

## Administrative Procedure 330

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# STUDENT ATTENDANCE

## Background

Regular attendance by students in all of their classes enhances their performance and contributes substantially to their rate of progress. While students have a right to access an educational program, they also have a responsibility to attend these classes regularly and pursue their studies in a diligent manner.

Provincial legislation requires students to attend school regularly and punctually and identifies circumstances under which an absence may be deemed as excusable.

The Superintendent shall serve as the Attendance Officer for the Division unless that responsibility has been delegated by the Superintendent to another individual.

## Procedures

1. The Superintendent may excuse the attendance of a student pursuant to Section 13(5) (e) of the School Act as follows:
  - 1.1 Special educational program examination and determination needs.
  - 1.2 Student behavioural disorder, pending an assessment and review for educational program identification and placement.
  - 1.3 Students in need of special treatment due to illness and/or behavior.
2. The Principal may temporarily excuse attendance of a student for the following:
  - 2.1 Family vacations where minimal school program time is involved.
  - 2.2 Family separations where agreements stipulate the spending of a specific amount of time with one (1) parent or the other provided minimal school program time is involved.
  - 2.3 Other reasons deemed acceptable to the Principal.
3. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and students are to be encouraged to schedule medical, dental or other such related appointment at times that do not conflict with regular hours of instruction.
4. The Principal shall ensure that students missing instructional time are advised they are responsible for the material covered in their absence.
5. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be requested by the Principal to phone or send a written explanation to provide the reasons for a student's absence from classes.
6. The Principal shall ensure that attendance problems are investigated and discussed with the concerned students and their parent(s)/guardian(s). Persistent attendance problems may be referred to the Attendance Officer for further action.

7. The Principal shall ensure that an accurate record of student attendance is kept.
8. The Principal shall ensure that written procedures have been established to deal with students who are inexcusably absent from school or classes. These procedures are to reflect:
  - 8.1 Efforts to work directly with the student to resolve the issue.
  - 8.2 Ongoing communication and consultation with parent(s)/guardian(s) concerning the attendance problem.
  - 8.3 Progressively more serious consequences for students who are persistently and inexcusably absent.
  - 8.4 Referral to the Attendance Officer if a serious attendance problem cannot be resolved.
9. The Attendance Officer shall review all cases submitted to his/her attention and, in consultation with the Principal and parents determine an appropriate course of action.
10. Actions taken by the Attendance Officer shall be documented.
11. Where attendance does not improve significantly following written direction to the student, the Attendance Officer may make an “ex parte” application to a judge or justice of the peace as per Section 14 of the School Act.
12. If the Attendance Officer is of the opinion that an “ex parte” application would not be effective, s/he may refer the matter to the Superintendent, with a recommendation for referral to the Attendance Board as per Section 15 of the School Act.
13. A referral to the Attendance Board by the Superintendent will be made using the Attendance Board—Notice of Referral form (Appendix).
14. Section 128 of the School Act states that on hearing a matter referred to it, the Attendance Board may, subject to any terms or conditions that the Attendance Board considers proper in the circumstances, make an order doing one (1) or more of the following:
  - 14.1 Directing the student to attend school.
  - 14.2 Directing the parents of a student to send the student to school.
  - 14.3 Subject to sections 29, 47 and 48 of the School Act, directing the student to take an education program, course or student program set out in the order.
  - 14.4 Reporting the matter to a Director under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act.
  - 14.5 Imposing on the parent a monetary penalty not exceeding \$100 per day, up to a maximum of \$1,000, to be paid to the Crown for each day that the student does not attend school.
  - 14.6 Giving such other direction not referred to in clauses 14.1 to 14.5 as the Attendance Board considers appropriate in the circumstances.
15. Students whose attendance is not made compulsory by the School Act, and who attend irregularly without justification or excuse, may be asked to withdraw from school by the Principal.

15.1 In the case of students who are not independent students, such action will be taken only after consultation with parent(s)/guardian(s).

16. The Superintendent may excuse a student from attending school under the provisions of Section 13 of the School Act.

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

## Administrative Procedure 330 – Appendix

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### ATTENDANCE BOARD-NOTICE OF REFERRAL FORM



#### Notice of Referral to Attendance Board Package

This package contains suggestions for dealing with non-attendance at the local level and **Form 1** for making a referral to the Attendance Board.

##### General Practices to support Student Attendance

1. Local policies recognize and emphasize the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
2. School practices and guidelines reflect specific expectations and procedures for addressing absenteeism.
3. Students and parents are well informed of attendance problems and consequences as situations emerge.
4. Schools make all reasonable efforts at the jurisdiction level to address attendance issues before making a referral to the Attendance Board.

##### Specific Considerations Before You Make a Referral

1. Is the student's absenteeism a recent development or was attendance an issue in previous years?
2. Are you certain that the student's parents have been well informed?
3. Has the student been placed in an appropriate education program? Have the necessary supports been provided to ensure an opportunity to succeed?
4. Has the school counsellor/jurisdiction counselling services been involved?
5. Has the need for involvement of other internal or external agencies been considered? Have any support agencies been notified and involved?
6. Have you met at the home or school with the student, parents, staff and other agencies to identify the cause or causes for non-attendance, develop an individualized attendance improvement plan or attendance contract with the student, and/or explore alternative educational placements?
7. Have all efforts to address the attendance been documented?

**Note:** Referrals received after May 1 in a school year may not result in formal action unless there are exceptional circumstances.

September 1, 2007