



STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approval:

Effective Date: March 1, 2019

GENERAL INFORMATION

Compulsory Attendance

The Education Act (s.22) requires that students who are younger than sixteen (16) years of age must attend school, unless they:

- are unable to attend school because of sickness or other unavoidable cause;
- are participating in aboriginal cultural activities or in aboriginal harvesting activities;
- are participating in religious observances, celebrations, or activities recognized by a religious denomination;
- have been suspended by a school and have not been given permission to enrol in another school;
- are enrolled and in regular attendance at a private school or a home education program;
- are prohibited from being in a public place pursuant to the *Public Health and Safety Act*; or
- are enrolled in distance education courses as approved by the Department of Education.

When a parent of a child required to attend school either neglects or refuses to take reasonable steps to cause the child to attend school, the parent is guilty of an offence and is liable to a fine of up to \$100 per day that the child is absent from school. A child

who is 12 years of age or older; required to attend school; and absent from school without lawful excuse is also guilty of an offence.

School Attendance Policy

The Education Act requires that each School Board or School Council establish an attendance policy for their students.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction to School Boards and School Councils to use when they develop attendance policies for their schools, in order to promote consistency across Yukon schools.

DEFINITIONS

'Parent' means the biological parents, the adoptive parents by custom or otherwise, the persons legally entitled to custody, or the persons who usually have the care and control of the child.

POLICY STATEMENT

Students who are younger than 16 years of age must attend school unless they are excused for any of the reasons listed in the Act (see Appendix 'A').

This policy applies to all Yukon students, regardless of age.

Daily school attendance is important for all students, including those who are age 16 or older. Students who attend school regularly are more engaged in learning, have a greater sense of belonging to the community and are more likely to be successful at school.

Attendance is also recorded for safety reasons; in the event of an emergency, the school must know who is present and accounted for. An absence will be recorded in all instances where a student is not physically present in the school.

Students attending authorized school-related activities away from the school are marked in the system as *Absent Authorised*.

The Department of Education recognizes that when a student is away from the school because they are participating in an aboriginal cultural or aboriginal harvesting activity, these activities have an educational purpose that is consistent with the delivery of the Yukon school curriculum. These absences must also be marked *Absent Authorised*, in

recognition of the fact that these activities are an essential part of the student's educational program.

All absences recorded as *Absent Authorized* must not be included in the number of days that a student is considered to have been absent from school on student reports, or in the calculation of student absenteeism data.

Dismissals or suspensions under the *Education Act* are marked *Absent Excused*.

(See Appendix 'C' for the Student Information System Standards for data collection types that are recorded and provided to schools)

If a student's parents plan holidays during school instructional time, they assume responsibility for the fact that the student will miss classroom instruction. Teachers are not expected to prepare homework packages for the student to complete during their absence from school.

Legal proceedings to enforce a child's attendance at school will not be authorized unless all other reasonable steps have been taken to support the child's attendance at school. Legal proceedings must be authorized in advance by the Assistant Deputy Minister.

School Attendance Policies

School administrators must work closely with students, teachers, parents, and the School Council or School Board to establish a school attendance policy in accordance with the requirements of the *Education Act* and the provisions of this policy.

School Attendance Policies established for a school shall include the types of provisions included in the School Attendance Policy Template that is attached as Appendix 'B', and modified as the School Council or School Board deems appropriate. The provisions set out in **bold** in the template must be included in a school's Attendance Policy.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students, parents, and educators have a shared responsibility to ensure that all students attend school in accordance with the requirements of the *Education Act*.

Students are responsible for attending school regularly as required by the *Education Act*.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school as required by the Act, for promptly notifying the school of their child's absence from school, and for notifying the school in advance of any planned, extended period of absence of their child from school.

Teachers are responsible for encouraging regular attendance by their students, and for recording and monitoring student absence (and notifying the school administrator) when a concern arises about a student's attendance.

School administrators are responsible for ensuring that concerns about a student's attendance are reported to the student's parents in a timely manner. An administrator can delegate staff to handle attendance issues. Serious and unresolved student absences will be reported to appropriate school staff as well as the superintendent for further action.

