

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### Background

The Division believes that students, unless excused in accordance with provisions of the *Education Act*, should attend school on a daily basis, arrive on time, and attend all scheduled classes.

The Division recognizes the importance of students being in regular attendance at school. **The primary responsibility for regular school attendance rests with the student and the parents/guardians.** However, should attendance become irregular and there is concern that the educational program of a student is in jeopardy, the school shall become involved in accordance with the procedures outlined in this administrative procedure.

Section 31 of the *Education Act* states that a student “shall attend school regularly and punctually” and Section 7 identifies that individuals who are six years of age as of September 1 and younger than 16 years of age, shall attend school. This administrative procedure is directed towards all students who are enrolled in grades 1-12; however, there will be some differences for students who are in grades 1-9 and for students who are in high school.

There is a clear distinction made in this administrative procedure between absences which are deemed to be “excusable” and absences which are “inexcusable” and that fall under the category of truancy. Section 7 of the *Education Act* outlines the reasons why a student may be excused from attending school for legitimate reasons.

### Procedures

1. The Division has an expectation that:
  - a. students will attend school regularly and punctually in accordance with Section 31 of the Education Act, and that students and parents/guardians have primary responsibility in this regard,
  - b. school staff will enforce the student attendance policy,
  - c. parents/guardians will cooperate with school staff in the enforcement of student attendance.
2. The Board has delegated to the Superintendent the authority and responsibility to enforce the student attendance policy. The Superintendent may appoint one or more “attendance officers” to assist with administering this administrative procedure.
3. Each school is responsible for developing a student attendance policy, which shall be communicated to students and parents/guardians early in the school year. The attendance policy should be included in student and parent handbooks, where feasible.
4. Schools shall have procedures in place to monitor student attendance on a daily basis and to verify absences through phone calls, notes, medical certificates or other such acceptable practices that are outlined in the attendance policy of the school.

5. The school administration is assigned the responsibility of determining whether an absence shall be classified as excusable or inexcusable. **Excusable absences** shall include:
  - a. the student is unable to attend by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause,
  - b. the day is recognized as a religious holiday by the religious denomination to which the student belongs,
  - c. the principal of the school has suspended the student from school and the suspension is still in effect,
  - d. the student has been expelled from a school and has not yet been enrolled in another education program, or
  - e. the board or, if the student is enrolled in a private school or resides in unorganized territory, the Minister
    - i. determines that the parent of the student has shown sufficient cause as to why the student should not be required to attend school, and
    - ii. excuses the student from attending school for a prescribed period of time.
6. The school and/or the individual teacher must keep the parents/guardians informed of all absenteeism. This will be done at regular reporting periods for all students and in keeping with the attendance policy of the school.
7. A critical benchmark attendance level of 90% will be utilized in the Livingstone Range School Division. If a student's overall attendance falls below the 90% level, or if a student is inexcusably absent, the administration may initiate one or more of the following actions:
  - a. conference with the student and/or parents/guardians,
  - b. adjust programs or schedules,
  - c. provide counselling from within or from outside the school setting,
  - d. take whatever other action is deemed appropriate by the administration.
8. If there is no improvement in the regular attendance patterns, after attempts to resolve the problem have been carried out, the administration may initiate one of the following actions:
  - a. denial of school privileges,
  - b. consider alternate educational placements,
  - c. referral to attendance officer
9. The Superintendent may excuse a student from attending school under Section 7 of the *Education Act* and may also refer attendance problems to the Attendance Board in accordance with Section 9.
10. For high school students where attendance is monitored by individual courses, if a student fully violates the provisions of the school attendance policy and remediation efforts have failed, the following options are available to the school administration:
  - a. Ask the student to voluntarily withdrawn from a course(s) by signing a "course withdrawal" form.
  - b. If the student will not voluntarily withdraw, the Principal may suspend the student from a course(s) and recommend course expulsion to the Discipline Committee in keeping with provisions under Section 36 of the Education Act.
  - c. Report a mark to Alberta Education for the discontinued course(s) if the mid-point part of the semester or school year (for non-semester courses) has been reached.

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December, 2003  
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**References**

Section 1, 7, 8, 9, 31, 32, 33, 46, 48, 49, 52, 53, 55, 196, 197, 222 Education Act