



STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Procedures

1.0 Introduction

Persistent absence is a problem we can solve. Everyone can make a difference by helping students and families understand that going to school every day and avoiding absences whenever possible is critical to realizing their hopes and dreams. Too often, we don't realize how quickly absences add up and missing just two days every month can cause a child to fall behind.

School administrators are expected to follow the [Administrator Attendance Toolkit](#) (found in Docushare under Board Departments >> Mental Health and Well-Being) to help schools develop efficient and effective attendance strategies in their work with students, families and communities.

2.0 Temporary Excusal of Attendance

Parents/Guardians may request permission for their child to temporarily be excused from school for a pre-determined specified period of time, pursuant to Ontario Regulation 298 of the Education Act, Section 23 (3). This request must be made in writing and submitted to the school principal for approval, using the Temporary Excusal of Attendance Form (**Appendix A**).

If the student will be participating in a Program of Study during their absence (encouraged but not required for absences of 14 days or less), then a meeting should be held with the Parent/Guardian and the Principal to develop an appropriate plan. (Example available as **Appendix B**)

While excused from school, the parent/guardian accepts full responsibility for the student's education.

A student who does not return from a temporary excusal of attendance at the stated time will be referred to the Attendance Counsellor.

3.0 Reasons to Initiate Attendance Protocol

- For elementary students, a minimum of 10 accumulated student absences within a 3 month period with no reasonable explanation determined by the Education Act (see Ed. Act Section 2).
- For secondary students, a minimum of 10 accumulative student absences within a three month period with no reasonable explanation determined by the Education Act (see Ed. Act Section 2).
- Student demonstrates a pattern of absences (e.g., only Mondays, every afternoon, one specific class).
- Student not returning after a Board holiday within 5 days.
- Student demonstrates other possible indicators that attendance is a concern.

4.0 Attendance Protocol Referral Process

(*All attempts to communicate with a student and/or parent or guardian must be documented)

4.1 Teacher Contact

- Attendance is taken in accordance with the Safe Arrival Policy 2.1.2.
- The teacher and/or secretary notice a pattern or raise a concern regarding a student's attendance.
- The teacher contacts the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) to discuss attendance.
- If there is no improvement in 5 days, then the teacher should refer the student to school administration.

4.2 Principal/Vice-Principal Contact

- The Principal or Vice-Principal contacts the parent(s) or guardian(s) by telephone or through a person to person meeting including the student.
- A "Letter of Concern" could be sent to parent(s) or guardian(s) if contact has not been successful. (**Appendix C**). This will initiate a referral to the attendance counsellor who will then monitor for improvement.
- If there has been no improvement in 5 days, then the principal or vice-principal should refer the student to the Attendance Counsellor.

4.3 Referral to Attendance Counsellor

- The Principal or Vice-Principal will notify the Attendance Counsellor in writing (by email or Letter of Concern) of the student with the attendance concern.
- The referral from the Principal or Vice-Principal will also contain any pertinent information regarding the student's attendance patterns, such as medical notes, Child and Youth Worker referrals, Indigenous Student Advisor referrals, or Individual Education Plan components.

4.4 Attendance Counsellor

- The Attendance Counsellor will attempt to contact the student and/or parent(s) or guardian(s) through several means including phone calls, letters, private social media accounts and/or home visits.
- The Attendance Counsellor will work with the student and/or parent(s) or guardian(s) to encourage improved attendance through several interventions including:
 - Regular attendance counselling
 - Modified timetable

- Resources and assessments for schools and parents, to assist with children who refuse school.
 - Referrals to internal supports (e.g., Child and Youth Worker, Social Worker, Mental Health and Addiction Nurse, Indigenous Student Advisor, Student Success Teacher)
 - Referrals to external supports (e.g., North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services, Canadian Mental Health Association, addiction counseling, medical support)
 - Supervised Alternative Learning (See Policy 2.1.8)
 - Attendance Review Meeting(s)
 - Warning letters (**Appendix D**)
 - Refer compulsory attendance matters to Provincial Court for legal consequences
- The Attendance Counsellor shall keep all school administrators and the Superintendent of Schools informed through the use of a memorandum (**Appendix E**) detailing the progress of the interventions of all prolonged absences, every 15 days, to a maximum of 60 days for children aged 14 to 17, or indefinitely for children aged 6 to 13, provided the procedures for prolonged absence are followed. This contact will be marked in the student's file in Aspen, under the Attendance tab, and the Documents side tab.
 - The Attendance Counsellor shall maintain a list of non-attending students who are fourteen to seventeen years old and who have been removed from the register of any District School Board Ontario North East school. These youth and/or their parents or guardians will be contacted at least once a semester by the Attendance Counsellor to encourage them to resume their education. (**Appendix F**)