School Boards and School Councils are required to establish an attendance policy for their school.

APPLICATION

This policy applies to all Yukon schools.

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

In situations where the individual circumstances of a case are such that the provisions of this policy cannot be applied or to do so would result in an unfair or an unintended result, the decision may be based on the individual merits and justice of the situation. Such a decision will be considered for that specific case only and will not be precedent setting.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective March 1, 2019.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY REFERENCES

Education Act, ss. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 38 (b), 113 (1) (i).

HISTORY

Student Attendance Policy, effective January 31, 2008; amended effective March 1, 2019.

APPENDIX 'A'

EDUCATION ACT – COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

Compulsory Education

22(2) A student is excused from attendance at school if

- (a) the student is unable to attend school because of sickness or other unavoidable cause;
- (b) the student is a participant in religious observances, celebrations or activities recognized by a religious denomination;
- (c) the student is a participant in Yukon aboriginal cultural activities or in aboriginal harvesting activities;
- (d) the student has been suspended by a school and has not been given permission to enrol in another school;
- (e) the student is enrolled and in regular attendance at a private school or a home education program in accordance with this Act; or
- (f) the student is enrolled in distance education courses as approved by the deputy minister. S.Y. 2002, c.61, s.2

Excusing from attendance

23(1) The superintendent or director may, on application from a student or a parent of a student, excuse the student from attendance at school and may attach conditions to the permission to be excused.

- (2) Before excusing a student from attendance at school, the superintendent or director shall consult with the student and the student's parents.
- (3) The superintendent or director may direct that a student who is excused from attendance at school receive optional education. S.Y. 2002, c.61, s.23

APPENDIX 'B'

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY TEMPLATE

GENERAL INFORMATION

The *Education Act* requires that students who are younger than sixteen (16) years of age must attend school, unless they:

- are unable to attend school because of sickness or other unavoidable cause;
- are participating in aboriginal cultural activities or in aboriginal harvesting activities;
- are participating in religious observances, celebrations, or activities recognized by a religious denomination;
- have been suspended by a school and have not been given permission to enrol in another school;
- are enrolled and in regular attendance at a private school or a home education program;
- are prohibited from being in a public place pursuant to the *Public Health and Safety Act*; or
- are enrolled in distance education courses as approved by the Department of Education.

Daily school attendance is important for all students, including those who are age 16 or older. Students who attend school regularly are more engaged in learning, have a greater sense of belonging to the community and are more likely to be successful at school.

Attendance is also recorded for safety reasons; in the event of an emergency the school must know who is present and accounted for. An absence will be recorded in all instances where a student is not physically present in the school.

Students attending authorized school-related activities away from the school are marked in the system as *Absent Authorised*.

When a student is away from the school because they are participating in an aboriginal cultural or aboriginal harvesting activity, these activities have an educational purpose that is consistent with the delivery of the Yukon school curriculum. These absences are also marked *Absent Authorised*, in recognition of

the fact that these activities are an essential part of the student's educational program.

All absences recorded as *Absent Authorized* must not be included in the number of days that a student is considered to have been absent from school on student reports, or in the calculation of student absenteeism data.

Dismissals or suspensions under the *Education Act* are marked *Absent Excused*.

Responsibility for regular school attendance rests with each student and their parents. However, this attendance policy will only succeed when the whole school community works together to support student attendance and student success.

School staff are expected to promote good attendance by setting a good example of promptness and regular attendance; encouraging students to attend school every day; and encouraging student attendance through good classroom instruction that motivates students to learn.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Notification of School

When a student is going to be absent from school, the student's parent should contact the school at (school contact information) and inform the school of the absence and its expected duration.

Notification of Parent/Guardian

When a student is absent from school, the school will attempt to contact the student's parent to inform them of the student's absence.

After 1 Absence

The school administrator or home room teacher will inform the student's parents to seek support to address the matter.

Management of Prolonged Absences and Chronic Absenteeism

If a student's parents plan holidays during school instructional time, they assume responsibility for the fact that the student will miss classroom instruction. Teachers are not expected to prepare homework packages for the student to complete during their absence from school.

