

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Background

High Prairie School Division (HPSD) believes that regular attendance and punctuality are critical factors in the academic and personal success of students. Students who attend school regularly and on time are more engaged in learning, develop better social skills, and achieve higher academic success compared to those with frequent absences or lateness. While schools can take steps to encourage regular attendance, it is recognized that promotion of regular attendance is a shared responsibility amongst parents/guardians, students and HPSD personnel.

Definitions

Compulsory education – an individual who is eligible to be enrolled in school, who on September 1 in a year is 6 years of age or older, and is younger than 16 years of age, shall attend school.

Chronic absenteeism – a student who has, for any reason, missed 10 percent or more of the school year or in the previous year, missed a month or more of school

Excusable absences from school - are legislated in the Education Act (s.7) as follows: the student is unable to attend by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause, the day is recognized as a religious holiday by the religious denomination to which the student belongs, the Principal of the school has suspended the student from school and the suspension is still in effect, the student has been expelled from a school and has not yet enrolled in another education program

Attendance Officer – means the Superintendent or any other individual designated by the board as an attendance officer.

Office of Student Attendance and Re-engagement (OSAR) - provides leadership and support to school authorities to address chronic absenteeism. The OSAR promotes the use of strategies to support and encourage all students to attend school regularly.

Provincial Attendance Board - A student with a pattern of chronic non-attendance may be referred to the Attendance Board if efforts to enforce attendance and re-engagement in learning have been unsuccessful.

Procedures

1. General

- 1.1. HPSD has an expectation that:
 - 1.1.1. reasonable efforts are taken to promote the importance of regular student attendance;
 - 1.1.2. Administrative Procedure 330 – Student Attendance will be communicated to students, parents/guardians and school council early in the school year through various means: meetings, student/parent handbooks, notices to parents, school bulletins, social media.
- 1.2. The procedure will:
 - 1.2.1. define school expectations regarding attendance and actions that will be taken when student attendance is unacceptable;
 - 1.2.2. use qualitative and quantitative data to identify attendance trends and barriers;
 - 1.2.3. identify staff who will be involved when attendance is affecting a student's learning (e.g. Wellness Coach, Career Coach, Indigenous Education Coach, Behaviour Management Consultant, Attendance Officer);
 - 1.2.4. identify steps to be taken when reasonable attempts at intervention have not resulted in improved attendance.

2. Documentation

- 2.1. Staff is required to accurately report student attendance in the Student Information System (Edsembli).
- 2.2. Attempts will be made to contact parents/guardians to verify absences.
 - 2.2.1. All contacts will be documented within Edsembli.
- 2.3. Electronic reporting of student absence to parents/guardians may be used for ongoing communication of student absence but is not an appropriate verification mechanism.

3. Responsibilities for student attendance will be shared by the following:**3.1. Students**

- 3.1.1. Maintain regular class attendance.
- 3.1.2. Attend classes punctually.

3.2. Parents/Guardians

- 3.2.1. Ensure their children maintain regular school/class attendance.
- 3.2.2. Provide an explanation for any absence from school.
- 3.2.3. Shall, whenever possible, schedule medical, dental, other appointments and family holidays outside of regular instructional hours.

3.3. Teachers

- 3.3.1. Maintain accurate daily/block attendance records in Edsembli.
- 3.3.2. Report instances where student is suspected of truancy.
- 3.3.3. Make initial contact with parents regarding an attendance pattern or concern as soon as it is evident (phone call / email).

3.4. Principals

- 3.4.1. Establish a student attendance communication system between the school and home (both verbal and written) to address attendance concerns.
- 3.4.2. Ensure appropriate accommodations and/or adaptations for student learning are being addressed.
- 3.4.3. Ensure accurate attendance data is placed on student reports home and a copy included with the student cumulative record.
- 3.4.4. By October 15, for any student identified as having missed 15% of the school year to date, the principal will mail home a letter outlining the attendance concerns. The letter is to be attached to the student's record in Provincial Approach to Student Information (PASI) and a copy forwarded to the Attendance Officer.
- 3.4.5. In consultation with teacher(s), provide strategies and supports as needed (Form 330A), immediately after the October 15 letter has been sent home.
- 3.4.6. In consultation with teacher(s) and school support personnel, develop an Attendance Improvement Plan as needed (Form 330B1), and with parents (Form 330B2) immediately after the October 15 letter has been sent home.
- 3.4.7. If a student's attendance pattern remains a concern, by November 1, communicate via a second letter to parents/guardians the ongoing attendance concerns. The letter is to be attached to the student's record in PASI and a copy forwarded to the Attendance Officer. If no improvement after this letter:
 - 3.4.7.1. For students between the ages of 6 and 16, the matter is referred to the HPSD Attendance Officer.
 - 3.4.7.2. For high school students (16 years and over) where attendance is monitored by individual courses, if all supports and services have not resulted in improved attendance and the student is not meeting the expectations within the school attendance policy, the following attempt shall be used to address the problem:
 - 3.4.7.2.1. Consult with the parents and student, which may lead to voluntary withdrawal from a course(s);
 - 3.4.7.2.2. Send a letter, advising the student and parent of the decision, with an invitation to re-enroll during the next semester (if age appropriate); and
 - 3.4.7.2.3. Send a copy of letter to the HPSD Attendance Officer.

3.4.8. At ANY point in the year after October 15, if a student's attendance becomes concerning, follow this procedure.

3.5. Attendance Officer

3.5.1. Reviews school interventions with the principal.

3.5.2. Provides recommendations if additional school measures are required.

3.5.3. Notifies parent/student of the Attendance Officer's involvement and collaborates with the school and parents to support improved attendance.

3.5.4. Determines if outside agency involvement or other HPSPD supports are required.

3.5.5. Consults with the Office of Student Attendance and Re-engagement (OSAR).

3.5.6. Completes referral to the Provincial Attendance Board, if advised.

References

Education Act, Section 7, 8, 9, 31, 32, 46, 47

Cross References

Administrative Procedure 340 - Code of Conduct

Forms

Administrative Form 330A - Attendance Promotion Strategies

Administrative Form 330B1 - Student Attendance Improvement Template

Administrative Form 330B2 - Attendance Improvement Plan

Appendix 330A - Attendance Letter 1 (Initial)

Appendix 330B - Attendance Letter 2 (Follow-Up)