4.5 Prolonged Absence

- If a secondary student has been absent for 15 consecutive classes in a course without appropriate supporting medical documentation, the student must be withdrawn from the course on the day immediately following the last day of attendance. If the student no longer qualifies to be a full-time student as a result of this withdrawal, the student's enrolment status must be changed to "part-time".
- After 15 consecutive days of absence, a student shall be shown as retired on the 16th day. However, a student may be maintained on the register beyond 15 consecutive days of absence, if the principal:
 - Completes the Prolonged Absence Form (**Appendix G**) and sends it to the Attendance Counsellor; or
 - There is documentation, by a regulated health professional, that the pupil is seriously ill.
- After 30 consecutive days of absence, a principal may keep a student on the register only if advised by the Attendance Counsellor through a memorandum (**Appendix E**) that the student's file is still active.

Appendices

Appendix A: Temporary Excusal of Attendance Form

Appendix B: Sample Program of Study

Appendix C: Sample Letters of Concern

Appendix D: Sample Warning Letter

Appendix E: Memorandum

Appendix F: Re-Registration Letters

Appendix G: Prolonged Absence Form

References

Education Act

Education Act R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 298: Operation of Schools – General



TEMPORARY EXCUSAL OF ATTENDANCE

Student Name:		OEN #:	Grade:
School:		Student Address:	
D.O.B:	Age:		

Parent/Guardian:	Parent/Guardian:
Home Phone:	Home Phone:
Work Number:	Work Number:
Cell Number:	Cell Number:

Teacher(s):		
Excusal Start Date:	Student Return Date:	Total School Days Missed:

We, the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of the above student, hereby request permission that my child is temporarily excused from school for the above-stated period of time (pursuant to Ontario Regulation 298 of the Education Act, Section 23 (3)). I/We take full responsibility for the student's absence from school and for any work or tests missed during the period of absence. I/We have been made aware that regular school attendance is linked to school success and am/are aware of the potential risks associated with prolonged absences from school.

For absences between seven to fourteen consecutive days: I/We understand that the school is encouraged to, but not required to, provide alternative programming during this period of time and that the student will be marked as "G" in the Daily Student Attendance Register.

For absences beyond the above-stated return date: I/We understand that the student will be marked as absent and/or withdrawn from the Enrolment Register. I/We will re-register the student upon their return.

I/We understand that the student must return to school on the date indicated above or the matter will be referred to the Attendance Counsellor.

A program of study has been provided

Date	Parent/Guardian(s) Signature
Date	Principal's or Designates Signature



**PROGRAM OF STUDY for a
TEMPORARY EXCUSAL OF ATTENDANCE**

Student Name:		OEN #:
Excusal Start Date:	Student Return Date:	

Subject:	Course Code:	Teacher:
Assignment:		
Textbook/Resources Required:		

Subject:	Course Code:	Teacher:
Assignment:		
Textbook/Resources Required:		

Subject:	Course Code:	Teacher:
Assignment:		
Textbook/Resources Required:		

Subject:	Course Code:	Teacher:
Assignment:		
Textbook/Resources Required:		



SAMPLE LETTER OF CONCERN FROM PRINCIPAL – 5+ Days Absent

[Today's Date]

[Parent/Guardian Name]
[Parent/Guardian Address]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

RE: [Student Name]

We are concerned about your child’s attendance. We know that when children miss school, are late or absent, they can develop gaps in their education. Additionally, this can make them feel disconnected from their friends and make school an uncomfortable place to be. Please see below a detailed list of your child’s absences.

