

STUDENT ATTENDANCE TERMINOLOGY

The following common terminology for student attendance shall apply as defined by Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning in Safe and Caring Schools: Presence and Engagement:

Presence: when a student attends and participates in the school or classroom on the days in which they are required. This is an entry point to being able to engage students in the process of learning. Student may be present even if they are not physically within a classroom, depending on their student-specific plan.

Engagement: Students' attitudes towards schooling, their attendance and participation in school activities, disposition towards learning, and working, and socializing with others in school. Engagement is expressed in students' feelings that they belong at school, and in their participation in school activities (OECD, 2003)

Regular Attendance: Coming to school and/or participating in learning consistently and on a routine, habitual basis, missing no more than 5 days for the entire school year.

Absence: any time that a student is not in class or participating in a school activity while not being on suspension/expulsion.

Excused Absence: Refers to any time that a student is not present in class or not participating in a school sanctioned activity (while not being on suspension/expulsion) with the mutual consent of the school principal and the parent/caregiver. (Updated June 28, 2023)

Unexcused Absence: refers to any time a student is not present in class or not participating in a school sanctioned activity (while not being on suspension/expulsion) without the mutual consent of the school principal and the parent/caregiver. (Updated June 28, 2023)

Chronic Absenteeism: Being absent 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.

Severe Chronic Absenteeism: Being absent for 20 or more classes in a single high school course or 20 percent or more of instructional days in Kindergarten to Grade 8 in a reporting period.

Student-Specific Plan (SSP): a planning record-keeping, and communication document, as outlined in Standards for Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba (MEECL, 2022). Student-specific planning is a process through which members of students support teams meet the unique needs of individual students; it may range from short-term strategies applied in the classroom to comprehensive, individualized programming. (p.7 and 8)

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Guidelines for Enhancing Proactive and Preventative Attendance Practices

School teams, along with students and parents/caregivers must seek a proactive approach that support students by identifying and solving barriers to student presence and engagement early to prevent further absences and to limit and reduce the risk of chronic absenteeism. This includes and is not limited to the following:

Notifying parents/caregivers via voicemail/automated system; and

If absence persists, a personal contact from the teacher or designate to better understand the nature of the absence and proactively identify strategies in response to barriers.

Guidelines for Documenting, Monitoring, Analyzing, and Reporting

Keep consistent, daily records on student presence and absence, including whether absences are excused or unexcused (p.11)

Include monitoring and analyzing division-wide and school attendance data as standing agenda items at school-based support team meetings and senior administration meetings. (p.11)

Guidelines for a Response to Chronic Absenteeism

Ensure that responses to absenteeism are non-punitive, fair, and predictable with a focus on restorative practices to reengage with the school environment (p.13). Suspensions, expulsions, and withdrawals are not to be used as responses to absenteeism. (p.12)

Develop and implement Student Specific Plans for students who are experience chronic and/or severe chronic absenteeism with a focus on inviting the students back and finding the necessary resources to support attendance (p.12)

Guidelines for Coordinated Services

Designate a case manager to provide a stable point of contact to establish relationships with chronically absent students and their parent/caregiver.

Establish relationships with parents/caregivers and external agencies for the purpose of supporting the return of students to school (p.13)

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