

Public Schools Branch

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE

ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT	
<i>Policy Section</i> Programs and Services	<i>Procedure Number</i> 406.1
<i>Pages</i> 5	<i>Approved Date</i> September 1, 2022
<i>Reviewed Date</i>	<i>Effective Date</i> October 18, 2016
<i>Replaces: PSB - Operational Procedures 406.1 - Attendance and Engagement, October 18, 2016</i>	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Public Schools Branch seeks full cooperation from parent(s)/guardian(s); in promoting regular school attendance and punctuality to their school age children.
- 1.2 Attendance in school is central to educational achievement and school success. School attendance is required by law, under the *Education Act*, for all children between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16). Parent(s)/guardian(s) must ensure that students attend and remain in school daily.
- 1.3 The Public Schools Branch strongly encourages the following:
 - 1.3.1 When possible medical/dental appointments and extracurricular activities should be scheduled after school hours; and
 - 1.3.2 Family vacations should be taken during school vacation and recess periods.
- 1.4 No student will be excused from regular attendance and schoolwork to take private lessons in sports, music, art, dance, or any other area without prior approval of the Minister responsible for public education in Prince Edward Island.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Excused Absence** – An absence from school which has been approved in accordance with the *Education Act*.
- 2.2 **Late** - Student arrives with more than 50% of AM/PM remaining or arrives with more than 50% of class remaining if using period attendance collection.
- 2.3 **Early Departure** - Student departs with less than 50% of AM/PM remaining or departs with less than 50% of class remaining if using period attendance collection.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Students shall:
 - 3.1.1 Attend classes regularly and punctually and participate in the education programs in which the student is enrolled as required by the *Education Act*,
 - 3.1.2 Be engaged in learning;

- 3.1.3 Complete work missed during excused and unexcused absences;
- 3.1.4 Comply with the attendance and engagement policy and procedure.
- 3.2 Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall:
 - 3.2.1 Ensure their child is punctual and regularly attends school;
 - 3.2.2 Support their child in the pursuit of learning;
 - 3.2.3 Notify the school prior to or on the day of their child's absence;
 - 3.2.4 Contact the school in advance of any planned, extended periods of absence;
 - 3.2.5 Support the completion of work missed during excused and unexcused absences;
 - 3.2.6 Collaborate with school staff to support student attendance and engagement.
- 3.3 Teachers shall:
 - 3.3.1 Support students in the pursuit of learning;
 - 3.3.2 Maintain daily/course attendance data in PowerSchool;
 - 3.3.3 Support and encourage student punctuality and regular attendance;
 - 3.3.4 Contact the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss attendance concerns;
 - 3.3.5 Permit students with absences the opportunity to complete missed assignments and tests;
 - 3.3.6 Refer students with ongoing attendance problems to administration;
 - 3.3.7 Collaborate with administration and parents to support student attendance and engagement.
- 3.4 Administrators shall:
 - 3.4.1 Ensure that students, parent(s)/guardian(s), and staff are aware of the attendance and engagement policy and procedure;
 - 3.4.2 Ensure teachers maintain attendance data as outlined in this procedure;
 - 3.4.3 Ensure that student attendance is reported to parent(s)/guardian(s) in a timely manner;
 - 3.4.4 Collaborate with school staff and parents to support student attendance and engagement;
 - 3.4.5 Report frequent student absenteeism to the Director of the Public Schools Branch when the explanation of a student's absences is unsatisfactory and interventions at the school level have been exhausted in accordance with this procedure;
 - 3.4.6 Report in detail chronic absences and the interventions implemented by the school to the Department of Family and Human Services where absenteeism is suspected to be a symptom of neglect.
- 3.5 The Director of Public Schools Branch shall:
 - 3.5.1 Ensure that schools are aware of and follow the attendance and engagement procedure;
 - 3.5.2 Investigate cases of student absenteeism which have been reported by a school principal, in accordance with section 5.5 and 6.5, and take any action as required under the *Education Act*.
- 3.6 Director of Child Protection:

- 3.6.1** Assess all child protection reports received from the school to determine if the report meets the criteria for an investigation under the *Child Protection Act*.

4.0 EXCUSED ABSENCES

A student is excused from attending school on an instructional day if:

- 4.1.1 The student is unable to attend school because of illness or through other cause which has been reported to and approved by the principal;
- 4.1.2 The day is recognized as a religious holiday by the religious denomination to which the student belongs; or
- 4.1.3 The Minister certifies in writing to the Public Schools Branch that the student:
 - a. Is exempt from attending school; or
 - b. Is taking part in a home education program.

5.0 PROCEDURES – GRADES K-9

- 5.1** These procedures are to be applied to student absences in grades K-9. ***Absences involving extenuating circumstances will be reviewed by the teacher and administrator and the procedures will be changed accordingly. All steps must be documented so the documentation can be provided to the Director, if needed.***
- 5.2 Step 1** – When a student has **5 or more days** of absences in a reporting period and the teacher is concerned with the impact the absences are having on the student’s learning:
- 5.2.1 The classroom teacher will phone home (3 attempts) to communicate concern about attendance;
 - 5.2.2 If contact is unsuccessful the teacher will inform administration.
- 5.3 Step 2** – When a student continues to have absences within the school year which are concerning to the teacher and are impacting the student’s learning:
- 5.3.1 The classroom teacher will notify administration about the attendance concern;
 - 5.3.2 Administration will send home the *Initial Notification of Absenteeism* letter to communicate concern about attendance and to arrange a parent(s)/guardian(s) meeting;
 - 5.3.3 Administration will refer to the school-based Student Services Team.
- 5.4 Step 3** – When a student continues to have absences which are concerning to the teacher and impacting the students learning after the actions taken in Step 2:
- 5.4.1 The classroom teacher will notify the administration that the attendance concern continues Administration will send home the *Second Notification of Absenteeism* letter;
 - 5.4.2 Administration will meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s), and where appropriate, the student to develop a support plan. Administration will document the support plan and meeting discussions and will provide a written copy to the parent(s)/guardian(s);

