

PROCEDURE NO: 441.1**TITLE: Safe and Caring Schools – Student Presence and Engagement****EFFECTIVE DATE: April 9, 2024****REVISED DATE:****REVIEW YEAR:**

SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS – STUDENT PRESENCE AND ENGAGEMENT

Background

Seine River School Division strives to ensure the presence and engagement of students by taking proactive and preventative attendance measures. This is achieved by creating safe, caring, culturally responsive, and inclusive schools through the implementation of non-punitive outreach protocols, student-specific planning, and coordinated responses within and beyond the school to support students in remaining engaged and present at school.

Student presence focuses on having students attend and participate at school on required days as outlined by the school calendar. This is an entry point to engage students in the process of learning. Students may be present even if they are not physically in the classroom, depending on student-specific planning.

Student engagement includes students' attitude toward school, their attendance, their participation in school activities, their disposition toward learning, as well as working and socializing with others at school. Engagement is expressed in students' feeling that they belong at school and participate in school activities.

Student attendance is an essential aspect of their presence and engagement at school. As it relates to this procedure, attendance can be defined as follows:

- Regular attendance - Coming to school and/or participating in learning consistently and on a routine, habitual basis, missing no more than five days for the entire school year;
- Chronic absenteeism - Where unexcused absences account for 10 or more classes in a single high school course or 10 percent or more of instructional days in kindergarten to Grade 8 in a reporting period; and
- Severe chronic absenteeism - Where unexcused absences account for 20 or more classes in a single high school course or 10 percent or more of instructional days in kindergarten to Grade 8 in a reporting period.

Inclusive of this approach to student presence and engagement, student-specific planning is used as a process where members of student support teams meet the unique needs of individual students. It may range from short-term strategies that are applied in the classroom to more comprehensive, individualized programming as determined by a school's student support team.

Procedure

1. Roles and Responsibilities

1.1 Superintendent or Designate

- 1.1.1 Ensure students who are eligible for enrolment with the division receive regular and appropriate educational programming;
- 1.1.2 Work with schools, parents, community, and other partners to ensure that students are regularly present;
- 1.1.3 Ensure that schools track student attendance accurately, document any chronically absent students, and take immediate, sustained action to address causes of chronic absenteeism until the student is regularly present;
- 1.1.4 Work with schools and agencies to identify supports and interventions to help meet both the educational and non-education needs of students and families to ensure regular school attendance, such as through coordinated services; and
- 1.1.5 Ensure culturally safe educational environments and cultural competence among all staff.

1.2 Principal or Designate

- 1.2.1 Work with teachers, students, parents, and others, as needed, to promote regular attendance, including identifying supports in response to student absences;
- 1.2.2 Ensure teachers maintain accurate attendance records;
- 1.2.3 Monitor and review student attendance data and oversee the student-specific planning process, including the assignment of a case manager for students experiencing chronic absenteeism;
- 1.2.4 Report chronic/severe absenteeism to the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services;
- 1.2.5 Invite community agencies, organizations and associations, other education authorities, and regional health and children's services authorities to plan collaboratively in support of appropriate educational programming and planning for students; and
- 1.2.6 Lead school-based attendance initiatives.

1.3 Teacher and Support Staff

- 1.3.1 Monitor and record student attendance;
- 1.3.2 Provide timely communication to the principal and the parent;
- 1.3.3 Identify potential issues related to chronic lateness and/or absenteeism;
- 1.3.4 Promote and support regular attendance;
- 1.3.5 Communicate (verbally and in writing, if needed) with parents when concerns related to attendance arise;
- 1.3.6 Document steps taken to communicate with students, parents, and outside agencies when concerns related to attendance arise; and
- 1.3.7 Participate in the student-specific planning process.

