



Policy: Student Attendance

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Belief Statement:

All students at the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board are expected to be in regular attendance at school. Our common vision of the learner is that of a responsible citizen, a collaborative contributor, and a self-directed, responsible and lifelong learner. This vision of the learner can best be realized through regular attendance at school. The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board believes that the responsibility for the daily attendance of students rests with the parents and/or guardians, the student where they are of age, and school board staff.

Policy Statement:

It is the policy of the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board to support parents and/or guardians so that students can demonstrate regular and punctual attendance at school.

It is the policy of the Board that administrative procedures be developed to:

- Direct the appropriate staff regarding the process for maintaining student attendance records;
- Have a process for communicating student absences/lates to parents/guardians; and
- Monitor safe arrival, as well as the courses of action that may be taken for instances of truancy and habitual neglect of duty to attend school regularly and punctually.

Glossary of Key Policy Terms:

School Attendance

For the purposes of these procedures, *school attendance* refers to regular day-school attendance at a Catholic elementary or secondary school.

References:

Education Act R.S.O. 1990 E.2 and Part II (School Attendance)
O. Reg 298



Student Attendance AP 200.03

Procedure for: Principals, Teachers, Secretaries,
Student Support Services Staff

Adopted: January 27, 2009

Submitted by: Director of Education

Revised: April 24, 2018 (*effective September 1, 2018*)

Category: Students

Purpose

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to provide direction to parents, principals, teachers and students regarding their respective responsibilities related to regular and punctual attendance at school.

Responsibilities - as noted in Administrative Procedure

Information

Requirements for school attendance are outlined in the Education Act in statutes and regulations, as well as through guidelines provided to school districts related to the school register (Education Act R.S.O. 1990, Chapter E.2, Part II – School Attendance and O. Reg 298 s. 23).

Procedures

1.0 Student Attendance General Principles

- 1.1 **Cooperation** - Maintaining an effective school environment where regular and punctual school attendance exists requires the cooperation and collaboration of students, families, district staff and, where necessary, community services.
- 1.2 **Promotion** – It is critical that all staff promote regular and punctual attendance at school as a crucial mechanism to ensure improved student achievement. This promotion should be done through communication platforms such as newsletters and announcements on a regular basis. Promotion of good attendance is greatly enhanced with school programs and co-curricular activities are relevant and accessible to students.

2.0 Responsibilities for Students and Parents/Guardians

- 2.1 It is the duty of a parent or guardian of a person who is required to attend school to cause the student to attend school regularly and punctually as required under the Education Act.
 - 2.1.1 A person is excused from attendance at school if:
 - (a) the person is receiving satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere.
 - (b) the person is unable to attend school by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause.
 - (c) transportation is not provided by a board for the person and there is no school that he or she has a right to attend situated:
 - (i) within 1.6 kilometres from the person's residence measured by the nearest road if he or she has not attained the age of seven years on or before the first school day in September in the year in question, or



- (ii) within 3.2 kilometres from the person's residence measured by the nearest road if he or she has attained the age of seven years but not the age of 10 years on or before the first school day in September in the year in question, or
- (iii) within 4.8 kilometres from the person's residence measured by the nearest road if he or she has attained the age of 10 years on or before the first school day in September in the year in question.
- (d) the person has obtained a secondary school graduation diploma or has completed a course that gives equivalent standing;
- (e) the person is absent from school for the purpose of receiving instruction in music and the period of absence does not exceed one-half day in any week;
- (f) the person is suspended, expelled or excluded from attendance at school under any Act or under the regulations;
- (g) the person is absent on a day regarded as a holy day by the church or religious denomination to which he or she belongs; or
- (h) the person is absent or excused as authorized under this Act and the regulations. 2006, c. 28, s. 5 (1).

2.2 All students shall attend classes punctually and regularly.

2.3 It is the duty of a parent or a student where the student is an adult, to give a reason for any student absence or late arrival to the principal or designate before the absence or upon return to school after an absence.

3.0 Record Keeping, Verification and Reporting

3.1 Students shall be admitted to class if they are returning from an absence or are late once it has been verified by the principal or designate.

3.2 Parents shall be promptly contacted by the school when a student is recorded absent and their absence has not been verified.

3.3 **Elementary Schools** - Student attendance shall be recorded at the beginning of each school day and immediately following the lunch break (the second nutrition break for schools on the balanced school day schedule).

3.4 **Secondary Schools** - Student attendance shall be recorded at the beginning of each period of the school day.