- 5.4.3 Administration will inform parent(s)/guardian(s) that if the support plan is unsuccessful there will be a report to the Director of Public Schools Branch. When non-attendance is suspected to be an indicator of parental neglect, administration shall make a report to the Department of Family and Human Services, as required under the mandatory reporting section of the *Child Protection Act*, as per section 10(1).
- 5.5 **Step 4** – When a student continues to have absences which are concerning to the teacher after the actions taken in Step 3:
- 5.5.1 The classroom teacher will notify the administration that the attendance concern continues;
- 5.5.2 Administration will send home the *Third Notification of Absenteeism* letter;
- 5.5.3 Administration will report the frequent absence concern to the Director of Public Schools Branch and provide the supporting documentation and information as outlined in Steps 1, 2 and 3.
- 5.5.4 The Director of Public Schools Branch will investigate cases of student absenteeism, in accordance with section 3.5.2, and take any action as required under the *Education Act*.
- 5.5.5 When non-attendance is suspected to be an indicator of parental neglect and the child is in need of protection, the person who suspects the neglect shall make a report to the Director of Child Protection, as required under the mandatory reporting section of the *Child Protection Act*, as per section 10(1). The report should include:
- a) Attendance record;
 - b) Documented communication to parent(s)/guardian(s);
 - c) Interventions and results.
- 6.0 PROCEDURES – GRADE 10 – 12**
- 6.1** These procedures are to be applied to student absences in grades 10-12. ***Absences involving extenuating circumstances will be reviewed by the teacher and administrator and procedures will be changed accordingly. All steps must be documented so the documentation can be provided to the Director, if needed.***
- 6.2 Step 1** – When a student has **5 or more days or periods** of absence per subject and the teacher is concerned with the impact the absences are having on the student’s learning:
- 6.2.1 The subject teacher will communicate concern about attendance to the student;
- 6.2.2 The subject teacher will phone home (3 attempts) to communicate concern about attendance;
- 6.2.3 If contact is unsuccessful the teacher will inform administration.

- 6.3 **Step 2** – When a student continues to have absences which are concerning to the teacher and are impacting the student’s learning:
- 6.3.1 The subject teacher will communicate to the student that attendance is still a concern. The subject teacher will notify the administration about the attendance concern;
 - 6.3.2 Administration will send home the *Initial Notification of Absenteeism* letter to communicate concern about attendance and to arrange a meeting with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s). A phone call to the parent(s)/guardian(s) may be required to arrange the meeting;
 - 6.3.3 Administration will meet with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) to develop a support plan and discuss possible implications of continued absenteeism. Administration will document the support plan and meeting discussions and will provide a written copy to the parent(s)/guardian(s);
 - 6.3.4 Administration will refer the attendance matter to the school-based Student Services Team for follow-up.
- 6.4 **Step 3** – When a student continues to have absences which are concerning to the subject teacher and impacting the student’s learning after the actions taken in Step 2:
- 6.4.1 The subject teacher will notify the administration that the attendance concern continues;
 - 6.4.2 Where course credits are in jeopardy, the administration may,
 - a) Implement a reduction in schedule or referral to an alternative placement for the purpose of increasing student success. Parents will be responsible for their student (including transportation) during the periods of the school day that they are not attending; or
 - b) Discontinue the student for the remainder of the semester. Programming such as Credit Recovery and future registration may be explored at the school level;
 - 6.4.3 Administration will notify the student and send home the *Second Notification of Absenteeism* letter to request a meeting and identify the ongoing attendance concerns and outline any changes in courses or programming.
 - 6.4.4 The parent will have the right to appeal any changes to the student’s education plan.
- 6.5 **Step 4** – When a student continues to have absences which are concerning to the teacher after the actions taken in Step 3, the administration will report the frequent absence concern to the Director of Public Schools Branch and provide the supporting documentation and information as outlined in Steps 1, 2 and 3. The Director of Public Schools Branch will investigate cases of student absenteeism, in accordance with section 3.5.2, and take any action as required under the *Education Act*.
- 6.5.1 Where non-attendance is suspected to be an indicator of parental neglect and the child is in need of protection, administration shall make a report to the Director of Child Protection, as required under the mandatory

reporting section of the *Child Protection Act*, as per section 10(1). The report should include:

- a) Attendance record;
- b) Documented communication to parent(s)/guardian(s);
- c) Interventions and results.

7.0 FORMS

- 7.1 *Absenteeism Letters K - 9*
- 7.2 *Absenteeism Letters 10 - 12*
- 7.3 *Attendance and Engagement Checklist K - 9*
- 7.4 *Attendance and Engagement Checklist 10 - 12*

8.0 CROSS REFERENCE

- 8.1 *PSB Operational Policy 406 Attendance and Engagement*
- 8.2 *Education Act*
- 8.3 *Child Protection Act*

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