



## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE – AP613-1**

### **Student Attendance – Elementary**

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Area: Student Conduct and Safety  
Policy Reference: Student Attendance (PO613)

Approved: May 12, 2011  
Revised: Nov. 10, 2014 (Interim); Feb. 9, 2015

Review Cycle: Annually

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#### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to support the implementation of the Student Attendance Policy in reinforcing regular attendance and punctuality habits among all elementary students.

#### **2. Definitions**

**Absent** – an elementary student is considered absent when he/she is not present for the morning and/or afternoon session of the school day.

**Late** – an elementary student is considered late if he/she arrives to class after the beginning of the morning or afternoon session of the school day.

**Program of Study** – an outline of the academic program to be provided to the pupil during a Temporary Excusal from school including how that academic program will be accessed by the pupil. Where the pupil has an IEP, the Program of Study will reflect the appropriate accommodations/modifications as outlined in the IEP. A Program of Study shall be developed under the direction of the school Principal with assistance, as appropriate, by the Vice Principal and school team.

**Temporary Excusal of Attendance** – a student is considered temporarily excused from attendance if the principal has granted permission for him/her to be absent from school on a temporary basis.

## **3. Procedures**

### **3.1 Safe Arrival**

- a) When regular attendance-taking shows that a pupil is absent and that his or her parent or guardian has not informed the school of the absence, the principal, in accordance with the board's established practice on safe arrivals, should ensure that the school immediately contacts the parent or guardian to find out if he or she is aware of the child's absence.

### **3.2 Responsibilities of the Principal**

- a) Subsection 265(1)(c) of the Education Act states that it is the duty of a principal of a school, in addition to his or her duties as a teacher, "to register the pupils and to ensure that the attendance of pupils for every school day is recorded either on the register supplied by the Minister in accordance with the instructions contained therein or in such other manner as is approved by the Minister."
- b) The principal must ensure that he/she implements the expectations of the yearly Enrolment Register Instructions for Elementary and Secondary Schools issued by the Ministry of Education at the beginning of each school year.
- c) The principal must ensure that:
  - i. a system is in place to provide school staff with all the appropriate information about each pupil that is required in keeping the enrolment register and attendance records;
  - ii. enrolment and attendance records are accurate and up to date;
  - iii. all required enrolment and attendance records and related documents are retained in the Ontario Student Record (OSR) for audit purposes;
  - iv. he/she must sign-off on all enrolment registers even if nil FTE is reported for each category of pupils;
  - v. parents/guardians are notified of all student absences or lates when a pattern of concern emerges; and
  - vi. where a student is missing from school for several consecutive days for no known reason and all possible means of reaching the

parent/guardian or designated emergency contact have been made, the matter should be referred to Attendance Counsellor for consultation or follow-up.

### **3.3 Responsibilities of Students**

- a) As per the Education Act S.21(1) all students under 18 years of age are required to be in attendance at school or an authorized alternative education program unless they have already graduated or are otherwise excused from attendance at school.
- b) Students are required to “attend classes punctually and regularly” (Regulation 298, 23.1(d)).
- c) Students may be excused by the principal from attendance at school temporarily at any time at the written request of a parent of the pupil or the pupil if that pupil is an adult” (Regulation 298, 23.3).

### **3.4 Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians**

- a) Parents or guardians of a child of compulsory school age (aged 6-17) shall ensure that the child attends school unless the person is at least 16 years old and has withdrawn from parental control (Education Act, Section 21, (5)).

### **3.5 Prolonged Absence of Students**

- a) The following requirement does not apply to students who are receiving satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere as determined by the principal. Home schooling of students is subject to the provisions of PPM 131 – Home Schooling and the Board’s Home Schooling Policy (PO510).
- b) Where a student has been absent for two or more consecutive school days without an acceptable explanation, it is recommended that this absence be reported to the vice-principal or principal.
- c) If a student has been absent for 15 consecutive scheduled days without appropriate supporting documentation, principals must follow the procedures given under “Absence from a Course for 15 Consecutive Scheduled Days” in the current year’s Enrolment Register Instructions for Elementary and Secondary Schools. The prolonged absence procedure is divided into 15 day subsequent periods of consecutive absence (1-15, 16-30, 31-45 and 46-60 or more if applicable).

- d) In these situations, the principal will notify the school Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor in writing on the Attendance Counselling Referral Form (Form 8111) on the student's sixteenth day of absence, unless the case has already been referred. A copy of this form should be placed in the OSR.

### **3.6 Temporary Excusal of Attendance**

- a) The principal may, in accordance with the Education Act, grant a 'Temporary Excusal of Attendance' (see Form 8114) for a student if the parent or guardian makes a request in writing. If the period of absence is expected to be fifteen or more consecutive days, the principal must provide a 'Program of Study for Temporary Excusal of Attendance' (see Form 8115). If the program of study is not provided, the student must be removed from the register as per the Enrolment Register Instructions for Elementary and Secondary Schools. Both of these forms should be placed in the student's OSR.