4.0 Secretaries

4.1 It is the duty of the school secretary to follow the processes and procedures set out by the administrative procedure and school principal for:

4.1.1 Maintaining accurate records of student attendance in the Student Management System (e.g. PowerSchool);

4.1.2 Recording and reporting to the principal or designate reasons regarding absence or lateness from parents/guardians or adult students (18+); and

4.1.3 Running attendance summary reports at the request of the principal or designate (usually monthly).



5.0 Teachers

- 5.1 It is the duty of the classroom teacher to maintain an accurate record of attendance for each class, to report absenteeism and late arrivals promptly to the principal or designate, to follow the process established by the principal for admission of students who are late or are returning from an absence.
- 5.2 Teachers shall not readmit a student who is returning to school from an unverified absence or who is late arriving to school unless approved by the principal or designate.
- 5.3 Teachers shall notify the parent/guardian or the adult student and report to the principal or designate in the instance when there are recurring absences that are resulting in a negative impact on student achievement (see Appendix A).

6.0 Principals

- 6.1 It is the duty of the principal to establish a process for recording daily attendance, promptly reporting unverified absenteeism to parents/guardians, admitting students and verifying reasons for absenteeism or lateness, maintaining accurate records of student attendance and to follow Section 8 of these procedures for supporting students and families with problematic attendance.
- 6.2 When a teacher has reported to the principal or designate regarding recurring absences that are resulting in a negative impact on student achievement, the principal shall follow Section 8 of this procedure.
- 6.3 Principals and vice-principals shall review school-wide attendance reports on a monthly basis (at a minimum), to identify students with habitual absenteeism or lateness that is having a negative impact on student achievement and subsequently follow Section 8 of this procedure.
- 6.4 Principals shall communicate the process for attendance recording, verification and reporting to staff, students and parents on an annual basis (e.g., through staff handbooks, student handbooks and newsletters, etc.).
- 6.5 Principals shall report to the School Attendance Counsellor the names of any compulsory school age student who has 15 unexcused consecutive absences and continue to notify the School Attendance Counsellor every 15 days thereafter (Appendix B).
- 6.6 Principals shall report to the School Attendance Counsellor and school supervisory officer the names, ages and residences of all compulsory school-aged students who are not attending school as required by law.

7.0 School Attendance Counsellors

- 7.1 Upon request by the school principal, the School Attendance Counsellor shall assist with developing strategies and supports for students with irregular attendance as identified in this procedure.
- 7.2 Upon notification by a principal that a student is failing to attend school, the School Attendance Counsellor shall contact the parent/guardian to address school concerns.

7.3 Consecutive Unexcused Absences 15 – 30 – 45 – 60 Days

- 7.3.1 The School Attendance Counsellor, upon receipt of written referral for a student with 15 unexplained consecutive absences from school shall make contact with the parent or guardian regarding the reasons for the absenteeism and provide support for the family to re-engage the student in an approved educational program under the Education Act.



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- 7.3.2 The School Attendance Counsellor shall update the principal in writing at 15 day intervals with respect to the progress of the student regarding attendance and/or the involvement of community partners assisting in addressing factors which may be contributing to poor attendance.
 - 7.3.3 If after several attempts to re-engage students are unsuccessful, the School Attendance Counsellor in consultation with the Superintendent may bring the student to the Attendance Review Committee. The School Attendance Counsellor may also consult with the Provincial Attendance Counsellor.
 - 7.3.4 The Attendance Review Committee meeting may recommend proceeding with charges under the Education Act (for students ages 12-15 and parents of children under the age of 16). If proceeding with charges, the School Attendance Counsellor shall give written notice to the parent or guardian for the student to attend and shall advise the parent or guardian, in writing, of the provisions of subsection 24 (2). R.S.O. 1990, c.E.2, s. 26 (4).

8.0 Guidelines of Supports for Students and Families

8.1 Problematic Attendance Impacting Student Achievement - Supports and Interventions

In the instance where a student has more than five absences or is habitually late and/or the student's attendance is having a substantively negative impact on student achievement, the Principal shall establish strategies to improve student attendance and shall consider the following approaches (Appendix A):

- Step One** Teacher to contact parent/guardian, or adult student (where appropriate) to identify the reasons for the irregular attendance or punctuality, to collaborate on strategies to improve attendance, to implement the strategies, and to follow up on the success of the strategies in a timely fashion. If attendance does not improve sufficiently, teacher will notify the principal.
- Step Two** If attendance has not improved sufficiently as deemed by the principal, the principal or designate will consult with the student attendance counsellor, meet with the parent/guardian or student (where appropriate) and other school staff to identify the reasons for the irregular attendance or punctuality, to collaborate on strategies to improve attendance, to implement the strategies and to follow up on the success of the strategies in a timely fashion.
- Step Three** If attendance has not improved sufficiently as deemed by the principal, a letter shall be sent home and a second meeting is to be set up with the parents and/or student where appropriate, and would include the Attendance Counsellor.
- Step Four** If attendance has not improved sufficiently as deemed by the principal, he/she will continue to refer the student to the School Attendance Counsellor.

