



TITLE: ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

1.0 Rationale:

Early identification of school attendance issues is critical to a student's progress. When irregular attendance is identified by school personnel, intervention at an early stage is most beneficial to both the student and the school. School attendance is an issue that concerns everyone.

2.0 Definitions:

Compulsory School Age:

All people must begin attending school the first September after turning six (6) years old. They must continue to attend until they attain the age of eighteen (18) or upon achievement of an Ontario Secondary School Diploma or equivalent.

Education Act:

This is the provincial law that governs education in Ontario.

Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL):

See Policy 2.1.8.

Barriers to Learning:

Examples of these could include: drug misuse, mental health problems, anger management, pregnancy, social/emotional/behavioural problems, academic related issues, parental issues, conflict with the law, and/or economic restraints.

3.0 Policy:

In accordance with the Education Act, every child has the right to an education and inherent within that right is the responsibility of every child to attend school regularly while of compulsory school age. District School Board Ontario North East recognizes that regular attendance is critical to the process of learning and strives to address all attendance concerns following the Attendance Procedures process. All barriers to learning will be considered in a respectful manner for all cases of non-attendance.

PROCEDURES:

REASONS TO INITIATE ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

- For elementary students, a minimum of 10 accumulative student absences within a 3 month period with no reasonable explanation determined by the Education Act (see Ed. Act Section 2).
- For secondary students, a minimum of 10 accumulative student absences within a term or semester with no reasonable explanation determined by the Education Act (see Ed. Act Section 2).
- Student demonstrates a pattern of absences (only Mondays, every afternoon, one specific class, etc.).
- Student not returning after Board holiday within 5 days.
- Student demonstrates other possible indicators that attendance is a concern.

ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL REFERRAL PROCESS

All attempts to communicate with a student and/or parent or guardian must be documented

1. TEACHER CONTACT

- Attendance will be taken as per the “Safe Arrival Policy”, No. 2.1.2.
- The teacher and/or secretary notice a pattern or raise a concern regarding a student’s attendance.
- The teacher contacts the student’s parent(s) or guardian(s) to discuss attendance.
- If there is no improvement in 5 days, then the teacher should refer the student to school administration.

2. PRINCIPAL/VICE-PRINCIPAL CONTACT

- The principal or vice-principal contacts the parent(s) or guardian(s) by telephone or through a person to person meeting including the student.
- A “Letter of Concern” could be sent to parent(s) or guardian(s) if contact has not been successful. **(Appendix A)**.
- If there has been no improvement in 5 days, then the principal or vice-principal should refer the student to the Attendance Counsellor.

3. REFERRAL TO ATTENDANCE COUNSELLOR

- The principal or vice-principal will notify the Attendance Counsellor in writing (email is sufficient) of the student with the attendance concern.
- The referral from the principal or vice-principal will also contain any pertinent information regarding the student's attendance patterns. E.g. medical notes, child and youth worker referral, IEP components, etc.

4. ATTENDANCE COUNSELLOR

- The Attendance Counsellor will attempt to contact the student and/or parent(s) or guardian(s) through several means including phone calls, letters, and/or home visits.
- The Attendance Counsellor will work with the student and/or parent(s) or guardian(s) to encourage improved attendance through several interventions including:
 - Regular attendance counseling
 - Modified timetable
 - Resources and assessments for schools and parents, to assist with children who refuse school.
 - Referrals to internal supports (CYW, District Social Worker, Mental Health and Addiction Nurse, Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Student Success teacher, etc.)
 - Referrals to external supports (NEOFACS, CMHA, addiction counseling, medical support, etc.)
 - Supervised Alternative Learning (See Policy 2.1.8)
 - Warning letters (**Appendix B**)
 - Attendance Review Meeting(s)
 - Refer compulsory attendance matters to Provincial Court for legal consequences
- The Attendance Counsellor shall keep all school administrators and the Superintendent of Schools informed through the use of a memorandum (**Appendix C**) detailing the progress of the interventions of all prolonged absences, every 15 days, to a maximum of 60 days. This contact will be marked in the student's Contact Notes in Maplewood under the "Attendance" tab.
- The Attendance Counsellor shall maintain a list of non-attending students who are fourteen to seventeen years old and who have been removed from the register of any District School Board Ontario North East school. These youth and/or their parents or guardians will be contacted at least once a semester by the Attendance Counsellor to encourage them to resume their education.

5. PROLONGED ABSENCE

- If a secondary student has been absent for 15 consecutive classes in a course without appropriate supporting medical documentation, the student must be withdrawn from the course on the day immediately following the last day of attendance. If the student no longer qualifies to be a full-time student as a result of this withdrawal, the student's enrolment status must be changed to "part-time".

- After 15 consecutive days of absence, a student shall be shown as retired on the 16th day. However, a student may be maintained on the register beyond 15 consecutive days of absence, if the principal:
 - Completes the Prolonged Absence Form (**Appendix D**) and sends it to the Attendance Counsellor, which would be used in cases of illness, temporary excusal, etc.;
 - Makes a referral to the Attendance Counsellor when it appears to be a chronic habitual attendance problem;
 - Knows that this is already an open case with the Attendance Counsellor;
 - There is documentation that the pupil is seriously ill.

