

(1) Purpose

(For terminology, see Section 5)

To support student attendance, division staff will:

- (a) ensure students who are eligible for enrolment with the division receive regular and appropriate educational programming.
- (b) provide all students with the same minimum number of hours of instruction and document any reduction or alterations in the school day, including a plan to return to full-time instruction.
- (c) implement a transition-to-school plan in a timely manner according to the interdepartmental transition protocols and provincial transition protocols.
- (d) provide educational programming within 14 calendar days after the student's completed registration has been received and accepted by the school, regardless of whether that school has received the student's pupil file.
- (e) ensure student attendance is tracked accurately, document any students who are chronically absent, and take immediate, sustained action to address causes of chronic absenteeism until the student is regularly present.
- (f) continually investigate and identify the causes of student absences and determine the appropriate supports required to promote regular attendance.
- (g) work with parents and community partners to ensure students are regularly present.
- (h) work with community agencies to identify supports and interventions to help meet both the educational and well-being needs of students and families to ensure regular school attendance.
- (i) ensure culturally safe educational environments and cultural competence among all staff.
- (j) monitor and analyze division wide and school enrolment and attendance data and create responsive action plans.

- (k) ensure student attendance is a standing agenda item in senior administration meetings and school-based support team meetings.
- (l) transfer pupil record information according to existing Manitoba Pupil File Guidelines.
- (m) transfer the cumulative file and pupil support file components of the pupil file within one school week of receiving such a request from the receiving school.

(2) Responsibilities for Attendance

Students, parents, and school staff are crucial in co-ordinating their efforts to support student attendance.

(a) Students:

- (i) are responsible to attend school and classes regularly and punctually.
- (ii) must comply with the school's code of conduct, engage in the learning process, and complete assignments and other related work required by teachers.
- (iii) participate in student-specific planning, as developmentally appropriate.

(b) Parents:

- (i) must take all reasonable measures to ensure the child attends school regularly.
- (ii) have the right to be informed regularly of the attendance, behaviour, and academic achievement of their child in school, and to participate in student-specific planning.
- (iii) are responsible for co-operating fully with the child's teachers and other employees of the school division to ensure the child complies with the school's code of conduct.

(c) Teachers:

- (i) promote, support, monitor, and record student attendance.
- (ii) communicate (verbally and in writing, if needed) with students and parents when concerns related to attendance arise.
- (iii) identify potential issues related to chronic lateness and/or absenteeism.
- (iv) document steps taken to communicate with students, parents, and outside agencies when concerns related to attendance arise.
- (v) participate in student-specific planning.
- (vi) provide assignments to students who are absent.

(d) Principals or designates:

- (i) foster family connections in their school communities.
- (ii) ensure teachers maintain accurate attendance records.
- (iii) lead school-based attendance initiatives.
- (iv) monitor school enrolment data to ensure that all students expected to be present are in school. This includes comparing enrolment registers year over year, as well as reviewing unclaimed pupil files and homeschool reports from the department.
- (v) create non-punitive outreach protocols to identify students who are likely to experience chronic absenteeism by monitoring and responding to student presence and absence data trends.
- (vi) work with teachers, students, parents, and others, as needed, to promote regular attendance, including identifying supports in response to student absences.
- (vii) monitor and review student attendance data and oversee student-specific planning, including the assignment of a case manager for students experiencing chronic absenteeism.

- (viii) invite community agencies, organizations and associations, other education authorities, and regional health and children's services authorities to plan collaboratively in support of appropriate educational programming and planning for students.
- (ix) report chronic/severe absenteeism to the school division.

(3) Attendance Protocol

Attendance will be recorded and monitored at the classroom, school, and divisional levels.

- (a) Attendance will be taken in the morning and afternoon by teachers in early and middle years and period-by-period in senior years each day.
- (b) Absences will be recorded as excused or unexcused.
- (c) Where the parent(s)/guardian(s) has determined the student must be absent from school, the parent(s)/guardian(s) is responsible to inform the school staff of the reason for the absence prior to the scheduled time for that class or no later than one day immediately after the student's return to school. Students who are 18 years of age or older may phone in their own absence reasons, in lieu of their parent(s)/guardian(s).
- (d) Early and middle years schools will call home to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student's absences if the school has not yet been notified. Senior years schools will use an automated dialer to inform parent(s)/guardian(s) of the absence.
- (e) In the case of long-term illness, the student's absences must be supported by a medical certificate.
- (f) If absences persist, the teacher or school designate will make personal contact to better understand the nature of the absences and work with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to proactively identify the strategies in response to barriers.
- (g) Where a student is suspended from school, each day of the suspension will be recorded/counted as an excused absence for attendance purposes.

(4) Proactive and Preventative Interventions

Through a tiered approach, division staff will provide a co-ordinated response procedure, including restorative practices, to support the retention of students in school.

- (a) Responses to absences will be non-punitive, fair, and predictable for all students.
- (b) Responses to student absenteeism will vary based on the age, grade, and development of the student, the professional judgment of teachers and principal or designate, and the individual circumstances of the student.
- (c) The division prohibits schools from the use of suspensions, expulsions, and withdrawals as a response to absenteeism.
- (d) When a student reaches the number of absences defined as chronic absenteeism, a meeting of the school team is required, which includes the parent (and student, when appropriate).
- (e) Students who are chronically absent will have a student-specific plan.
- (f) If the school has been unsuccessful in addressing severe chronic absenteeism for a student, the division will notify the attendance officer, as well as Child and Family Services, if there are concerns about student safety and well-being.
- (g) The division will provide formal written notification to Manitoba Education for students who experience severe chronic absenteeism, as requested by that department.

(5) Terminology

(a) Presence

When a student attends and participates in the school or classroom on the days in which they are required. Students may be present even if they are not physically within a classroom, depending on their student-specific plan.

(b) Engagement

A student's attitude towards schooling, their attendance and participation in school activities, and their disposition towards learning, working, and socializing with others in school. Engagement is expressed in a student's feelings that they belong at school, and in their participation in school activities.

(c) Regular Attendance

Coming to school and/or participating in learning consistently and on a routine, habitual basis, missing no more than five days for the entire school year.

(d) Absence

Any time a student is not in class or not participating in a school-sanctioned activity while not on suspension/expulsion.

(e) Excused Absence

Any time a student is not in class or not participating in a school-sanctioned activity, while not being on suspension/expulsion with the mutual consent of the school principal or designate and the parent.

(f) Unexcused Absence

Any time a student is not in class or not participating in a school-sanctioned activity, while not being on suspension/expulsion without the mutual consent of the school principal or designate and the parent.

(g) Chronic Absenteeism

Where unexcused absences account for 10 or more classes in a single high school course or 10 per cent or more of instructional days in kindergarten to Grade 8 in a reporting period.

(h) Severe Chronic Absenteeism

Where unexcused absences account for 20 or more classes in a single high school course or 20 per cent or more of instructional days in kindergarten to Grade 8 in a reporting period.

(i) Student-Specific Plan

A planning, record-keeping, and communication document, as outlined in Standards for Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba (Manitoba Education, 2022).

Effective Date:	March 5, 2024	Review Date:
Amended Date:		
Board Motion(s):	51/24	
References:	Safe and Caring Schools: A Policy Directive and Action Plan to Enhance Student Presence and Engagement (Manitoba Education 2023); Standards for Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba (Manitoba Education 2022)	