



POLICY – PO613

Student Attendance

Area: Student Conduct and Safety
Source: Superintendent of Safe Schools

Approved: May 24, 2011

Revised: November 10, 2014 (Interim); February 9, 2015; November 11, 2019; May 10, 2021

1. Introduction

The Durham Catholic District School Board (the “Board”) believes that regular attendance and punctuality are essential for students to be successful in school and subsequently in employment. The Board recognizes that both staff and parents/guardians/caregivers share the responsibility to promote the values of good attendance and punctuality; to collaborate in resolving issues of absenteeism and lateness when they arise; and provide positive reinforcement and supports needed for good attendance and punctuality.

2. Definitions

Absent:

- a) Elementary — an elementary student is considered absent when they are not present (in class or online) for the morning and/or afternoon session of the school day.
- b) Secondary — a secondary student is considered absent when they are not present (in class or online) for any subject period of the school day or scheduled examination.

Late:

- a) Elementary — an elementary student is considered late if they arrive to class (in class or online) after the beginning of the morning or afternoon session of the school day.
- b) Secondary — a secondary student is considered late if they arrive to class (in class or online) after the beginning of any subject period 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

Prolonged Absence (*Enrolment Register Instructions for Elementary and Secondary Schools*) – the absence of a pupil for 15 consecutive school days without appropriate supporting documentation.

Temporary Excusal of Attendance—temporary absence of a pupil for which permission has been granted by the principal.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and its attendant administrative procedure is to provide direction in the reinforcement and support of good attendance and punctuality among all students.

4. Application / Scope

This policy applies to all students in the Board. This policy also acknowledges the responsibility of all staff and parents/guardians/caregivers in supporting regular student attendance and punctuality.

5. Principles

- 5.1 The Board believes there is a correlation between regular student attendance and student success from kindergarten to the completion of secondary school.
- 5.2 The Board recognizes its responsibility in creating a safe, welcoming and inclusive school environment that will support and encourage regular attendance.
- 5.3 The Board believes that parents/guardians/caregivers have an essential role to play in supporting the regular attendance and punctuality of their children.
- 5.4 In ensuring a safe school environment for all students, the Board acknowledges its responsibility in monitoring student attendance and punctuality, responding to issues of absenteeism and lateness, and engaging parents/guardians/caregivers in a timely manner when such issues arise.

5.5—DCDSB believes that chronic absenteeism and lateness require ongoing communication and engagement of parents/guardians/caregivers, substantial and concerted interventions in supporting other issues which may be contributing to the problem.

- 5.5 The Board recognizes that the issues, barriers, and challenges that underly chronic absenteeism and lateness are multi-faceted. As such, resolving chronic absenteeism and lateness requires positive, supportive ongoing communication

and engagement of parents/guardians/caregivers and students to create substantial solutions and interventions in supporting the issues which may be creating barriers to attendance for a specific student or groups of students.

6. Requirements

6.1 The Director or Education, or designate, shall issue administrative procedures and guidelines to support this policy and amend them thereafter as the need may arise.

6.2 The administrative procedure must address:

6.2.1 Daily monitoring of student attendance and punctuality for compulsory attendance-aged children;

6.2.2 Initiation and reinforcement of a safe arrival program for all students;

6.2.3 Reinforcement and support of good attendance and punctuality;

6.2.4 Timely response to student absence and lateness;

6.2.5 Engagement of parents/guardians/caregivers in reinforcing and supporting good attendance and punctuality;

6.2.6 Comprehensive and effective interventions to support chronic absenteeism and lateness.

6.3 Responsibilities of the Principal

6.3.1 Subsection 265(1)(c) of the Education Act states that it is the duty of a principal of a school, in addition to their 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.”

6.3.2 The principal must ensure that they follow Student Attendance Procedures (AP613-1 and AP613-2) and implement 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.

~~6.3.3 The principal must ensure that:~~

~~a) 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;~~

~~b) Enrolment and attendance records are accurate and up to date;~~

~~c) All required enrolment and attendance records and related documents are retained for audit purposes;~~

- d) They must sign off on all enrolment registers even if nil full-time equivalent is reported for each category of pupils;
- e) Parents/guardians/caregivers are notified of all student absences or lates; and
- f) Where a student is missing from school for two or more 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.

6.4 Responsibilities of Students

- 6.4.1 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.
- 6.4.2 Students are required to “attend classes punctually and regularly” (Regulation 298, 23.1(d)).
- 6.4.3 Students may be excused by the principal from attendance at school temporarily at any time at the written request of a parent/guardian/caregivers of the pupil or the pupil if that pupil is an adult (Regulation 298, 23.3).

6.5 Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians/Caregivers

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

7. Sources

- 7.1 Education Act
- 7.2 Ontario Regulation 374/10 – Supervised Alternative Learning and Other Excusals from Attendance at School
- 7.3 Enrolment Register Instructions for Elementary and Secondary Schools, Ministry of Education

8. Related Policies and Administrative Procedures

- 8.1 Student Attendance – Elementary Administrative Procedure (AP613-1)
- 8.2 Student Attendance – Secondary Administrative Procedure (AP613-2)
- 8.3 Admission of Students Administrative Procedure (AP410-1)