Parents may contact the school at any time to request information about their child's attendance at school, and are encouraged to meet with a student's teacher, counsellor, or school administrator to discuss any concerns they have about a student's attendance at school.

Addressing chronic absenteeism requires collaboration among parents, the school, and in some cases social agencies in the community.

The first step in addressing attendance concerns is to identify the reasons for the student's absenteeism and to develop a plan to encourage regular attendance by the student.

In doing so, reasonable attempts will be made to assist students to catch up on school work that has been missed because of their absences

Chronic unexcused student absenteeism may be dealt with in the following ways:

- Meetings and conversations among students, parents, teachers, counsellors, and school administrators to resolve the matter.
- Making up for missed instructional time by the student, as determined appropriate by school staff (for example, teachers may provide homework packages in cases of prolonged, unexpected absences).
- Examining whether the student can no longer successfully complete a course(s) they are enrolled in because of their absenteeism, and
- Consideration of alternative educational programs that may help the student be successful.

Note: the numbers of absences listed below are only recommendations

After 5 Total Unexcused Absences

The school administrator will discuss the matter with the student and will inform the student's parents to seek support to address the matter.

After 20 Total Unexcused Absences

The student's parents will be informed, and they, along with the appropriate school staff, and the student's parents will meet to discuss and address the matter, including providing the student with access to in-school resources, or alternative educational programs.

Formal Plan

Upon a decision by the appropriate school staff, the school administrator will contact the student's parents to develop a formal plan to address the student's chronic absenteeism. This may include the provision of alternative educational programs, the assistance of external agencies etc.

Roles and Responsibilities

Students, parents, and educators have a shared responsibility to ensure that all students attend school in accordance with the requirements of the *Education Act*.

Students are responsible for attending school on each day that classes are in session, unless they are excused for one of the reasons set out in the *Education Act*.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school as required by the Act, for promptly notifying the school of their child's absence from school, for notifying the school in advance of any planned, extended period of absence of their child from school, and for collaborating with the school to address absenteeism issues.

Teachers are responsible for encouraging regular attendance by their students, for recording and monitoring student absences, and for notifying the school administrator when a concern arises about a student's attendance.

School administrators are responsible for ensuring that concerns about a student's attendance are reported to the student's parents in a timely manner. An administrator can delegate staff to handle attendance issues. Serious and unresolved student absences will be reported to appropriate school staff as well as the superintendent for further action.

APPENDIX 'C'

ASPEN • YUKON DAILY ATTENDANCE STANDARDS

SITUATION	WHAT DO I ENTER IN ASPEN?
Student is absent, but you don't know why.	Absent (1.0) = Full Day
Student is absent - check the "Excused?" checkbox.	Absent + Excused (1.0) = Full Day
Student is absent, participating in offsite school activity	Absent (1.0) + Authorized
Student is absent, but arrives before 10:30 AM	Late + Arrival Time is recorded.
Student is absent, but arrives 10:30 - 1PM	Absent (.25) + Late + Arrival Time is recorded.
Student is absent, but arrives 1 - 2 PM	Absent (.50) + Late + Arrival Time is recorded.
Student is absent, but arrives 2 PM - end of day	Absent (.75) + Late + Arrival Time is recorded.
Student is at school, but leaves before 10:30 AM	Absent (.75) + Departure Time is recorded.
Student is at school, but leaves 10:30 - 1PM	Absent (.50) + Departure Time is recorded.
Student is at school, but leaves 1 - 2 PM	Absent (.25) + Departure Time is recorded.
Student is at school, but leaves 2 PM - end of day	Dismissed + Departure Time is recorded
ATTENDANCE DESCRIPTION	ATTENDANCE CODE
Absent	A
Absent + excused	AE
Student is absent, participating in offsite school activity or in aboriginal cultural activities or aboriginal harvesting activities.*	A Auth (Authorized)
Late	L
Dismissed	D

***Note: All absences recorded as *Absent Authorized* must not be included in the number of days that a student is considered to have been absent from school on student reports.**

RECEIVED

MAR 04 2019

DEPT OF EDUCATION