

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

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1.0 ATTENDANCE

2.0 AUTHORIZATION

1.0 ATTENDANCE

- 1.1 The Halifax Regional School Board recognizes that regular student attendance and punctuality are essential to student achievement.
- 1.2 The Halifax Regional School Board is committed to the full implementation of the Nova Scotia Education Act which clearly defines student attendance as a responsibility that is shared among parents/guardians, students, teachers, principals and the school board.
- 1.3 The Halifax Regional School Board is committed to full implementation of the Public School Program which defines the goals and policies of public school education in Nova Scotia, including the essential features of learning environments and learning experiences.
- 1.4 The Board supports a school-based approach to attendance management, but also believes that school attendance strategies must be consistent with the Education Act and Board policy.
- 1.5 The Halifax Regional School Board recognizes that different schools will have different strategies for recognizing good attendance and for intervening to reduce attendance problems.

2.0 AUTHORIZATION

- 2.1 The Superintendent is authorized to issue procedures in support of this policy.

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

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1.0 ATTENDANCE **2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

1.0 ATTENDANCE

- 1.1 Students are expected to report to all classes on time.
- 1.2 Principals will ensure that all learning environments are inviting, supportive, and engaging as described in the Public School Program.
- 1.3 All schools, in consultation with their School Advisory Council, will develop a set of strategies to secure full and regular attendance of all students.
- 1.4 School-based strategies to secure full and regular attendance of all students will:
 - 1.4.1 Be made available to all students, parents/guardians, and staff;
 - 1.4.2 Apply to all students who are registered with the school regardless of age or grade;
 - 1.4.3 Include a description of responsibilities and methods for:
 - 1.4.3.1 Promoting student attendance;
 - 1.4.3.2 Communicating with parents/guardians about unexcused absences;
 - 1.4.3.3 Communicating with parents/guardians regarding ongoing attendance problems.
- 1.5 Attendance will be recorded on a period-by-period basis by classroom teachers and will be recorded under the following categories:
 - 1.5.1 Present: There are several circumstances and designations for which a student will be marked present. These include:
 - 1.5.1.1 Student is present in class;
 - 1.5.1.2 Student was in the office or Student Services during class;
 - 1.5.1.3 Student was on a school-authorized field trip, participating in a school team activity, or another school sponsored activity;

- 1.5.1.4 Student was at a job placement such as co-op;
- 1.5.1.5 Student is on an unassigned or study block.

1.5.2 Special Circumstance Absence: There are instances for which a student will be marked absent due to special circumstances. These include:

- 1.5.2.1 Student has a documented acute or chronic medical condition requiring hospitalization or specialist appointments;
- 1.5.2.2 Student is absent due to a verifiable religious observance
- 1.5.2.3 Student is absent due to a death in the immediate family;
- 1.5.2.4 Student is absent as a result of participation in an educational opportunity or special activity as deemed appropriate by school administration (e.g., participation in a recognized provincial, national or international competition). This designation always requires administrative approval prior to the event;
- 1.5.2.5 Student is absent as a direct result of legal obligations, supported by court subpoenas or appropriate documentation.

1.5.3 Suspension

- 1.5.3.1 Student is absent due to a suspension by school administration.

1.5.4 Excused Absence: A student's absence will be considered excused when:

- 1.5.4.1 The student is absent, but has provided an acceptable excuse through documented contact from home.

1.5.5 Unexcused Absence: A student's absence will be considered unexcused when:

- 1.5.5.1 The student is absent and has not provided an acceptable excuse through documented contact from home.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The Halifax Regional School Board Attendance Committee is responsible for:

- 2.1.1 Monitoring the attendance of students;

- 2.1.2 Taking steps to reduce the absenteeism of students;
- 2.1.3 Recommending to the Superintendent, remedial steps and policies in respect of those students who have been reported as being habitually absent from school without acceptable excuse.
- 2.2 The Superintendent and the School Administration Department are responsible for:
 - 2.2.1 Ensuring that all schools in the Halifax Regional School Board develop strategies to secure full and regular attendance and that such strategies are consistent with the Education Act and Board policy;
 - 2.2.2 Working with school administrators and the Board's Attendance Committee when ongoing attendance problems are identified;
 - 2.2.3 Monitoring the implementation of the Board's Attendance Policy and Procedures, including procedures for compiling, tracking and reporting attendance data.
- 2.3 School Administrators are responsible for:
 - 2.3.1 Consulting with staff and School Advisory Councils to develop strategies to secure full and regular attendance of all students;
 - 2.3.2 Communicating the board's attendance policy and the school's strategies for promoting full attendance to teachers, students, and parents/guardians;
 - 2.3.3 Ensuring that students and parents/guardians understand the consequences of ongoing excused and unexcused absences;
 - 2.3.4 Maintaining current records of special circumstances and informing appropriate staff of such circumstances on an annual basis;
 - 2.3.5 Reporting ongoing attendance issues to their School Administration Supervisor.
- 2.4 Teachers are responsible for:
 - 2.4.1 Determining the cause and recording all cases where students are late or absent;
 - 2.4.2 Communicating with students about the importance of daily attendance and punctuality and their effect on learning and achievement;
 - 2.4.3 Notifying parents/guardians where student absenteeism is an ongoing issue and/or affecting achievement;
 - 2.4.4 Referring students with ongoing attendance problems to a school counsellor or administrator.
- 2.5 Students are responsible for:

- 2.5.1 Attending school and arriving punctually;
- 2.5.2 Abiding by the Board's attendance policy;
- 2.5.3 Participating fully in learning opportunities;
- 2.5.4 Completing work missed during excused and unexcused absences.

2.6 Parents and guardians are responsible for:

- 2.6.1 Ensuring that their children attend school and arrive punctually every school day;
- 2.6.2 Contacting the school through a phone call, email or with a dated and signed written excuse in the event that their child is absent or late;
- 2.6.3 Communicating with their children about the importance of daily attendance and punctuality and their effect on learning and achievement;
- 2.6.4 Informing school administrators of any special circumstances that may have an effect on their child's attendance.