Whatever the reason for your child’s absences/late arrivals, [Abbreviated AC Name (ex. "Mrs. Clark")], our regional Attendance Counsellor, is available to work with you and your child to encourage regular, on-time attendance. You can reach her in the following ways:

- [List alternate contact methods]
-
-

Our Attendance Counsellors start to monitor the attendance of our pupils when their absences begin to interfere with their academic success.

If improvement has not been noted, [Abbreviated AC Name (ex. "Mrs. Clark")] may contact you and/or your child to further discuss your child’s attendance and offer support.

Sincerely,

[Principal Name]
Principal

Cc: Attendance Counsellor
Supervisory Officer

Absences	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	Total
Morning						
Afternoon						
Lates						
	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	Total
Morning						
Afternoon						
Lates						



SAMPLE LETTER OF CONCERN FROM PRINCIPAL – 10+ Days Absent

[Today's Date]

[Parent/Guardian Name]
[Parent/Guardian Address]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

RE: [Student Name]

Since September, your child has missed () school days. We know that when children miss school, are late or absent, they can develop gaps in their education. Additionally, this can make them feel disconnected from their friends and make school an uncomfortable place to be. Please see below a detailed list of your child's absences.

Whatever the reason for your child's absences/late arrivals, [Abbreviated AC Name (ex. "Mrs. Clark")], our regional Attendance Counsellor, is available to work with you and your child to encourage regular, on-time attendance. You can reach her in the following ways:

- [List alternate contact methods]
-
-

Our Attendance Counsellors start to monitor the attendance of our pupils after 10-15 cumulative absences within a 3-month period.

If improvement has not been noted, [Abbreviated AC Name (ex. "Mrs. Clark")] may contact you and/or your child to further discuss your child's attendance and offer support.

Sincerely,

[Principal Name]
Principal

Cc: Attendance Counsellor
Supervisory Officer

Absences	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	Total
Morning						
Afternoon						
Lates						
	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	Total
Morning						
Afternoon						
Lates						



SAMPLE WARNING LETTER FROM ATTENDANCE COUNSELLOR

(on Board Letterhead)

[Date]

Addressee Name
Address

Dear Addressee Name

RE: Student Name – D.O.B.

Investigation of the facts concerning the non-attendance of your child brings me to the conclusion that, by law, I must inform you of the consequences of continued non-attendance. The following are excerpts from the *Education Act* which I must draw to your attention:

Section 30 (1) A parent or guardian of a person required to attend school under section 21 who neglects or refuses to cause that person to attend school is, unless the person is at least 16 years old or older, **guilty of an offence** and on conviction **is liable to a fine** of not more than \$200. 2006, c. 28, s. 7 (1).

Section 30 (2) The court may, in addition to or instead of imposing a fine, require a parent or guardian convicted of an offence under subsection (1) to submit to the Minister of Finance a personal bond, in a form prescribed by the court, in the penal sum of \$200 with one or more sureties as required, conditioned that the parent or guardian shall cause the person to attend school as required under section 21 and, upon breach of the condition, the bond is forfeit to the Crown. 2006, c. 28, s. 7 (1).

Section 30 (5) A person who is required by law to attend school and who refuses to attend or is habitually absent from school is, unless the person is 16 years old or older, **guilty of an offence** and on conviction is liable to the penalties under Part VI of the Provincial Offences Act and subsection 266 (2) of the Act applies in any proceeding under this section. 2006, c. 28, s. 7 (3).

Under Section 26 (4) of the *Education Act* I am required to give written notice to the parent or guardian of a child who is not attending schools as required, to cause the child to attend school forthwith. **This letter, and the extracts from the Act, constitutes the warning** to you as a parent concerning this matter. I shall therefore expect that your child will return to school upon receipt of this letter. Failure to do so must be considered to be either neglect on the part of the parent or refusal on the part of the student.

Sincerely,

Attendance Counsellor Name
Attendance Counsellor
District School Board Ontario North East

cc: Principal, Supervisory Officer



RE-REGISTRATION LETTER – Second Semester

(on Board Letterhead)

[Date]

[Address]

Dear [Parent/Guardian/Adult Student Name],

RE: [Student Name] D.O.B. [Date of Birth]

Please be advised that [Student First Name] was removed from the academic register during the first semester of the [school year] school year for the reason of non-attendance. [Student First Name] needs to re-register as soon as possible in order to be listed as a student for second semester at [School Name]. Second semester commences on [Date].

