



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES MEMORANDUM

APC009

Elementary Attendance Procedures

DATE OF ISSUE: January 28, 2003

Revised: N/A

MEMO TO: Elementary Principals and Vice Principals; Planning and Priorities

FROM: Director of Education

PURPOSE

To provide a consistent set of procedures for elementary principals and staff to follow regarding chronic absenteeism.

REFERENCES

Sharing Our Journey
Ministry of Education Acts and Regulations
Student Services Handbook

COMMENTS AND GUIDELINES

The attached procedures identify the various roles that staff play in supporting students who have chronic absentee patterns.

ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Introduction

Any absenteeism has an impact upon the student. Chronic absenteeism can be an indicator of academic failure or of other social/emotional factors and can have a direct negative effect on all areas of a child's development and subsequent adjustment in future years. Once a student is enrolled in school, regular school attendance is mandatory. The enforcement of school attendance is required for all students – including those in JK/SK.

Non-attendance should be considered serious and detrimental when:

- The absence is unexplained
- A pattern is evident (e.g. lates, skipped classes, and/or absences per week)
- There is a history of previous attendance concerns with the student or siblings
- The absences negatively impact upon academic success
- 10 cumulative days per term or 20 school year, and/or
- 5 – 15 consecutive days

Discretion needs to be utilized in examining the reasons for non-attendance. For example, the following may be contributing factors: legitimate illness and serious illness or death of a family member.

In cases of serious absenteeism a plan needs to be developed to help the student and family correct the problem. The plan should address an individual student's particular needs and include a variety of strategies aimed at improving school attendance. Active and co-operative involvement by the student, family and school community is essential for this process to be successful. The Collaborative Team (or members of the Team) can be consulted to assist in the development of the plan

The problem, as well as the ultimate solution, most often rests with the student and parent/guardian. The Teacher, Principal, Collaborative Team personnel (and in some instances, agency personnel) participate in problem solving and developing supportive measures to enable the student to succeed at school. A team effort involving home/school/community partners usually brings encouraging results.

1. ROLE OF SCHOOL

There are no absolute number of days that a student needs to be absent or late before a classroom teacher or Principal notes a concern.

If the absence or late is unexplained, or if there is history of previous attendance concerns : 1 absence or late is all that is required to begin documentation.

- 1.1. **Classroom Teacher:** notes a concern regarding student attendance (this includes absence(s) and/or lates). The classroom teacher should contact the parent/guardian and inquire into absence(s) and/or lates.

The classroom teacher will inform the Principal.

Documentation begins (use Appendix A as a guide to assess possible reasons for non-attendance). The classroom teacher should document involvement and contact both the student and parent/guardian.

- 1.2. **The Principal:** if absences and/or lates continue, the Principal will contact the parents. The Principal may request medical certification for frequent or questionable illnesses. The Principal is encouraged to develop strategies to promote regular attendance with students and families (incentives and consequences). ESS or Trillium can and should be used to track attendance.
- 1.3. **After 10 days** of concerned absence, the Principal will mail the parent/guardian a Letter of Concern (use Appendix B as a sample letter). The Letter of Concern can be used to address lates as well as absences. Note that 10 days does not mean consecutive days.
- 1.4. **After 15 consecutive days** of absence a pupil shall be removed from the school register (Education Act – Section 28. Subsection (1) (C). The school needs to continue to track the attendance of students who have been removed from the register. Please check with School Superintendent prior to removing the student from the school register.

Principals should follow the Safe Arrival Procedures (as outlined in a separate AP memo), to ensure that all students have complete and current information regarding parent/guardian telephone numbers and emergency contact numbers.

2. ROLE OF COLLABORATIVE TEAM:

- 2.1. The Collaborative Team will assist the school to develop or review the plan to rectify the non-attendance
- 2.2. In cases of significant attendance concerns the Principal should contact the Special Education Resource Teacher. The SERT will consult with the Collaborative Team and the team will review the schools plan to rectify the non-attendance.
- 2.3. **In situations where non-attendance issues may be attributed to depression, suicide, pregnancy, student to student sexual harassment, suspected child abuse, including teacher allegations, compassionate care concerns or issues involving anxiety or school phobia, the school social worker must be immediately contacted.**

3. ROLE OF ATTENDANCE COUNSELLOR:

- 3.1. The Attendance Counsellor will give written warning to a parent/guardian indicating to the parent/guardian that they are required to ensure their child immediately attends

school. The consequences of not ensuring the child immediately attends school will be included.

