

MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 76**STUDENT ATTENDANCE****BACKGROUND**

Students are required to attend school unless excused under the provisions of the School Act.

POLICY

~~The Board expects students to attend school regularly and punctually, staff to monitor student attendance and parents to cooperate with school staff in the enforcement of student attendance.~~

Students shall attend school regularly and punctually as required by the School Act and as mandated under the authority of the Board.

GUIDELINES

1. ~~The superintendent, or designate, will provide oversight with respect to students referred to the provincial Attendance Board.~~ Except for independent students, responsibility for advising the school when a student shall be absent or late and the reason for the absence or lateness shall rest with the parent/guardian.
2. Each school principal shall be responsible for establishing school attendance procedures with respect to the relevant administrative procedure.
3. The Superintendent or designate shall provide oversight with respect to students referred to the provincial Attendance Board.

Adopted:
September 7, 2004

Revised:
November 27, 2018

REFERENCES:

School Act: Sections 1, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 60, 61, 113, 126

Procedure 605 P 001 Student Attendance **New**

Exhibit 605 E 001 Attendance Procedures – Continuum of Supports **New**

MEDICINE HAT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 76

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

TITLE: Attendance	POLICY REFERENCE: 605 Student Attendance
PROCEDURE CODE: 605 P 001 Student Attendance	

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

Supporting Student attendance is a responsibility shared by the school, the teacher, the student, the parent/guardian and the community. Regular attendance at school is critical to student success and is of the utmost importance for a student to achieve their full potential. Regular attendance is expected of every student in Medicine Hat Public School Division.

It is important for the schools to accurately monitor and identify concerning trends in student attendance and to intervene when absenteeism or truancy are considered excessive and/or student behaviors are seen as moving towards discouragement from school. The District has a legal responsibility to ensure that students attend school on a regular basis and shall ensure that students abide by provincial attendance laws.

GENERAL

1. Principals shall develop student attendance procedures which include a process for keeping parents/guardians informed of unexcused absences.
2. School attendance procedures shall include a process for students or parents to notify the school of student absences.
3. Principals shall make students and parents/guardians aware of their responsibility for regular and punctual student attendance.
4. Teachers shall keep accurate attendance records for each of their students.
5. The record of a student's attendance shall appear on student progress reports.
6. An Assistant Superintendent shall be appointed Attendance Officer for the School Division.

PROCEDURES

1. The District supports positive attendance through a comprehensive approach grounded in prevention and intervention.
2. The focus on attendance issues must be in the supportive context. The supportive context is grounded in the collaborative model which includes the school, District supports, students and their families, and outside agencies.

3. The decision to move to legal measures defined under Section 14 of the School Act is to be made in consultation with the Superintendent and/or the Attendance Officer. Such a decision should be taken only after all proactive and supportive measures have been exhausted with little or no improvement in student attendance.
4. Principals shall establish school level attendance policies that:
 - a. Encourage regular attendance;
 - b. Are clearly disseminated to students and families and accessible in multiple formats;
 - c. Ensure that accurate student attendance records are maintained and monitored;
 - d. Reference a Continuum of Attendance Supports that demonstrates classroom and school-based attendance and engagement supports and;
 - e. Involve the family in resolving attendance problems.
5. Principals may consider:
 - a. The role of personalized early outreach in establishing a culture of attendance;
 - b. Using appropriate tools to conduct proactive campaigns to communicate the importance of attendance (posters, websites, social media, incentives, positive communication home, etc.);
 - c. Sending regular attendance data home to all families;
 - d. Using software tools to set up automatic alerts connected to chronic absenteeism;
6. Principals shall ensure that appropriate accommodation and/or adaptation for learning difficulties are addressed.
7. Principals shall ensure that valid physical or mental health related issues are not the primary cause of poor attendance.
8. Both informal and formal communication to parents/guardians regarding poor attendance, and attempts to resolve the poor attendance should be documented.
9. In instances where corrective measures taken by the school have not been effective in addressing poor student attendance will advise the Division Attendance Officer.
10. The Division Attendance Officer will:
 - a. Review school based interventions with school administration;
 - b. Compile all documentation (e.g. correspondence to parents, record of attendance, etc.);
 - c. Advise the school if additional measures or strategies are required;
 - d. Determine if the Community Conference team should engage the family.
 - e. Advise the parents /guardians of his/her involvement;
11. Should these measures be unsuccessful the school will develop written correspondence to parents/guardians that references the School Act, outline school action taken to date, and include the number of days absent. The school will share this information with the District Attendance Officer.
12. The Division Attendance Officer will determine if a referral to the Attendance Board is warranted.

Approved:
October 1, 2018

REFERENCES

School Act: Sections 1, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 22, 60, 61, 113, and 126

MEDICINE HAT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 76

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

TITLE: Attendance Procedures – Continuum of Supports	POLICY REFERENCE: 605 Student Attendance
EXHIBIT CODE: 605 E 001	PROCEDURE CODE: 605 P 001 Student Attendance

Tier 4 - System Interventions
- o Attendance Board Referral - o Formal attendance letter home - o Community Conference Facilitation Referral - o Case conference including the Attendance Officer - o Enter any place other than a dwelling to determine if a student is present and direct that student to their home or school - o Seek an ex parte warrant to enter, without force, a home/dwelling to determine if a student who should be at school is present and to direct conditions as authorized by a judge or justice of the peace
Tier 3 - School Interventions
- o Letter home - o Case conference meeting - o Home visit (at school's discretion) - o Consult with Office of Student Attendance & Re-engagement (OSAR) - o Consider an attendance "mentor" - o Hard to Reach Parents - Alternative avenues (Facebook message or other social media contact) - o Alternative structures or schedules (as appropriate) - o Connect student with a mentor - o Creation of attendance plan with student and family - o School or Admin contact with home - by phone or email (not a formal letter at this point) - o Weekly attendance monitoring through Dossier reports - o Refer families to appropriate school-based resources or external support agencies (eg. Common Ground, Triple P Parenting - McMan, City of Med Hat FSLWs, Bridges, FSCD, CMH, other)

Tier 2 - Classroom Interventions
- o Meet with family - o If the student has siblings in the school, how is their attendance? - o Consult with admin, classroom support teacher or school counsellor (if available) - o Recognizing improved attendance - o Contact and Communication with home - phone calls, personal notes, log entries - o Engaging students and parents - o Personalized early outreach (e.g. handwritten notes in agenda in lieu of formal letter(s) home) - o Implement strategies in school-based Attendance Plan
Tier 1 Prevention Per AB ED: Includes examining our Engagement, School Culture, Pedagogy, Structure, Leadership
- o Establishing an Optimal Learning Environment in the classroom - o Shared Accountability School/Student/Home - o Regular and meaningful communication with parents/guardians by the classroom teacher - o Early Intervention and Monitoring - o Daily Accurate Attendance Data and Monitoring - o Training school staff to understand Attendance Data - o Accurate PowerSchool Contact information - o Setting goals and targets for attendance data - o Recognizing good attendance - o Particular attention to Transition years - o Involving other organizations in promoting and supporting good attention - o Supporting engagement through school belonging - o Positive Messaging (school based and system based – posters, online messaging, etc.) - o Parent/Community Support - o Incentive Programs (classroom based and/or school based) - o Setting Expectations - o School targets for attendance (goal setting) - o School Attendance Plan

Approved:
October 1, 2018