



5.03 Student Attendance

5. Students - Administrative Procedure Manual

To maximize a student's opportunity to acquire the education necessary to function successfully in today's complex world, it is imperative that each student attend school on a regular basis. Any interruption in student attendance interferes with this ideal.

It is generally accepted that activities that take place in school are a vital part of the teaching-learning process. A day of instruction lost due to absence cannot be recovered and the dialogue that has taken place between the Teacher and students cannot be duplicated. It is therefore important that each student accept responsibility for his/her regular, punctual attendance at each assigned class period. It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian, or responsible adult to ensure that each child attends school regularly and punctually in accordance with the provisions of The Public Schools Act and the Policies and Regulations of the Portage la Prairie School Division.

All student absenteeism (Kindergarten to Grade 12) must be validated by means of an explanation from the parent, guardian, or responsible adult. Each Principal will establish procedures for receiving explanations of student absenteeism from parents or guardians.

Explanations of student absenteeism must include:

1. the date
2. information pertaining to the reason for the absence
3. if in written form, the signature of the parent, guardian, or responsible adult.

Absences not validated via a satisfactory explanation or that have not been resolved by the school staff are to be immediately referred, in writing, by the Principal to the appropriate member of the School Division staff or outside agency (i.e. School Counsellor, Division

Attendance Officer, Superintendent's Department, R.C.M.P., Child and Family Services, etc.).

Students over the age of 18 years and living away from their parents' home shall be responsible for their own attendance.

DELIBERATE FAILURE TO ATTEND

The Division supports and authorizes the school Principal to take action at the school level with respect to encouraging students to attend classes. These efforts will be explained in the school's attendance policy printed in the student handbook. Activities designed address a student's attendance issues may include:

- Alternate, off-campus programs
- Meetings with parents/guardian
- Student assistance programs
- Social agency partners
- Short-term suspensions

Deliberate failure to attend school creates a serious impediment to learning. In cases where a student is unlawfully absent from school, provisions of the Public Schools Act will apply. The Superintendent of Schools is designated as the School Attendance Officer with the rights and responsibilities outlined in the PSA. [264 (1) (2); 267 (1, 2); 268 (1, 2, 3); 269, 270, 273.

Where a student is absent from school contrary to the provisions of the Public Schools Act, [PSA 260 (1) (2)],

1. The teacher, or the employee recording school attendance, shall in writing, report the matter including the name of the student, to the Principal of the school [PSA 266(1)].
2. The Principal, when satisfied that the student is in fact absent as reported, shall advise the Attendance Officer with the name and address of the student [PSA 266 (2)].
3. The Superintendent, when satisfied that the student has failed to respond to the efforts made at the school level, may take further action as authorized in the PSA including initiating legal proceedings with the student's parents.

TEMPLATE LETTER FROM THE ATTENDANCE OFFICER

Name and address of parent/legal guardian

Salutation,

In order to maximize a student's opportunity to acquire the education necessary to function successfully in today's complex world, it is imperative that each student attend school on a regular basis. Any interruption in student attendance interferes with this ideal. Deliberate failure to attend school creates a serious impediment to learning.

It has been reported to me that your son/daughter, (Student Name), has been unlawfully absent from school a total of ___ out of a possible ___ days this school year in spite of documented efforts at the school level intended for the purpose of improving his frequency of attendance.

As Superintendent, I have been designated as the School Attendance Officer with the rights and responsibilities outlined in the Manitoba's Public Schools Act [264 (1) (2); 267 (1, 2); 268 (1, 2, 3); 269, 270, 273. As such, and because your son/daughter has been absent from school contrary to the provisions of the Act, I am obligated to take action as authorized in the Act by initiating legal proceedings with you, his parent.

Therefore, please take notice that unless you cause your child, Student Name, to attend school under the provisions of the Act on or before the ___ day of ___ A.D., 20___, and to continue in regular attendance throughout the period during which he or she is required by The Public Schools Act to attend school regularly, or make satisfactory provisions for the education of the child hereinbefore named during that period, you will be liable to prosecution under The Public Schools Act.

Please also note that under provisions of the Act, any person who fails, refuses or neglects to comply with the terms and directions of a notice served upon him/her pursuant to section

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268(3) of the Act is guilty of an offence and is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding \$500 or such other penalty as the court may deem proper.

Signature

Superintendent
School Attendance Officer

Cc Principal
 Non-custodial parent (if required)
 Local RCMP detachment