



POLICY: JE
SUBJECT: STUDENT ATTENDANCE/TRUANCY
APPROVAL DATE: June 20, 1989
REVISION DATE: March 4, 1997, September 12, 2011,
June 24, 2019
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1. GENERAL

- 1.1 The Winnipeg School Division (WSD) believes that regular and punctual attendance enhances the chances for success by assuring that the student receives the maximum instructional time and has opportunities for participation in the learning process.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Public Schools Act (PSA), a person who is six years of age or older on December 31 in a year has the right to attend school from the beginning of the fall term of that year until;
- (a) the last school day of June in the year in which the person becomes 21 years of age; or
 - (b) the day the person receives a graduation diploma or certificate of completion, as defined in the regulations; whichever comes first.
- 1.3 It is the expectation of WSD that students shall attend school as required under the Public Schools Act.
- 1.4 WSD shall make all reasonable efforts to support students experiencing attendance problems and will ensure that reasonable alternatives have been attempted prior to referral of a student with a chronic absenteeism problem to the Attendance Services.
- 1.5 In accordance with the Public Schools Act, parents or legal guardian of a child who is of compulsory school age must ensure that the child attends school. A child of compulsory school age is required to attend school. Subject to section 262, any person who fails or refuses to comply with subsection (1) is guilty of an offence.
- 1.6 Each school shall develop and implement interventions and supports to address student absenteeism when possible.
- 1.7 A Student over the age of 18 years of age is subject to the rules of the school board in matters pertaining to school attendance.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Absence**
Non-attendance for any reason other than for school-sponsored activities shall be considered an absence.
- 2.2 **Chronic Absenteeism**
An accumulation of unexcused absences of any period/class without just cause shall be considered chronic absenteeism.



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2.3 **Absence for Medical Reasons**

Absences for medical reasons shall be taken into consideration when determining the loss of a credit or the withdrawal from a course or courses at the senior high level. The following factors should be considered:

- (a) length of absence:
 - short term - note from parent/guardian,
 - long term - availability of tutoring services;
- (b) frequency of absences for medical reasons;
- (c) overall student performance in course(s).

2.4 **Absence for Vacations**

The possible consequences to the student for extended absence due to vacations shall be outlined to the student and the parent/guardian.

The student shall be expected to obtain and complete the work required for the courses that may be missed due to absence for a vacation.

2.5 **Credit (High School Program)**

In order to obtain a credit, successful completion of a course of study for which a minimum of 110 hours of instruction has been scheduled is required.

3. **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

3.1 Students are responsible for

- (a) attending school and classes regularly and punctually;
- (b) complying with the school's code of conduct;
- (c) completing assignments and other related work required by teachers or other employees;
- (d) respecting school property and the property of others.

4. **PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS**

4.1 Parents/guardians of students under the age of 18 shall be informed by the school of attendance concerns related to their child/children.

4.2 At the senior high level, parents/guardians of students under the age of 18 shall be contacted by telephone or by letter at least twice prior to a student being considered for withdrawal from a course.

4.3 For students 18 years of age or older, permission of the student is required before information is released to the parent/guardian.

5. **WSD ATTENDANCE PROGRAM**

5.1 The goals of the WSD Attendance Program shall be to investigate attendance problems which school personnel have been unable to resolve after all reasonable alternatives have been attempted. The Division has retained the services of Attendance Counselling Education Services Inc. (A.C.E.S.) to provide attendance support. Attendance Counsellors act as an advocate and promote effective relationships between the home, the school and the community in the best interests of a student.



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- 5.2 To provide support services to children, parents/guardians and school personnel as a means of resolving attendance problems.
- 5.3 In striving to achieve these goals, it is assumed that absenteeism is a symptom of a more serious learning/academic problem or family problem which may require the support services of Clinical Support Services disciplines or Child and Family Services Agencies.
- 5.4 Referral to the Attendance Counselling Education Services (A.C.E.S.) shall be made by the principal.
- 5.5 Attendance Services shall be provided to assist in investigating and attempting to resolve chronic attendance problems.

6. ATTENDANCE OFFICERS

- 6.1 In accordance with The Public Schools Act, WSD shall appoint one or more school attendance officers or designate one or more of its employees as school attendance officers. Every school attendance officer has jurisdiction over each child who is a resident of or a pupil in the area for which the school attendance officer is appointed or designated and over all other children within that area.
- 6.2 The Attendance Officer has the power without warrant, to enter any place or public entertainment or any other place where the student may be employed and conduct that student to the school or to the home, when that student is reported as being absent from school.
- 6.3 The Attendance Officer must serve the person having care and control of the student with a notice in writing (Exhibit A), where upon a receipt of report and investigation finds that the student is unlawfully absent from school.
- 6.4 Every school attendance officer appointed under the authority of the Public Schools Act has the right of access to the student records for the purpose of procuring the names, ages and addresses of all children of compulsory school age and all such other information as may be required for the carrying out of the provisions of the Act.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Principal

- a) The principal must report the absence to the student's parent/guardian and inform them of their obligation to ensure the student attends school or if the child is 15 years of age participates in an activity or program as stated in the Public Schools Act.
- b) The principal must report a child's absence to the local school attendance officer if the principal is satisfied that
 - i. the student continues to be absent from school after the student's parent or legal guardian has been informed of the absence; and
 - ii. the parent or guardian has had a reasonable opportunity to comply with their obligations under the Public School Act.