- After 30 consecutive days of absence, a principal may keep a student on the register only if advised by the Attendance Counsellor through a memorandum (**Appendix C**) that the student's file is still active.

Attendance Procedures Policy – APPENDIX A

Sample “Letter of Concern” from Principal
(on school letterhead)

Date:

Name:

Address:

Dear

RE: – D.O.B.

I am writing with concern regarding your child’s school attendance.
has missed school days and has been late times within the last month.

With this many absences already this school year, it places
at a great disadvantage academically. It is important for you to understand that your child is
legally required to be in daily attendance at school. If this pattern of non-attendance
continues, he/she will be referred to the Attendance Counsellor for our school board.

We hope that you will join with us and encourage your child’s daily attendance and punctuality.
Improvement in his/her attendance will have a significant impact on his/her academic success.

I would be pleased to meet with you to discuss your child’s attendance and can be reached at
(705) 123-4567 Ext. 1234 to arrange this meeting.

Sincerely,

Principal

cc:

Attendance Counsellor
Supervisory Officer

Attendance Procedures Policy – APPENDIX B

**Sample “Warning Letter” from Attendance Counsellor
(on Board Letterhead)**

Date:

Name:

Address:

Dear

RE: – D.O.B.

Investigation of the facts concerning the non-attendance of your son/daughter brings me to the conclusion that, by law, I must inform you of the consequences of continued non-attendance. The following are excerpts from the Education Act which I must draw to your attention:

Section 30 (1) *A parent or guardian of a person required to attend school under section 21 who neglects or refuses to cause that person to attend school is, unless the person is at least 16 years old and has withdrawn from parental control, guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to a fine of not more than \$1,000. 2006, c. 28, s. 7 (2).*

Section 30 (2) *The court may, in addition to or instead of imposing a fine, require a parent or guardian convicted of an offence under subsection (1) to submit to the Minister of Finance a personal bond, in a form prescribed by the court, in the penal sum of \$1,000 with one or more sureties as required, conditioned that the parent or guardian shall cause the person to attend school as required under section 21 and, upon breach of the condition, the bond is forfeit to the Crown. 2006, c. 28, s. 7 (2).*

Section 30 (5) *A child who is required by law to attend school and who refuses to attend or who is habitually absent from school is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to the penalties under Part VI of the Provincial Offences Act and subsection 266(2) of this Act applies in any proceedings under this section.*

In Section 26 (4) *I am required to give written notice to the parent or guardian to cause the child to attend school forthwith.*

This letter, and the extracts from the Act, constitutes the warning to you as a parent concerning this matter. I shall therefore expect that your child will return to school upon receipt of this letter. Failure to do so must be considered to be either neglect on the part of the parent or refusal on the part of the student.

Sincerely,

Attendance Counsellor
District School Board Ontario North East

cc: Principal
Supervisory Officer

Attendance Procedures Policy – APPENDIX C

MEMORANDUM

From:
Attendance Counsellor

To: Principal, School

Date:

Re: Student's Status

Student: _____ DOB: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

This student:

- Is a SAL student and this student should remain on your register as SAL.
- Registered at PACE/or Section 23, please remove from your register.
- Is in custody at _____, please remove from your register.
- Is being home schooled as per section 21(2a) of the Ed Act, please remove from your register.
- The above named student's file is still active and I am aware that the student has been absent more than 15 consecutive days. At this time my recommendation is for the student to remain on the register (see comments).
- The above named student's file is inactive and the student has been absent more than 15 consecutive days, please remove from your register (see comments).

Comments:

Yours truly,

Attendance Counsellor

cc: Office Manager
Guidance Office
Vice Principal
Superintendent of Schools

Attendance Procedures Policy – APPENDIX D

PROLONGED ABSENCE FORM

(Reference: Student Register)

***This form is used as of the 15th day of CONSECUTIVE ABSENTEEISM
 (must be filled out on the 16th day and signed by Principal)***

It is the school's responsibility to contact the parent or adult pupil in order to determine why the pupil has not been in attendance. All contacts and documentation are to be retained in the same location as the registers. The removal of a pupil's name from the register does not negate the obligations required under the Education Act for compulsory attendance. This original document is to be placed in the OSR and a copy with the student register files.

Date:

Identifying Information:

Student's Name:	DOB:	Gender:
School:	Grade:	
Address:	Parent(s)/Guardian(s) :	

ACTIONS TAKEN BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL

- Note:** 1. After 15 consecutive days of absence, a pupil shall be shown as retired on the 16th day.
2. However, a pupil may be maintained on the register beyond 15 consecutive days of absence, if the principal:
- a) completes the Prolonged Absence Form and sends it to the Attendance Counsellor which would be used in cases of illness, temporary excusal, etc., **or**
 - b) makes a referral to the Attendance Counsellor when it appears to be a chronic habitual attendance problem, **or**
 - c) knows that this is already an open case with the Attendance Counsellor **or**
 - d) there is documentation that the pupil is seriously ill
3. The following chart should be used to document the school actions/comments regarding this situation:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Actions/Comments</i>

Principal Signature:

Date:

<p>South: Submit to Shannon Petryk by email at shannon.petryk@dsb1.edu.on.ca or by fax at (705) 647-9260</p> <p>North, Central: Submit to Odile Robichaud by email at odile.robichaud@dsb1.edu.on.ca or by fax at 360-5704</p>