- 3.2. The Attendance Counsellor may request a Principal or designate complete an Attend 2 form
- 3.3. In criminal matters, the Attendance Counsellor will work with the parent/guardian and school to obtain a court mandated “attend school order”.

RESPONDING TO STUDENT ABSENTEEISM AT ELEMENTARY

Pattern of unexplained absences and/or lates begins	Classroom Teacher contacts Parent(s)/Guardian and Informs Principal
--	--



10 DAYS of Concerned Absences	<i>Principal contacts Parent(s)/Guardian and sends letter of concern</i>
--------------------------------------	---



Absences Continue	Meeting with Parent(s)/Guardian, Classroom Teacher and Principal. <i>A school plan is developed</i> (Collaborative Team may be consulted)
--------------------------	--



on 16th day remove student from register. The school continues to track student attendance.



If non-attendance persists, referral made to Collaborative Team Personnel. Appropriate Collaborative Team personnel will review the school plan.



**The Attendance Counsellor is notified.
Attend-1 form is completed and forwarded to Attendance Counsellor**



Attendance Counsellor will generate Letter of Warning to the parent/guardian

*Documentation should occur through all steps

Appendix A

GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS AND FAMILIES WITH REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

School:

- Has the student's O.S.R. been reviewed? Is there a pattern of non-attendance?
- Is the student's program level appropriate?
- Has appropriate academic assistance been offered?
- Does the student have a positive relationship with a teacher who could act as a mentor/support person?
- Has the student developed a peer group?
- Is this peer group positive in supporting regular school attendance?
- Is the student involved in extra curricular school activities (i.e. sports, clubs, special events)?
- Is the student frequently absent from a particular class or at a specific time of the day?
- Has school staff attempted to assist the student get caught up on missed school work?
- Has the student been assisted in making a "fresh start" at regular school attendance?
- Has the student's name been identified through the in-school process?

Individual:

- What is the student's legal name?
- Are there health problems?
- Has the student been asked why she/he is not attending?
- Are there social/emotional problems?
- Are there indications of substance abuse?
- Does the student have the potential possibility of being able to meet the expectations in the subject/grade?
- Has the student missed time from school due to conflicting appointments/activities?

Family:

- Does the family recognize the importance of regular school attendance?
- What is the attendance pattern of siblings?
- Do parents make contact with the school or respond to requests regarding their child's attendance?
- Are parents aware that an attendance problem exists?
- Does the student have adequate transportation?
- Are there problems relating to health, domestic violence or substance abuse within

the family?

- Are there financial difficulties with the family which impact on a student's attendance (i.e. no lunches, babysitting younger siblings)?
- Has the family had past or present assistance through Student Services or community agencies?
- Is there a significant adult in the student's life who would assist with attendance concerns (i.e. grandparents, siblings, etc.)?

Sample Letter from Principal

School Letterhead

(Date)

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
Address

Dear _____

Re: Student's Name

I am writing out of concern for your child, _____. As you will notice in the enclosed profile, he/she has been late/absent from school several times. Since the beginning of this school year _____ has been late _____ times and/or absent _____ days.

As well as compulsory attendance being mandatory under the Education Act, continual lates and absences have a negative impact on children academically and socially. I would strongly encourage you to help your child be on time and attend school more regularly.

If there are health concerns, perhaps your family physician should be consulted. If emotional, social or behavioural issues are interfering with your child's attendance, perhaps members of our Board Level Student Services team could be of assistance.

Hopefully by working together, we can ensure punctuality and regular school attendance.

If I can be of assistance to you in resolving this concern, please contact me at _____ at _____
(school) (phone no.)

Sincerely,

Principal

Copy: OSR, Attendance Counsellor

Appendix C

Guidelines and Suggestions for Filling out ATTEND-1 Form

Use the O.S.R. to complete the form. It is important to complete the entire form with as much detail as possible.

***Reasons for Referral** – It is important to use discretion on the form when referring to an Attendance Counsellor or Social Worker.