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- c) The principal shall ensure that procedures and expectations for attendance include the following:
- i. Procedures for the recording of student attendance by teachers, outlining the period of time for which the attendance is recorded (period, class, day), the person(s) responsible for recording attendance, and the manner in which attendance is to be recorded.
 - ii. Identification of the person(s) responsible for discussing the attendance concerns with the student, contacting the parent/guardian and recording the date and time of the contact.
 - iii. Identification of the number of absences at which concerns regarding attendance are discussed with the student and the parent/guardian is contacted.
 - iv. Identification of the number of absences at which the attendance record is forwarded to the school office to be dealt with by the counsellor, a member of the school administration, or the attendance officer. Referral to the WSD Attendance Program (A.C.E.S.) shall be made by the school personnel. Attendance Services shall be provided to assist in investigating and attempting to resolve chronic attendance problems.
 - v. At the senior high level, identification of the maximum number of hours that the student may be absent from a particular course(s) prior to being considered for withdrawal from the course(s).

These guidelines shall be reviewed with staff, parents/guardians and students on an annual basis and forwarded to the appropriate Superintendent of Schools

7.2 Teachers

Every teacher shall

- a) keep a record of attendance;
- b) maintain order and discipline in the school;
- c) notify the principal who shall notify the appropriate local health authority that they have reason to believe that a pupil attending the school has been exposed to or is suffering from a communicable disease as defined in *The Public Health Act* and regulations made thereunder;
- d) deliver or cause to be delivered or provide the parent/guardian of each student taught by them, reports of the pupil at the times.

8. WITHDRAWAL FROM COURSES (SENIOR HIGH)

8.1 The consequence for continual non-attendance at the senior high level may be the denial of a credit and/or the withdrawal of the student from a course or courses.

8.2 Prior to the decision to withdraw a student, the principal/vice-principal shall attempt to arrange a meeting with the student and the parent/guardian to review the steps taken to improve attendance, the number of warnings provided, possible alternatives for the student and the consequence(s) for continued absence. A probationary period may be established at this time.



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8.3 No student shall be required to withdraw from a course due to circumstances deemed exceptional by the school administration.

8.4 If all attempts to improve attendance are unsuccessful, students who are absent from a particular course (full credit course) for more than 20 hours in a school year shall be considered for withdrawal from the course.

The information outlined above shall be forwarded in writing to the parent/guardian or the student if 18 years of age or older.

8.5 A student under 18 years of age shall not be withdrawn from the school without a school-leaving certificate.

9. ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

9.1 In accordance with the Public Schools Act regulation, Learning to Age 18, an activity or program in which a pupil may participate instead of attending school may be approved if participation in it will result in any of the following outcomes: (a) the pupil becoming re-engaged in school programming; (b) the pupil receiving education and training for a specific job, occupation or other form of employment; (c) development of the pupil's preparation for employment and general employment skills; (d) development of the pupil's life skills.

9.2 The Superintendent of schools must identify and submit the activities and programs that they consider suitable for students to participate in instead of attending school to the Deputy Minister.

9.3 In determining the activities and programs to be submitted to the school board, the superintendent must have regard for (a) whether a pupil's participation in the activity or program will result in the outcomes specified in section 8.1; (b) the availability of the activity or program to the students and (c) the need to accommodate the different learning styles of students.

10. EXEMPTION FROM LIABILITY

10.1 In accordance with the Public Schools Act, no person is guilty of an offence under subsection 260(2) for failing or refusing to ensure that their child attends school if

- a) in the case of a student who is 16 years of age or older, the child is enrolled in an adult learning centre registered under *The Adult Learning Centres Act* and is taking a program of study leading to a high school diploma;
- b) the field representative certifies that in his opinion the student is currently receiving a standard of education at home or elsewhere equivalent to that provided in a public school;
- c) the student is unable to attend school by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause or is excluded from attendance under Public Schools Act subsection 261(2);
- d) the student is absent from school on any day regarded as a holy day by the church or religious denomination with which the student is affiliated;
- e) the principal of the school has suspended the student from the school and the suspension is still in effect;



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- f) the student has been expelled and has not been permitted to enrol in another school division;
- g) the student has received, or has completed the necessary requirements to receive, a graduation diploma or certificate of completion, as defined in the regulations made under PSA subsection 259(2);
- h) the student is at least 15 years of age and is participating in an activity or program provided for in the regulations made under Public Schools Act section 262.2;
- i) the student is absent or excused from school as authorized under this Act, a regulation made under this Act or another enactment; or
- j) the student is at least 16 years of age and has withdrawn from parental control.

11. PROSECUTION FOR FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE ATTENDANCE ACT

- 11.1 WSD shall define the conditions under which a request to the Crown Attorney for court action against a parent/guardian may be made.
- 11.2 If a parent/guardian claims exemption from liability under the Public Schools Act as justification for their child being unable to attend school by reason of illness, WSD may require that the parent/guardian provide a medical certificate signed by a licensed physician to the principal outlining the nature of the illness, anticipated duration of the illness, and/or the capacity of the student to attend and participate in regular school programming.