1.4 Student

- 1.4.1 Attend school and classes regularly and punctually;

- 1.4.2 Comply with the school's Code of Conduct, and complete assignments and other related work required by the teacher; and
- 1.4.3 Participate in student-specific planning as developmentally appropriate.
- 1.5 Parent
 - 1.5.1 Receive regular updates on the attendance, behavior, and academic achievement of their child in school, and participate in planning;
 - 1.5.2 Cooperate with the child's teacher and other employees of the school division to ensure the child complies with the school's code of conduct; and
 - 1.5.3 Take all reasonable measures to ensure the child attends school regularly.
2. **Prevention**
 - 2.1 Proactive Measures
 - 2.1.2 Provide food to students who come to school hungry;
 - 2.1.3 Engage parents with school, including providing opportunities to connect with the school and acknowledging and supporting family circumstances, supporting the presence of their children in school;
 - 2.1.4 Enhance the visibility of staff at transition times. This includes throughout the school day as well as when students move from one grade or another or to different schools;
 - 2.1.5 Create and implement a culturally relevant and responsive approach to curriculum delivery;
 - 2.1.6 Establish and implement restorative practices, including restorative justice approaches;
 - 2.1.7 Expand the implementation of anti-racism and anti-discrimination education; and
 - 2.1.8 Ensure culturally safe educational environments and cultural competence among all school division staff.
3. **Response**
 - 3.1 Absences before chronic or severe attendance concerns
 - 3.1.1 As per the Public Schools Act (PSA), when a student is absent, the employee recording attendance shall, in writing, report the absence to the school principal. The principal shall then ensure that there are measures in place to:
 - 3.1.1.1 Report the absence to the child's parent/caregiver of their obligation to ensure that the child attends school or if the child is at least 15 years old, participates in a program as per section 262.2 of the PSA; and
 - 3.1.1.2 Ensure the school has a communication plan in place to contact parents when their child is absent. This may include the usage of automated or direct phone calls, texts, and/or e-mails. The plan should stipulate who is contacting the parents/caregiver and what communication methods are appropriate.
 - 3.2 Chronic absenteeism
 - 3.2.1 If a student reaches the stage of chronic absenteeism, a meeting shall be held with a core team identified, including the parent, and a Student-Specific Plan

(SSP) shall be put in place to identify the student-specific barriers and the strategies being used to overcome these barriers.

3.3 Student-Specific Attendance Plans

- 3.3.1 Student-specific plans should focus on restorative practices that encourage attendance. Student Specific Plans shall include an identified attendance case manager who will be responsible for the coordination and follow-up of the SSP;
- 3.3.2 Student-Specific Plans may include Alternative Education Programming, flexible timetabling, variety of assessment methods/options, opportunities for credit acquisition and credit recovery, ways to ensure learning is accessible to the student based on their current level of performance, connecting the student and/or their family with school-based or division-based support and/or outside agencies; and
- 3.3.3 Student-Specific Plans shall not include suspensions, expulsions, and withdrawals as a response to absenteeism.

3.4 Severe chronic absenteeism

- 3.4.1 If a student reaches the stage of severe chronic absenteeism, an in-school intervention is needed along with other members of the school support team and external agencies, if applicable; and
- 3.4.2 If an in-school intervention is not successful, the Division shall notify the School Support Unit at the Student Services Branch in writing, as well as Child and Family Services if there are concerns about student safety and well-being.

4. Documenting, Monitoring, Analyzing and Reporting

4.1 The Principal shall

- 4.1.1 Ensure that there are daily, consistent recording procedures and common metrics on student presence and absence, including whether absences are excused or unexcused;
- 4.1.2 Ensure that enrolment data is monitored to ensure that all students expected to be present are in school. This includes comparing enrolment registers year over year, as well as reviewing unclaimed pupil files and homeschool reports from the department;
- 4.1.3 Monitor and analyze division-wide and school enrollment and attendance data;
- 4.1.4 Create an early warning system and non-punitive outreach protocols to identify students who are likely to experience chronic absenteeism that is monitored at the school and divisional levels; and
- 4.1.5 Ensure that student attendance be a standing agenda item at school-based support team meetings, and monthly senior administration meetings and reviewed by the student wellness committee.

Legislative Reference:

- [The Public Schools Act](#)
- [The Education Administration Act](#)
- [The Canadian Human Rights Act](#)



- The Protecting and Supporting Children (Information Sharing) Act
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Manitoba)