If the information is related to sensitive issues such as abuse, depression, suicide, eating disorders and/or some delicate family issues, respectfully refer to these issues as “significant social emotional concerns”. You can also put in brackets “Refer to family, student or Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor for more information”.

Other agencies involved: please **do not** fill in Family & Children’s Services, even if that agency is involved. You can put in brackets “Refer to Social Worker for more information.”



Waterloo Catholic
District School Board



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES MEMORANDUM



WATERLOO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
STUDENT SERVICES HANDBOOK

ATTEND-1

ATTENDANCE COUNSELLOR/SOCIAL WORK REFERRAL

Please consult with the Attendance Counsellor/Social Worker before submitting this completed referral.

STUDENT: _____		BIRTHDATE: _____	
ADDRESS: _____		PHONE: _____	
SCHOOL: _____		GRADE: _____	
TEACHER: _____	FATHER: _____	LIVES WITH	<input type="checkbox"/>
BUS. PHONE: _____			
MOTHER: _____	LIVES WITH	<input type="checkbox"/>	BUS. PHONE: _____
PHYSICIAN'S NAME: _____		PHYS. TEL. #: _____	
SIBLINGS AND AGES: _____			

OSR INFORMATION	
PREVIOUS SCHOOL: _____	NO. OF SCHOOLS ATTENDED _____
PREVIOUS ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM(S) ATTENDED: _____	
PREVIOUS INVOLVEMENT:	YOUTH CARE: <input type="checkbox"/>
ATTENDANCE: <input type="checkbox"/>	SOCIAL WORK: <input type="checkbox"/>
SPEECH-LANGUAGE: <input type="checkbox"/>	SPECIAL ED.: <input type="checkbox"/>
	BEHAVIOURAL CONSULTANT <input type="checkbox"/>
	OTHER: <input type="checkbox"/>

CURRENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS:

LEARNING • GROWING • TRANSFORMING THE WORLD TOGETHER

www.wcdsb.educan.ca

TOTAL ABSENCES TO DATE: _____

TOTAL ABSENCES LAST YEAR: _____

TOTAL LATES TO DATE: _____

TOTAL LATES LAST YEAR: _____

SCHOOL CONCERNS: (Check where appropriate; elaborate if needed)		ACADEMIC	<input type="checkbox"/>
ATTENDANCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	HOME DIFFICULTIES	<input type="checkbox"/>
BEHAVIOUR	<input type="checkbox"/>	EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES	<input type="checkbox"/>
		SOCIAL PROBLEMS	<input type="checkbox"/>
		OTHER	<input type="checkbox"/>

REASON FOR REFERRAL:

SOLUTIONS ATTEMPTED BY SCHOOL: (Modifications, Alternative programs, IEP, Parent meetings, etc.)

OTHER AGENCIES

INVOLVED: _____

PARENT'S RESPONSE TO REFERRAL

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE HELPFUL:

Referred by _____

date/month/year _____

DISTRIBUTION: 1. OSR 2. Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor 3. Student Services Secretary

Date Issued: September 1999

11 - 54
ATTEND 2

**Waterloo Catholic District School Board
Student Services Handbook**

LEARNING • GROWING • TRANSFORMING THE WORLD TOGETHER

w w w . w c d s b . e d u . o n . c a

ATTENDANCE PROFILE

To be used when referring truant absenteeism or unreasonable period of time. Submit to School Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor.

STUDENT: _____

SCHOOL: _____

GRADE: _____

BIRTHDATE: _____

HOME ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE: _____

PARENT OR GUARDIAN: _____

PRESENT DATE: _____

	First Week					Second Week					Third Week					Fourth Week			
	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T
Se																			
p																			
Oct																			
No																			
v																			
De																			
c																			
Jan																			
Feb																			
Mar																			
Apr																			
May																			
Jun																			

LEGEND

S Suspension

A Absent All Day

A/ Absent a.m.

L/ Late a.m.

/L Late p.m.

G "G" Days (Refer to Instructional Calendar)

I Illness

CI Certified Illness

Principal's Signature: _____

Total Days _____

Absent: _____

DISTRIBUTION: 1. OSR 2. School Social Worker/Attendance Counsellor

Date Issued: September 1999