance officer, the student's family and other community groups and agencies to restore the student's attendance at school. If the school attendance officer considers it to be appropriate, he or she will facilitate inter-agency access and support through structures and or protocols established by the district office.

CHILDREN WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN

- If all attempts to locate a student have failed after fifteen (15) school days and the school has not received advice that the student has enrolled at another school, the school Principal is to refer the student to the "Children Whose Whereabouts are Unknown List" through the school attendance officer.
- The school Principal is required to regularly review the Children Whose Whereabouts are Unknown list and advise the school attendance officer if a child has enrolled at the school.

REFERRALS TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PANEL

- If the student's attendance at school has not been successfully restored the school Principal, in collaboration with the school attendance officer, is to refer the student to the School Attendance Panel.
- The District Director is to establish a School Attendance Panel in accordance with the Procedures for School Attendance Panels.
- The School Attendance Panel is to fully consider the issues that contribute to the student's non-attendance at school, and establish strategies to ensure the reengagement of the student in an appropriate educational setting.
- The school Principal is to implement the relevant strategies established by the School Attendance Panel and monitor the subsequent attendance of the student.