

Current Policy

Proposed Policy

Adapted from the NS [Student Attendance and Engagement Policy](#)

Student Attendance and Engagement Policy

1. Introduction

This policy recognizes that regular attendance at school supports greater student success and achievement. Attendance supports student learning, promotes a sense of responsibility that students will benefit from throughout their life, and is a show of respect both to teachers as working professionals tasked with educating and mentoring the student and to parents in recognition of the sacrifice and support they give in making private Christian education available to their child..

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

This policy is not intended to punish students for circumstances beyond their control. The policy provides flexibility by allowing teachers and principals to use their professional judgment to determine when there may be extenuating circumstances affecting a student's attendance. In these cases, the school will work with the student and/or their family to respond with the appropriate incentives and supports, and/or to develop accountability mechanisms that recognize the student's unique situation.

2. Objective

The objective of the 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.

3. Definitions

absence: Any time that a student is not in class or not participating in a school activity.

tardy: Tardy refers to a student arriving to class at any point beyond the scheduled start time. Note that students will receive an absence if late for a class by 15/30 (full year/semester class) or more minutes. Three tardies equate to one absence.

parent/guardian: "Parent/guardian" includes a parent, guardian, and a person acting in the place of a parent.

4. Monitoring Attendance

Students are required to attend school regularly and punctually. All students are expected to be present and prepared for the beginning of class.

Teachers will record student attendance every day, in accordance with school policy. Period attendance is taken for students in grades 7-12.

As student attendance is a critical determinant of student success, students are encouraged to engage in healthy habits according to the [NEWSTART framework](#), and to remain at home if they are feeling unwell, especially if they have an infectious disease that might affect fellow students or school staff.

All reasons for absences from school must be communicated by the student's parent/guardian, per the school [attendance reporting procedure](#).

5. Responses to Absences and Chronic Lateness

5.1 Responses

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.

- 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 5 per cent of class time (4 semester class/8 yearly class absences).
- 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 (minimum 8 semester class/16 yearly class absences), or earlier if advised by the student's teacher.

- 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 (12 semester class/24 yearly class absences).

5.2 Attendance Monitoring

The school Office Manager will provide weekly attendance reports to the school Principal. The Principal will review the records and the Office Manager will send intervention emails to parents/guardians, students, teachers, and Principal.

5.3 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 will provide students with the materials that were distributed in class during the student's absence. Teachers may use their professional judgment in determining whether or not to provide a student who has missed class time with additional material beyond what was distributed in class. Teachers will act in accordance with our [Discretionary Vacation Homework Policy](#) for planned extended student absences.

5.4 Loss of Credit for Grades 10 to 12

In order to earn a course credit in high school, students are required to be present for at least 80 per cent of class time. A teacher can recommend loss of credit when a student has missed 20 per cent of class time due to any absences, and strong efforts have been made to improve the student's attendance, but no improvement has been demonstrated by the student.

Upon receiving the recommendation of a teacher, and working in consultation with the teacher and other school staff as appropriate, the principal will make the final decision around loss of credit. The principal is responsible for communicating the decision to the student and family.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Students are responsible for maintaining regular attendance and arriving at school on time and ready to learn, recognizing that younger students (P-6) rely more heavily on parent/guardian support to maintain regular attendance. Students are also responsible for catching up on any work missed as a result of an absence or absences.

Parents/guardians 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.

Office Staff 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.

The **Principal** is 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. The principal will work with teachers to maintain accurate attendance records. Principals are also responsible for the final decision around loss of credit due to absenteeism and for communicating the decision to the student and their family.

The **SLA School Board** is responsible for monitoring the implementation of all attendance policies and reviewing their effectiveness.

7. References

Nova Scotia. 2018. Education Act. SNS. c. 1.

<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/education.pdf>