In order to re-register with [School Name], you must complete an online registration form, found through our website (www.dsb1.ca), or register in person at the school office. Online registrations must include a follow-up visit to the school to provide your documentation. The following documentation must be provided when you visit the school:

- Proof of Student's Age (birth certificate or passport)
- Proof of Residence (document with physical address on it – e.g., utility bill, tax bill)
- Court Documents for Custody/Access (if applicable)

[Student First Name] will then be asked to see a Guidance Counsellor to pick out courses for the semester. The sooner [Student First Name] re-registers, the more course selection options there will be available.

Please note that according to the *Education Act*, all students must attend school until they reach the age of 18, or have obtained their Ontario Secondary School Diploma or equivalent. If you have any questions or concerns about this requirement/process, please contact me at [Phone] or by email at [Email].

We look forward to having [Student First Name] back at [School Name] for the second semester, and appreciate your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely

[Attendance Counsellor Name]
Attendance Counsellor
District School Board Ontario North East

Cc: Superintendent of Education
Exec. Assistant to Superintendent



RE-REGISTRATION LETTER – New Year

(on Board Letterhead)

[Date]

[Address]

Dear [Parent/Guardian/Adult Student Name],

RE: [Student Name] D.O.B. [Date of Birth]

Please be advised that [Student First Name] was removed from the academic register during the [school year] school year for the reason of non-attendance. [Student First Name] needs to re-register as soon as possible in order to be listed as a student of [School Name] for the upcoming [school year] school year.

In order to re-register with [School Name], you must complete an online registration form, found through our website (www.dsb1.ca), or register in person at the school office. Online registrations must include a follow-up visit to the school to provide your documentation. The following documentation must be provided when you visit the school:

- Proof of Student's Age (birth certificate or passport)
- Proof of Residence (document with physical address on it – e.g., utility bill, tax bill)
- Court Documents for Custody/Access (if applicable)

[Student First Name] will then be asked to see a Guidance Counsellor to pick out courses for next year. The sooner [Student First Name] re-registers, the more course selection options there will be available.

Please note that according to the *Education Act*, all students must attend school until they reach the age of 18, or have obtained their Ontario Secondary School Diploma or equivalent. If you have any questions or concerns about this requirement/process, please contact me at [Phone] or by email at [Email].

We look forward to having [Student First Name] back at [School Name] in the fall, and appreciate your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely

[Attendance Counsellor Name]
Attendance Counsellor
District School Board Ontario North East

Cc: Superintendent of Education
Exec. Assistant to Superintendent



PROLONGED ABSENCE FORM

(Reference: Student Register)

***This form is used as of the 15th day of CONSECUTIVE ABSENTEEISM
(Must be filled out on the 16th day and signed by Principal)***

It is the school's responsibility to contact the parent, guardian or adult pupil in order to determine why the pupil has not been in attendance. All contacts and documentation are to be retained in the same location as the registers. The removal of a pupil's name from the register does not negate the obligations required under the *Education Act* for compulsory attendance. This original document is to be placed in the OSR and a copy with the student register files.

Date: _____

Student Information:

Name:	DOB:	Grade:
School:	Home Address:	
Parent(s)/Guardian(s):		

ACTIONS TAKEN BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL

- After 15 consecutive days of absence, a pupil shall be shown as retired on the 16th day.
- However, a pupil may be maintained on the register beyond 15 consecutive days of absence, if the principal:
 - completes the Prolonged Absence Form and sends it to the Attendance Counsellor
 - or**
 - there is documentation, by a regulated health professional, that the pupil is seriously ill
- The following chart should be used to document the school actions/comments regarding this situation:

Date	Actions/Comments

Principal Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Submit (via email) to your Regional Attendance Counsellor:

South: Taryn.Fuller@dsb1.ca ☼ Central: Beth.Clark@dsb1.ca ☼ North: Nicole.Trottier@dsb1.ca