### **3.7 Strategies for Promoting Regular Attendance**

- a) Schools will include the Attendance Tip Sheet for Parents (Appendix 1) in the September newsletter each year.
- b) Schools will promote regular attendance by supporting formal and/or informal attendance positive reinforcement programs. These incentive programs will include recognition for improvement of attendance and punctuality.
- c) Expectations regarding regular attendance and punctuality will be included in the School Code of Conduct.

### **3.8 Responding to Chronic Attendance Issues**

- a) Issues regarding chronic absence will be addressed in the following progressive manner:
  - i. Classroom teacher will complete electronic student attendance tracking to ensure prompt transmission of information to the office. Consideration will be given to extraordinary circumstances (e.g., disruption of transportation services) which are beyond the control of the student. When attendance concerns develop (2-3 lates per week, 3-4 absences per month), the teacher will discuss these concerns with the parent/guardian and, where age-appropriate, the student to determine if there are extenuating circumstances

contributing to the issue. In such cases, supports will be considered.

- ii. Should there be no extenuating circumstances and if attendance concerns persist, the principal/vice-principal will be made aware of situation.
- iii. Principal/Vice-Principal communicates with student, as appropriate and parent/guardian to discuss concerns. Should no extenuating circumstances be present, progressive discipline may be implemented in response to these issues. This communication will include a letter home which details the number of days absent and/or late and the importance of regular attendance and punctuality (Appendix 2 – sample letter). The school Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor may be consulted with consideration of additional options included in Section 3.9.
- iv. Should these measures not be effective, referral is made to a school team meeting to include Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor. This step constitutes a referral to the Attendance Counsellor and will include complete of:
  - Electronic student attendance record;
  - Completed Attendance Counselling Referral Form (see Form 8111).

**Please note: Parental/Guardian consent is not required for attendance referral, however a team meeting is an excellent means of developing a corrective plan and gathering more information.**

- v. A second team meeting will be convened to determine progress toward regular attendance and punctuality. If goals are achieved, attendance continues to be monitored to ensure sustained success. If goals are not achieved, goals or expectations may require adjustment or other strategies may be considered.
- vi. The school will continue to monitor and document daily attendance and punctuality, however, further actions and interventions, including court action, remain at the discretion of the Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor.

### **3.9 Additional Options**

- a) At any point in the above process, the options listed below may be utilized in an attempt to retain or engage the student in their learning program.
  - i. Timetable adjustments;
  - ii. Counselling – Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor;
  - iii. Other Student Services Supports;
  - iv. Part-time Learning;
  - v. Breakfast/Lunch Program;
  - vi. Community service work in school;
  - vii. Social/Emotional Education Workshops;
  - viii. Home Instruction;
  - ix. Program Support/IEP;
  - x. Peer Tutors; and
  - xi. Use of other community supports

### **3.10 Additional Considerations**

- a) Parents/Guardians continue to have the option of home schooling at any time subject to the provisions of PPM 131 – Home Schooling and the Board’s Home Schooling Policy (PO510).
- b) In addressing concerns regarding any “at risk” student, it is essential to ensure that the parties are familiar with the student’s educational history as documented in his/her OSR. In addition, school personnel must ensure that any program adjustments, Individualized Education Plans or accommodations previously recommended by board personnel or other clinicians and documented in the OSR, are addressed in the student’s current program.

3.11 If an employee has questions or concerns arising from the implementation of this administrative procedure, they should be addressed with their immediate supervisor.

## **4. Sources**

- 4.1 Enrolment Register Instructions for Elementary and Secondary Schools
- 4.2 Education Act
- 4.3 Ontario Regulation 374/10 – Supervised Alternative Learning and Other Excusals from Attendance at School
- 4.4 Social Work and Attendance Counselling Service Brochure

## **5. Appendices**

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – Attendance Tip Sheet for Parents
- 5.2 Appendix 2 – Sample Principal Attendance Letter

## **6. Related Policies and Administrative Procedures**

- 6.1 Student Attendance Policy (PO613)
- 6.2 Student Attendance – Secondary Administrative Procedure (AP613-2)

## **7. Related Forms**

- 7.1 Attendance Counselling Referral Form (Form 8111)
- 7.2 Temporary Excusal of Attendance Form (Form 8114)
- 7.3 Program of Study for Temporary Excusal of Attendance Form (Form 8115)

## Appendix 1



Good attendance patterns established at the beginning of a student's school life can become an important factor in determining a student's academic success.