9.0 Truancy and Habitual Neglect of Duty

In the instance where a student is truant or demonstrates a habitual neglect of their duty to attend school punctually and regularly they may, at the discretion of the Principal, be subject to progressive discipline as set out in Board policy.



Definitions

Attendance Review Committee

A committee consisting of Superintendent, Principal, School Attendance Counsellor and any other community representatives as appropriate. Purpose of the committee is to review case and explore other potential strategies

Compulsory School Age Attendance

Subsection 21(1) of Education Act states that children aged 6-17 must attend school, unless excused. Pupils must continue to attend school until they reach the age of 18 or they graduate, or until June 30 of the year they turn 18 years of age.

School Staff

May include and are not limited to: classroom teachers, Chaplaincy Leader, guidance teachers, child and youth workers, early childhood educators, social workers (attendance counsellors), mental health leads, student success teachers, special education resource teachers, and the principal of Continuing and Alternative Education and other staff the principal deems appropriate.

Student Attendance

For the purposes of these procedures, *student attendance* refers to regular day-school attendance at a Catholic elementary or secondary school.

School Attendance Counsellor

The Board's social workers are the Board's student attendance counsellors as per the Education Act.

Provincial School Attendance Counsellor

The Lieutenant Governor in Council may appoint an officer, to be the Provincial School Attendance Counsellor, who shall, under the direction of the Minister, superintend and direct the enforcement of compulsory school attendance. R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, s. 24 (1).

References

Education Act R.S.O. 1990 E.2 and Part II (School Attendance)
Ontario Regulation 298
Home Schooling Policy 200.16
Home Instruction Policy 200.17
Supervised Alternative Learning Policy 200.06
Student Behaviour Discipline and Safety Policy 200.09



Appendix A

Student Attendance Supports and Interventions Form

Step One – Teacher Contact with Parent/Guardian

Student Name:		Date:	
OEN:	DOB:	IEP:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Teacher Name:		Grade/Course:	
Number of Days Absent:		Number of Lates:	
Date(s) of Parent/ Guardian Contact			
Notes from Parent Contact * :			
Referral to Principal: <input type="checkbox"/> Problematic attendance pattern <input type="checkbox"/> 15 days or more consecutive unexcused absences			

Step Two – Principal Intervention

Number of Days Absent:		Number of Lates:	
Date(s) of Parent/ Guardian Contact *:			
Notes from Parent Contact:			
Date of Follow Up Meeting(s):			
Referral to Attendance Counsellor:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Date:	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Step Three – Principal and Attendance Counsellor Intervention

Number of Days Absent:		Number of Lates:	
Date(s) of Parent/ Guardian Contact *:			
Notes from Parent Contact:			
Date Warning Letter (Appendix B) Issued:			

Step Four – Removal from Roll

*** Parent Discussion Guide**

Agenda Checklist			
<input type="checkbox"/> Attendance summary provided.	<input type="checkbox"/> Reasons for irregular attendance or punctuality discussed.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategies to improve attendance discussed and agreed upon.	<input type="checkbox"/> Date set for follow-up meeting to assess success of the strategies.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical documentation			
Possible Strategies			
<input type="checkbox"/> Referral to medical professional.	<input type="checkbox"/> Changes to student schedule to improve organization.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Referral to school supports to improve achievement.	<input type="checkbox"/> Referral to community services for support.		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to Alternative Learning (Secondary)		



Appendix B

Consecutive Absence Report (15-30-45-60)			
Student Name:		Date:	
OEN:	DOB:	IEP: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Teacher Name:		Principal Name:	
Number of Days Absent:		Number of Lates:	Grade/Course:
Date(s) of Parent/ Guardian Contact			
Notes from Parent Contact*:			
Enrolment Status		Medical Documentation	Program Recommendations
<input type="checkbox"/> On Roll <input type="checkbox"/> Off Roll		<input type="checkbox"/> Medical Documentation Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Documentation Pending	<input type="checkbox"/> Modified Program <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Education <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Removal from Roll -		Reasons for Removal from Roll:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Referred to School Attendance Counsellor <input type="checkbox"/> Warning Letter Sent to Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Referred to Attendance Review Committee		<input type="checkbox"/> Other Action (specify):	
Plan to Improve Attendance at School			
Signature of Principal:		Signature of School Attendance Counsellor:	
Copies to: Ontario Student Record Parent/Guardian School Attendance Counsellor ONSIS			



Appendix B

*** Parent Discussion Guide**

Agenda Checklist	
o Attendance summary provided.	o Reasons for irregular attendance or punctuality discussed.
o Strategies to improve attendance discussed and agreed upon.	o Date set for follow-up meeting to assess success of the strategies.
o Request medical documentation	o Maintain detailed notes of all conversations.
Possible Strategies	
o Referral to medical professional.	o Changes to student schedule to improve organization.
o Referral to school supports to improve achievement.	o Referral to community services for support.
	o Refer to Alternative Learning (Secondary)
Considerations	
o Detailed notes should be kept on file.	o Medical documentation should be kept on file.
o Teacher or principal meeting notes should include the student name, date of birth, OEN and IEP designation (if appropriate).	o Maintain records of all contact and attempted contacts with parents/guardians and adult students.



