

MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC BOARD OF EDUCATION OPERATES AS MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION, AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE REFERRED TO AS "MHPSD" AND/OR "DIVISION"

SECTION 600 – Students

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE: ATTENDANCE

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| <i>PROCEDURE CODE:</i> | <i>606 P 001</i> |
| Policy Reference: 606 – Student Attendance | |

PURPOSE

Supporting Student attendance is a responsibility shared by the school, the teacher, the student, the parent/guardian and the community. Regular attendance at school is critical to student success and is of the utmost importance for a student to achieve their full potential. Regular attendance is expected of every student in Medicine Hat Public School Division (MHPSD).

It is important for the schools to accurately monitor and identify concerning trends in student attendance and to intervene when absenteeism or truancy are considered excessive and/or student behaviors are seen as moving towards disengagement from school. The Division has a legal responsibility to ensure that students attend school on a regular basis and shall ensure that students abide by provincial attendance laws.

GENERAL

1. Principals shall develop student attendance procedures which include a process for keeping parents/guardians informed of unexcused absences.
2. School attendance procedures shall include a process for students or parents to notify the school of student absences.
3. Principals shall make students and parents/guardians aware of their responsibility for regular and punctual student attendance.
4. Teachers shall keep accurate attendance records for each of their students.
5. The record of a student's attendance shall appear on student progress reports.
6. An Assistant Superintendent shall be appointed Attendance Officer for the School Division.

PROCEDURES

1. The Division supports positive attendance through a comprehensive approach grounded in prevention and intervention.

2. The focus on attendance issues must be in the supportive context. The supportive context is grounded in the collaborative model which includes the school, Division supports, students and their families, and outside agencies.
3. The decision to move to legal measures defined under Section 8 of the Education Act is to be made in consultation with the Superintendent and/or the Attendance Officer. Such a decision should be taken only after all proactive and supportive measures have been exhausted with little or no improvement in student attendance.
4. Principals shall establish school level attendance policies that:
 - 4.1. Encourage regular attendance;
 - 4.2. Are clearly disseminated to students and families and accessible in multiple formats;
 - 4.3. Ensure that accurate student attendance records are maintained and monitored;
 - 4.4. Reference a Continuum of Attendance Supports that demonstrates classroom and school-based attendance and engagement supports and;
 - 4.5. Involve the family in resolving attendance problems.
5. Principals may consider:
 - 5.1. The role of personalized early outreach in establishing a culture of attendance;
 - 5.2. Using appropriate tools to conduct proactive campaigns to communicate the importance of attendance (posters, websites, social media, incentives, positive communication home, etc.);
 - 5.3. Sending regular attendance data home to all families;
 - 5.4. Using software tools to set up automatic alerts connected to chronic absenteeism;
6. Principals shall ensure that appropriate accommodation and/or adaptation for learning difficulties are addressed.
7. Principals shall ensure that valid physical or mental health related issues are not the primary cause of poor attendance.
8. Both informal and formal communication to parents/guardians regarding poor attendance, and attempts to resolve the poor attendance should be documented.
9. In instances where corrective measures taken by the school have not been effective in addressing poor student attendance will advise the Division Attendance Officer.
10. The Division Attendance Officer will:
 - 10.1. Review school based interventions with school administration;
 - 10.2. Compile all documentation (e.g. correspondence to parents, record of attendance, etc.);
 - 10.3. Advise the school if additional measures or strategies are required;
 - 10.4. Determine if the Community Conference team should engage the family.
 - 10.5. Advise the parents /guardians of his/her involvement;
11. Should these measures be unsuccessful the school will develop written correspondence to parents/guardians that references the Education Act, outline school action taken to date, and



include the number of days absent. The school will share this information with the Division Attendance Officer.

12. The Division Attendance Officer will determine if a referral to the Attendance Board is warranted.

REFERENCES

Alberta Education – Education Act

Approved: October 1, 2018

Revised: November 27, 2018

