Northeastern Catholic District School Board

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Administrative Procedure Number: APE012

POLICY STATEMENT

The Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) is committed to providing high quality Catholic education to all learners. The NCDSB believes that regular and punctual attendance is essential if students are to receive the maximum benefit of a Catholic schooling experience. The NCDSB believes that the responsibility for the daily attendance of students rests with the parents and/or guardians, the student where they are of age, and school board staff.

REFERENCES

Education Act R.S.O 1990 E.2 and Part II (School Attendance)
Ontario Regulation 298
Enrolment Register Instructions for Elementary and Secondary Schools, Ministry of Education
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Policy Program Memorandum (PPM)
- 123 Safe Arrivals

NCDSB Policy
- E-12 Student Attendance
- E-24 Personal Information Management

DEFINITIONS

Compulsory School Age Attendance
Subsection 21(1) of the *Education Act* states that children aged 6-17 must attend school, unless excused. Pupils must continue to attend school until they reach the age of 18 or they graduate, or until June 30 of the year they turn 18 years of age.

School Staff
May include and are not limited to: classroom teachers, resource teachers, itinerant teachers, guidance counsellors, student success teachers, child and youth workers, early childhood educators, educational assistants, social workers, and other staff the Principal deems appropriate.

Student Attendance
For the purposes of these procedures, student attendance refers to regular day-school attendance at a Catholic elementary or secondary school.

Re-Engagement Counsellor
The Board's Re-Engagement Counsellors are appointed to fulfill the responsibility of student attendance counsellors as per the *Education Act.*

PROCEDURES

1.0 GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1 Supporting regular and punctual school attendance requires the cooperation and collaboration of students, families, school and board staff, and, where necessary, community services.

1.2 All staff share in the responsibility of promoting regular and punctual attendance at school as a foundational component of enhancing student achievement. Regular communication using established platforms such as school announcements, newsletters, email, and social media is an important aspect of attendance promotion. Additionally, promotion of good attendance is greatly enhanced when school programs and extra- curricular activities are relevant and accessible to students.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS

i) Ensure that a student who is required to attend school under the *Education Act*, attend school regularly and punctually.

ii) Provide a reason for every student absence or late arrival to school personnel before the absence or late arrival, or immediately upon the student's return to school.

iii) Parents/guardians/adult students may seek a temporary excusal for a planned student absence that will last at least 3 consecutive days. The form *Request for Temporary Excusal* (Appendix A) must be completed prior to the absence and authorized by the Principal.

2.2 SCHOOL SECRETARIES

School secretaries must follow the processes and procedures as directed by the Principal and those described in this administrative procedure, including by not limited to:

i) Maintain accurate records of student attendance in the student information system;

ii) Receive and record reasons for student absence or late arrival in the student information system;

iii) Maintain current student contact information in the student information system to ensure accuracy with the auto-attendance calls process;

iv) Contact a parent/guardian when a student has been recorded as absent or late and a reason has not been provided by a parent/guardian;

v) Run attendance summary reports at the request of the Principal or designate, and in accordance with reporting and document retention requirements.

2.3 TEACHERS

i) Classroom teachers must maintain an accurate record of attendance for each class, to report absenteeism and late arrivals promptly to the Principal or designate, and to follow the process established by the Principal for admission of students who are late or are returning from an absence.

ii) Teachers shall notify the parent/guardian/adult student when there are recurring absences that are resulting in a negative impact on student achievement.

iii) Teachers shall implement supportive strategies to respond to attendance concerns based on the needs of individual students as described in the *Attendance Concern Intervention Process* (Appendix B). Should these interventions not improve attendance, teachers shall notify the Principal or designate of the student attendance concern.

iv) Teachers shall promote regular school attendance by establishing a welcoming classroom environment that promotes safety and inclusivity, and that responds to the needs of individual learners. Teachers are encouraged to use a range of strategies to support regular attendance in their classroom, and to actively participate in school-based attendance promotion activities, including those described in *Attendance Support Activities* (Appendix C).

v) Teachers shall participate in school-based team meetings with parents/guardians, other school personnel, and/or students to respond to student attendance concerns.

vi) Teachers shall support student re-engagement in learning after a period of absenteeism using a range of strategies, including those outlined in *Strategies to Support Re-Introduction to Learning After Prolonged Absenteeism* (Appendix D).

