



NEWCOMBVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Excerpts from Provincial Student Attendance and Engagement Policy

On October 1, 2017, the Provincial Student Attendance and Engagement Policy came into effect in Nova Scotia. A link to this policy can be found on our school's web page, or at ednet.ns.ca/student-attendance-and-engagement-policy. This document contains key areas of this policy as well as what will be done at Newcombville Elementary School when dealing with student attendance issues.

This policy recognizes that regular attendance at school supports greater student success and achievement. Attendance supports student learning and promotes a sense of responsibility that students will need as they transition from the school system to post-secondary studies and/or the workforce.

Promoting and supporting regular student attendance is a shared responsibility. All partners, including students, parents/guardians, teachers, principals, school boards, and community partners must work together.

The objective of the Provincial Student Attendance and Engagement Policy is to set clear, consistent expectations for regular and punctual student attendance at all grade levels and provide a consistent approach in responding to student absences and chronic lateness.

As per the Education Act, students are required to attend school regularly and punctually. All students are expected to be present and prepared for the beginning of class.

All reasons for absences from school must be communicated by the student's parent/guardian, as per the school communication procedure.

Responses to Absences and Chronic Lateness

Responses to student absenteeism and chronic lateness will vary based on the age, grade, and development of the student, the professional judgment of teachers and principals, and the individual circumstances of the student. Responses may include connecting the student and/or their family with school-based or board-based supports (Board's Attendance Officer, Schools Plus, etc.) and/or with outside agencies, if needed (Community Services, Justice, and Health).

- i. Increasing connections will be made when the reason for an absence is not communicated to the school by the parent/guardian or when the frequency of total absences or chronic lateness has reached 10 per cent of class time (call from classroom teacher).
- ii. Early intervention responses will be used when an issue with attendance has been identified and/or the frequency of total absences or chronic lateness is between 10 and 15 per cent of class time, or earlier if advised by the student's teacher (call or letter from school administration or guidance counsellor).
- iii. Targeted interventions will be provided for students facing greater attendance challenges, often when the frequency of total absences or chronic lateness has gone over 15 per cent of class time (possible referral to board-based supports, or outside agencies, see above).
- iv. School Board Attendance Committees: As per the Education Act, school boards will establish school board attendance committees to monitor and analyze board-wide student attendance rates and take steps to reduce student absenteeism and promote regular attendance.

Materials For Absent Students

Teachers are not required to prepare additional materials or release test/examination materials prior to their release to the class. Teachers may use their professional judgement in determining whether or not to provide a student who has missed class time with additional material beyond what was distributed in class.

Roles and Responsibilities

Students are responsible for catching up on any work missed as a result of an absence or absences.

Parents/guardians (in P-5) are responsible for monitoring and ensuring that their children maintain regular attendance and arrive at school on time, and for communicating with the school regarding their child(ren)'s attendance.

Teachers are responsible for monitoring and recording student attendance and for identifying potential issues related to chronic lateness and/or absenteeism. Teachers will take reasonable steps to promote and support regular attendance and will communicate with students and/or parents/guardians when concerns related to attendance arise.

Principals are responsible for working with teachers, students, parents/guardians, and others as needed, to take reasonable steps to support attendance, including identifying supports in response to student absences and to promote regular attendance.

School boards are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the policy in schools and for working with schools and other partners to identify supports and interventions to help meet both the educational and non-educational needs of students and families. School boards will support the decisions made at a school-level regarding attendance issues and will establish attendance committees to monitor and analyze board-wide attendance data.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is responsible for establishing a provincial attendance policy and monitoring the implementation of the policy and reviewing its effectiveness.

Community partners are responsible for working collaboratively with students, parents/guardians, schools, and school boards to provide supports and services that encourage regular attendance and help decrease any barriers that may be affecting a student's ability to attend school.

Roles and responsibilities with respect to student attendance for other government departments, (e.g. Justice, Health and Wellness, Community Services) will be outlined in this policy, pending the release of recommendations by the Commission on Inclusive Education.

We encourage you to contact the school if you have any questions or concerns about the contents of this information or about the Provincial Student Attendance and Engagement Policy.