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|  Commission scolaire English-Montréal English Montreal School Board | | |
| POLICY: | CONTROL OF ABSENTEEISM | CODE: SS-9 |
| Origin: | Student Services | |
| Authority: | Resolutions #86-03-26-9.2; #00-10-25-8.2 | |
| Reference(s): | Education Act, Sections 14-18, 38, Youth Protection Act, Art. 38 | |

POLICY STATEMENT

The English Montreal School Board believes that regular school attendance promotes educational success by diminishing the risk of students dropping out of school, thereby increasing their chances of graduating with a diploma. The purpose of the present policy is to identify the distribution of responsibilities for the control of absenteeism and to provide the procedures by which schools can monitor and minimize the incidence of absenteeism. Also included with this policy are procedures to follow if recourse to the Education Act and the Youth Protection Act are considered advisable.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter I, Division II, Sections 14 to 18 of the Education Act define the legal parameter of compulsory school attendance.


Since July 1989, the Director of Youth Protection has had the mandate, in accordance with the Youth Protection Act, Section 38.1b, to investigate cases of persistent school absenteeism that have been signaled to him/her.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The **principal**¹ shall have the responsibility:
 - a. to oversee the development of procedures to monitor absenteeism of students in the school;
 - b. to monitor student absenteeism in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, Sections 14-18;

¹ See definition in Appendix A.

- c. to study serious cases of infractions of the law;
 - d. to refer persistent cases of absenteeism to the Director of Youth Protection. This is known as '*signalement*'.
2. The **Regional Director** shall have the responsibility:
- a. to ensure that all schools have procedures to monitor student absenteeism;
3. The **Director of Student Services** shall have the following responsibilities;
- a. to oversee the regulations and Board policy concerning compulsory school attendance;
 - b. to submit a report to the Board on an annual basis, indicating the number of special notices sent and the disposition of cases referred to the Director of Youth Protection regarding violation of regulations concerning compulsory school attendance;
 - c. to appeal, if necessary, to the Director of Youth Protection, cases which have not been retained as a '*signalement*' for investigation.

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| Origin: | Student Services | |
| Reference(s): | | |

1. At the beginning of each half-day at the elementary level and of each class at the secondary level, the teacher records the student's absence. As soon as an absence is noted, the parents² must be notified.
2. In cases of extended periods of absence, the absence record is forwarded to the principal.
3. Each telephone communication with a parent is noted with the reason given for the absence.
4. Upon his/her return to school, the student must submit a note signed by a parent to certify the duration of and reason for the absence. (The principal may waive this obligation at his/her discretion).
5. All absence notes shall be kept on file by the school until the end of the school year.
6. The principal communicates with the parent(s) as to the reason for the absence. Should an absence due to illness extend past five (5) days (or for fewer days if deemed appropriate by the principal), the school may demand a medical certificate giving, among other information, the approximate date of the student's return to school.
7. When the reason given is deemed invalid by the principal, said authority shall mobilize the school/community resources available to assist the student in question to improve attendance.
8. The principal retains all cases of students whose reasons justifying their absence seem questionable:
 - a. babysitting (of a brother or sister);
 - b. illness of one of the parents;

² See definition in Appendix A.

- c. part-time work;
- d. appointments that could have been scheduled after school;
- e. lack of motivation to go to school.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM PROBLEMS²

1. The principal shall discuss with the parent any serious problem as defined above, and may request that the parent come to the school to discuss the situation. The principal, in discussing the situation with the parent, shall attempt to resolve the problem by proposing strategies, and indicating support measures and services available within the school and community.
2. If the problem continues, the principal shall request in writing a meeting with the parent to discuss the problem in greater depth (Appendix B). The school social worker may be invited to this meeting; the parent should be encouraged to consent to any social service intervention available aimed at improving the student's attendance.
3. If the situation remains uncorrected, the principal shall send a letter by registered mail (Appendix C) to the parent explaining the requirements of Sections 14-18 of the Education Act, pertaining to compulsory school attendance. The parent shall be advised at this time that if the problem is not corrected promptly, the case shall be referred to the Director of Youth Protection. (If a letter cannot be mailed because the parent's address is unknown, then there is no recourse but to refer the child to the Department of Youth Protection.)
4. If the letter referred to in item #3 does not have the desired effect, the principal shall fill in the letter (Appendix D) and, in concert with school personnel, shall complete the 'School Absenteeism Report Form' (Appendix E), and forward both documents to the Department of Youth Protection.

Note:

In completing the form (Appendix E) where applicable, other clauses from the Youth Protection Act should be cited if violated, since absenteeism in itself shall not necessarily result in a retained '*signalement*'. Such violations should be included in the 'Comments and/or Concerns' section of the report form.

5. Copies of the letters issued as a result of item #2 (Appendix B), item #3 (Appendix C) and item #4 (Appendix D) and the prepared report form (Appendix E) should be simultaneously forwarded to the Regional Director concerned and the Director of Student Services.

² See definition in Appendix A.