As a parent, you can have a definite mark on your child's educational life. You may start your child off with an advantage by helping to create a good attendance pattern.

address the importance of regular attendance with your child  
teach good habits about punctuality, homework, responsibility  
talk with your child about their school day experience  
encourage a positive attitude about school  
notice and re-enforce good attendance habits  
develop a positive connection with your child's teacher(s)

**As a parent you can promote good attendance by:**

- asking the school for attendance procedures and reviewing them with your child
- noticing your child's attendance on report cards
- attending parent/teacher conferences
- knowing your child's friends
- contacting the school regarding any problems preventing your child from attending school (e.g., illness, transportation, etc.)
- requesting a school Team Meeting as needed

**If good attendance matters to you, it will to your child**



Prepared by the DCDSB Social Workers/Attendance Counsellors, 05/02/09

## Appendix 2

### Sample Principal Attendance Letter

Date

Dear (Parent/Guardian):

I am writing to you in regard to your (son's/daughter's) attendance difficulties. Please see the attached attendance profile. You may not be aware that (student's name) has been absent **X** days and late **X** times during this school year.

By law, children must attend school regularly until the age of 18 years.

Good attendance at school is directly linked to success at school. Poor attendance patterns increase the risk of dropping out of school in the future.

We would like to offer any assistance or support you may need in order to ensure (student's name)'s regular attendance at (name of school). The school's Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor (name) is also available for consultation or assistance to parents in our school community. If (student's name)'s attendance remains problematic, a referral will be made to (Social Worker's name) for follow-up.

We sincerely hope that (student's name) will be in regular attendance at (school's name) and enjoy the success of which (he/she) is capable.

Sincerely,

School Principal



# Attendance Counselling Referral Form

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B.: \_\_\_\_\_ Day/Month/Year  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ I.E.P.:  Y  N

**Mother/Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Father/Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cell Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of days absent to date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of lates to date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total classes missed: excused: \_\_\_\_\_ unexcused: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please check off the steps that have been taken by the school to date:***

<input type="checkbox"/> Timetable Adjustments	<input type="checkbox"/> Student Success Support	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone Calls Home Date(s): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Guidance Counselling	<input type="checkbox"/> School Team Meeting	<input type="checkbox"/> Letters Home Date(s): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Credit Rescue	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal Setting	<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting with Parent Date(s): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Credit Recovery	<input type="checkbox"/> Student Involvement	
<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time Learning	<input type="checkbox"/> Incentive Program	
<input type="checkbox"/> Co-op	<input type="checkbox"/> Tracking Sheets	
<input type="checkbox"/> Work Experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Restorative Practice	
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Service in the School	<input type="checkbox"/> Peer Support	
<input type="checkbox"/> Home Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/> School Activity Engagement (i.e., clubs, drama, etc.)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Program Support		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Student has been referred to other services (be specific): _____		

**\* Please attach Attendance Summary.**

Principal's or Designate's Signature

Date



## Request for Temporary Excusal of Attendance for Consecutive Absences Greater Than 15 Days

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
 OEN #: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 D.O.B.: (dd/mm/yy) \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work/cell phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Work/cell phone # : \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Withdrawal Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Return Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of School Days Missed: \_\_\_\_\_

We, the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of the above student, hereby request that my child be temporarily excused from school for the above-stated period of time (pursuant to Ontario Regulation 298 of the Education Act, Section 23 (3)). I/We take full responsibility for the student's absence from school and for any work or tests missed during the period of absence. I/We have been made aware that regular school attendance is linked to school success and am/are aware of the potential risks associated with prolonged absences from school.

**For absences beyond fifteen consecutive days:** I/We understand that the student will be removed from the Enrolment Register. I/We will re-register the student upon their return as indicated above.

Note: In exceptional circumstances only, with the Principal's approval, the student may remain on the enrolment register and may be marked as "G". Where the "G" code has been used, the school must provide a comprehensive Program of Study (attach to this form).

I/We understand that the student must return to school on the date indicated above or the matter will be referred to the Attendance Counsellor.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Signature

**OFFICE USE ONLY**  
 (Principal to complete indicating PowerSchool Coding)

\_\_\_\_\_ G (absence is 15 days or more and a comprehensive Program of Study is attached)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Remove from register and re-admit upon return (absence is greater than 15 days and no Program of Study provided)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Signature

Information Collection Authorization: This information is collected pursuant to the Board's education responsibilities as set out in the Education Act and its regulations. The information is collected for education purposes and is within guidelines set out in the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1989. This information will become part of the Ontario Student Record. Any questions with respect to this information should be directed to the Principal of the School. Users: Supervisory Officers, Principals, Teachers, Attendance Counsellors and Chief Attendance Officer.



# Program of Study for Temporary Excusal of Attendance Form

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

School contact during period of absence: \_\_\_\_\_

Academic supports considered:

I.E.P.     Accommodations     Modifications/Accommodations     Individualized Equipment

Subject: _____	
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>Assignment</b>

Please see attached unit of study (if applicable)

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: This Program of Study must be included with the Temporary Excusal Form for absences beyond fifteen consecutive days.**