

<b>STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY</b>	
<b>DM Approval:</b>	<b>Effective Date: Draft</b>

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### *Compulsory Attendance*

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.

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 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 guidelines for School Boards and School Councils to use when they develop attendance policies for their schools, in order to promote consistency across Yukon schools.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

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

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.

Students attending approved school-related activities away from the school are not considered to be absent from school.

If a student's parents plan holidays during school instructional time, they assume responsibility for the fact that the student will miss classroom instruction. In these circumstances reasonable efforts may be made by the school to help the student work ahead or catch up on missed school work, however teachers will not be expected to prepare homework packages for the student to complete during their absence from school.

The Department of Education recognizes that when a student is excused from attending 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.

See Appendix 'C' for Aspen – Student Information System Standards for data collection types that are recorded and provided to schools.

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, Schools Branch.

### *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.

The department recommends that the School Attendance Policy established for a school should 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.

## **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. 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 *Draft*.

## **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 Draft.

### 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 enroll 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 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.

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.

Students attending approved school-related activities away from the school are not considered to be absent from school.

#### **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.

### **Management of Prolonged Absences and Chronic Absenteeism**

If families find it necessary to plan holidays during school instructional time, they assume responsibility for the fact that the student will miss classroom instruction. In these circumstances reasonable efforts may be made by the school to help the student work ahead or catch up on missed school work, however teachers will not be expected to prepare comprehensive 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).
- Determining that the student can no longer successfully complete a course(s) they are enrolled in because of their absenteeism.
- Consideration of alternative educational programs (e.g. distance education, Individual Learning Centre) that may help the student be successful.

### After 1 Absence

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

### After 5 Total 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 Absences

The student's parents will be informed, and they, along with a school-based team, and student's parents will meet to discuss and address the matter, including providing the student with access to in-school resources.

### Formal Plan

Upon a decision by the school-based team, 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. 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**

<b>SITUATION</b>	<b>WHAT DO I ENTER IN ASPEN?</b>
Student is absent, but you don't know why.	Absent (1.0) = Full Day
Student is absent - <b>check the "Excused?" checkbox.</b>	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
<b>ATTENDANCE DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE CODE</b>
Absent	A
Absent + excused	AE
Student is absent, participating in offsite school activity	A Auth (Authorized)
Late	L
Dismissed	D