2.4 PRINCIPALS/VICE-PRINCIPALS

i) It is the duty of the Principal to establish a process for recording daily attendance, promptly reporting unverified absenteeism to parents/guardians, admitting students and verifying reasons for absenteeism or lateness, and maintaining accurate records of student attendance.

ii) When a teacher has reported to the Principal or designate regarding recurring absences that are resulting in a negative impact on student achievement, the

Principal shall respond within a tiered intervention approach as described in the *Attendance Concern Intervention Process* (Appendix B).

iii) Principals and Vice-Principals shall promote regular attendance at school by creating a welcoming school environment that promotes safety and inclusivity, and that responds to the needs of individual learners. Principals and Vice-Principals will use a range of strategies to promote regular attendance, including those described in *Attendance Support Activities* (Appendix C).

iv) Principals and Vice-Principals shall review school-wide attendance reports on a regular basis (biweekly at a minimum), to identify students with habitual absenteeism or lateness that is having a negative impact on student achievement. Principals or Vice-Principals shall then respond within a tiered intervention approach as described in *Attendance Concern Intervention Process* (Appendix B).

v) Principals shall communicate the process for attendance recording, verification and reporting to staff, students and parents at the beginning of each school year, or upon registration for students who enroll during the school year. Principals may select their preferred method to achieve this expectation, including through staff handbooks, student handbooks, parent newsletters, and social media campaigns.

vi) Principals shall use the online referral process to refer to the Re-Engagement Counsellor any compulsory school age student who has reached 11 – 15 consecutive days of absence. The Principal shall engage in regular communication with the Re-Engagement Counsellor to monitor the status of these students.

vii) Principals shall report to the Re-Engagement Counsellor the names and ages of all compulsory school-aged students who are not attending school as required by law. These students are those who are enrolled in a school, have never attended in the current school year, and for whom an Ontario Student Record (OSR) request has not been received or a confirmed destination is unknown.

2.5 RE-ENGAGEMENT COUNSELLORS

i) Upon request by the Principal, the Re-Engagement Counsellor shall assist with developing strategies and supports for school-wide attendance promotion initiatives.

ii) Upon request by the Principal or Vice-Principal, the Re-Engagement Counsellor shall assist with intervention planning to support specific students with irregular attendance.

iii) Upon receipt of an online referral for a student with 11 – 15 consecutive absences, the Re-Engagement Counsellor shall:

a) Make contact with the parent/guardian regarding the reasons for the absenteeism and provide support for the family to re-engage the student in an approved educational program under the *Education Act*.

b) Update the Principal in writing at 15-day intervals with respect to the progress of the student regarding attendance and/or the involvement of community partners assisting in addressing factors which may be contributing to poor attendance.

c) Maintain accurate documentation of all consecutive attendance referrals for schools within the board and make such documentation available to a Supervisory Officer, upon request.

iv) If ongoing attempts to re-engage students are unsuccessful, the Re-Engagement Counsellor will consult with an appropriate Supervisory Officer to confirm next steps.

2.6 SUPERINTENDENTS OF EDUCATION

i) Superintendents shall monitor attendance data regularly and meet with the Re- Engagement Counsellor as needed to provide support and direction.

ii) Superintendents shall review the board non-attender list at least once each term/semester, and consult with the Re-Engagement Counsellor to plan for outreach strategies.

iii) To support a board-wide focus on attendance promotion, Superintendents shall ensure resources are made available to Principals to support school-based attendance promotion strategies.

iv) Superintendents shall report district attendance trends to Principals on a yearly basis to highlight successes and to support individual school intervention processes.

3.0 RECORD KEEPING, VERIFICATION AND REPORING

3.1 A parent/guardian has the primary responsibility to inform the school of their child's absence or late arrive to school. When this information is not received in a timely manner, the school secretary will make reasonable efforts to contact the parent/guardian to confirm the reason for the absence.

3.2 For elementary schools, student attendance shall be recorded twice each school day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

3.3 For secondary schools, student attendance shall be recorded during each class period of the school day. Specialized procedures may be created by the school to support attendance record keeping in online learning classes or other specialized programs such as cooperative education and dual credit programs.

3.4 An auto-attendance call system will be used as a first point of contact with parents/guardians to address student absenteeism or late arrival to school.

4.0 RELATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

FORM: Request for Temporary Excusal
DOCUMENT: Attendance Concern Intervention Process
DOCUMENT: Attendance Support Activities
DOCUMENT: Strategies to Support Re-Introduction to Learning After Prolonged Absenteeism

Chief Executive Officer: *Tricia Stefanic Weltz*
Date: March 2024