Appendix C

Student Attendance Supports and Interventions Process

<p>Problematic Attendance Impacting Student Achievement</p>	<p>Consecutive Absence Process 10-15-30-45-60</p>
<p>Step One – Teacher Contact with Parent/Guardian</p> <p>Teacher to contact parent/guardian, or adult student (where appropriate) to identify the reasons for the irregular attendance or punctuality, to collaborate on strategies to improve attendance, to implement the strategies, and to follow up on the success of the strategies in a timely fashion. If attendance does not improve sufficiently, teacher will notify the principal. *</p>	<p>Step One (10 Consecutive Days Unexcused Absent) – Teacher Contact with Parent/Guardian</p> <p>Teacher to contact parent/guardian, or adult student (where appropriate) to identify the reasons for the irregular attendance or punctuality, to collaborate on strategies to improve attendance, to implement the strategies, and to follow up on the success of the strategies in a timely fashion. If attendance does not improve sufficiently, teacher will notify the principal. *</p>
<p>Step Two – Principal Intervention</p> <p>If attendance has not improved sufficiently as deemed by the principal, the Principal or designate will consult with the School Attendance Counsellor, meet with the parent/guardian or student (where appropriate) and other school staff to identify the reasons for the irregular attendance or punctuality, to collaborate on strategies to improve attendance, to implement the strategies and to follow up on the success of the strategies in a timely fashion.*</p>	<p>Step Two (15 Consecutive Days Unexcused Absent)</p> <p>If attendance has not improved sufficiently as deemed by the principal, the Principal or designate will consult with the School Attendance Counsellor, meet with the parent/guardian or student (where appropriate) and other school staff to identify the reasons for the irregular attendance or punctuality, to collaborate on strategies to improve attendance, to implement the strategies and to follow up on the success of the strategies in a timely fashion. In secondary schools, principals will notify attendance counsellors of any student who has reached 15 unexcused consecutive absences and the student may be removed from enrollment. * The student may be referred to the Attendance Review Committee. *</p>
<p>Step Three – Principal and School Attendance Counsellor Intervention</p> <p>If attendance has not improved sufficiently as deemed by the principal, a letter shall be sent home and a second meeting is to be set up with the parents and/or student where appropriate, and would include the School Attendance Counsellor. *</p>	<p>Step Three – Principal and School Attendance Counsellor Intervention (30 Consecutive Days Unexcused Absent)</p> <p>If attendance has not improved sufficiently as deemed by the principal, a letter shall be sent home and a second meeting is to be set up with the parents and/or student where appropriate, and would include the School Attendance Counsellor. The student may be referred to the Attendance Review Committee. *</p>
<p>Step Four – Principal and School Attendance Counsellor Intervention</p> <p>If attendance has not improved sufficiently as deemed by the principal, he/she will continue to refer the student to the School Attendance Counsellor. *</p>	<p>Step Four – Attendance Counsellor Intervention (45, 60 Consecutive Days Unexcused Absent)</p> <p>If attendance has not improved sufficiently as deemed by the principal, a letter shall be sent home and a third meeting is to be set up with the parents and/or student where appropriate, and would include the School Attendance Counsellor. The student shall be referred to the Attendance Review Committee. *</p>



Appendix C

*** Parent Discussion Guide**

Agenda Checklist	
o Attendance summary provided.	o Reasons for irregular attendance or punctuality discussed.
o Strategies to improve attendance discussed and agreed upon.	o Date set for follow-up meeting to assess success of the strategies.
o Request medical documentation	o Maintain detailed notes of all conversations.
Possible Strategies	
o Referral to medical professional.	o Changes to student schedule to improve organization.
o Referral to school supports to improve achievement.	o Referral to community services for support. o Refer to Alternative Learning (Secondary)
Considerations	
o Detailed notes should be kept on file.	o Medical documentation should be kept on file.
o Teacher or principal meeting notes should include the student name, date of birth, OEN and IEP designation (if appropriate).	o Maintain records of all contact and attempted contacts with parents/guardians and adult students.