FOLLOW-UP BY DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

1. A copy of the disposition of the case, once received from the Department of Youth Protection by the principal, should also be forwarded, without delay, to the Regional Director concerned and the Director of Student Services.
2. The Director of Student Services in consultation with the Regional Director concerned may decide to appeal a decision of the Department of Youth Protection, at the written request of the principal (Appendix F).
3. The Director of Student Services shall prepare a report to the Board on an annual basis, indicating the number of 'Special Notices' sent (Appendix C), the number of '*signalements*' made, the results of the dispositions of cases referred to the Director of Youth Protection and the number of appeals.

APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS

The term ***principal*** denotes the principal or any person delegated by the principal to perform a duty on his/her behalf.

The term ***parent(s)*** denotes any person having legal custody of the student.

Serious absenteeism problems shall be defined as incorporating one or more of the following:

1. A student who is absent for a period of five (5) or more consecutive days without a valid reason. (It is possible that the principal could still consider an absence to be invalid even if excused by a parent.)
2. A student who has had five (5) or more invalid absences in one month.
3. A student with a repeated pattern (e.g. Fridays) of invalid absences.
4. A student who has accumulated invalid absences equivalent to ten (10) percent or more of one school term.

APPENDIX B



**Commission scolaire
English-Montréal**
**English Montreal
School Board**

Date: _____

Dear _____:

Re: School Attendance

We would like to remind you that _____
born _____ is still of compulsory school age and is required by law
to attend school every day in compliance with the Education Act of the Province of
Quebec.

To date, absences for this school year have been as follows:

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

We have reason to believe that these absences are not justified; therefore, they can no longer be tolerated.

We would like you to come to the school to discuss this situation on _____.
Please call to confirm on _____ between 9:00 and 4:00 p.m.

Principal: _____

School: _____

c.c. Regional Director
Director, Student Services

APPENDIX C



Commission scolaire
English-Montréal
English Montreal
School Board

REGISTERED NOTICE

Date: _____

'SPECIAL NOTICE'

Dear _____:

Re: Student: _____

QPC: _____

This is to advise you that _____ has not attended school regularly.

This being the case, a special notice is being served to you so that you may be given the opportunity to comply with the Education Act. If, after receiving this notice, you fail to see that _____ attends school **immediately and regularly**, you will be in violation of Sections 14 to 18 of the Education Act, which is the law.

I hope that you will take this notice into serious consideration and avoid the possible involvement of the Director of Youth Protection, Batshaw Youth and Family Centres.

Signed in Montreal, this _____ of _____.

Principal: _____

School: _____

c.c. Regional Director
Director, Student Services

APPENDIX D



Commission scolaire
English-Montréal
English Montreal
School Board

Date:

R.T.S. Coordinator
Department of Youth Protection
Ville Marie Social Service Centre
5 Weredale Park, 5th Floor
Westmount, Quebec
H3Z 1Y5

Dear: _____

It is with regret that I must signal _____ to you for violation of the *Education Act*, Sections 14-18 regarding compulsory school attendance.

As the attached documentation indicates, we have complied with the procedures requested of us.

We await your decision regarding disposition of the case.

Sincerely,

Principal: _____

School: _____

c.c. Regional Director
Director, Student Services

APPENDIX E

S I G N A L E M E N T

Mail to:

Batshaw Youth and Family Centres
Division of Youth Protection
4515 St. Catherine St. West
Westmount, Quebec
H3Z 1R9

Or fax to: (514) 939-0597

SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM REPORT FORM

Date of mailing/faxing: _____ / _____ / _____
Year Month Day

Name of Student: _____
Surname First Name

Student's Date of Birth: _____ / _____ / _____
Year Month Day

IDENTIFICATION OF DECLARANT

Surname: _____

First name: _____

Position: _____

Name of School: _____

Address of School: _____

Telephone Number of School: (____) _____

Signature of Declarant (if other than principal) _____

Signature of Principal _____

A. Identification of Student

Surname: _____ First Name: _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____
 Year Month Day

Address: _____ Telephone: _____

_____ Postal Code: _____

Father

Mother

Surname: _____

Surname: _____

First Name: _____

First Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Telephone: _____

Who has Legal Custody? _____

Name of School: _____

Type of School: _____

Type of Class: _____

Does this student presently reside with someone other than a parent? If so, give name, address and telephone number of person/institution:

C. Description of the School Absenteeism Problem

1. When did the student start missing school? How often has he/she been absent from school?

2. What are the reasons given by the student and parents to justify the absences?

3. Does the student have behaviour problems at school? If so, what are they?

4. What steps did the school take to correct the situation (telephone calls, letter to parents, support services provided by a social worker and/or educator and/or other meeting with parents, student, administration, etc.)?

5. Are the student and/or parent(s) receiving services outside the school? If so, which ones?

6. What are the results obtained by the school services and/or by the services provided outside the school?

7. What is your knowledge of the student's activities outside the school since his/her absence?

8. Comments and/or concerns?

APPENDIX F



Commission scolaire
English-Montréal
English Montreal
School Board

Date: _____

Director of Student Services
English Montreal School Board

Dear Director,

Please find below the disposition forwarded to the school by the Department of Youth Protection (DYP) concerning the student

_____’s serious absenteeism problem.

- I **do not** ask that you consider appealing DYP’s decision.
- I ask that you **do** consider appealing DYP’s decision.

Principal’s signature: _____

School: _____

Date: _____