

**PILOT PROJECT**  
**January 31, 2011**  
**FORT NELSON SECONDARY SCHOOL**  
**ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

**Philosophy and Background:**

Research shows that regular attendance and school success go ‘hand in hand’ and that excessive absenteeism is directly related to students dropping out of school. Our objective is to help students achieve success throughout their high school years by encouraging regular school attendance.

Not all classroom work can be made up. Explanations, clarifications, discussions, opportunities for feedback, and group learning activities are invaluable components of an effective learning environment. Excessive absences adversely affect academic achievement.

The School Act (Article 3) requires that all children who reside in British Columbia must participate in an educational program provided by the Board until he or she reaches the age of 16 years.

The general goals of the Fort Nelson Secondary School’s attendance policy are to

- increase student success by promoting regular daily attendance and
- help students develop social responsibility in preparation for their future careers

We believe that it is our responsibility to provide effective instruction and encourage students to attend and be involved in their education and in the school community. The final responsibility, however, falls to the students and their parents/guardians. With this in mind, we feel that communication is essential, and we endeavor to keep parents informed of their child’s absences on a daily basis.

An absence is an absence, regardless of the reason. Each absence results in a lost learning opportunity in the classroom, which may not be regained. Students are responsible for any schoolwork that they have missed.

**Home/School Communication and Attendance Procedures:**

Communication between parents, students, and teachers is critical when a student is absent from class. Students are ultimately responsible for this direct communication and for any work they miss during an absence.

Parents/Guardians are requested to call the school or provide a written explanation to the school office (774-6958) if a student(s) in their care is going to be absent from class(es).

Upon returning to school, a student may be required to bring a note from a parent or guardian confirming that the parent is aware of the student's absence. If late for any class, the student must sign in at the office for a 'late slip' immediately upon arrival and proceed promptly to class.

We believe that parents need to be aware of all student absences; therefore, the FNSS Attendance Clerk contacts the parents/guardians of absent students if they fail to contact the school.

### **Absences:**

There may be numerous reasons for not attending classes. An example is travel from Fort Nelson for orthodontic work. The following reasons for absences have been taken into consideration in arriving at the allowance of 20 absences in any one class per semester as the criteria in this policy:

1. Student illness
2. Medical, Dental, or out-of-town Specialist appointments
3. Serious illness or death in the immediate family
4. Family emergency
5. Observance of a religious holiday
6. Employment
7. Truancy: on or off property
8. Family vacation
9. Other absence not approved by the school (**see note below**)

**NOTE:** Absences due to school activities or events, i.e. field trips, sports trips, or suspensions, or school approved community activities or events, are excluded from the attendance expectations criteria regarding course withdrawal. Students are responsible for schoolwork missed.

School approved community activities or events may include those operated by recognized community organizations to promote healthy lifestyle and recreational practices, such as Minor Hockey, Figure Skating, Cadets, Dance, Swimming, etc. It is the school's expectation that parents and the officials of any such organization will liaise closely with the school office to ensure accurate attendance information is recorded and absences are limited.

If a student is missing or is scheduled to miss more than ten days of school for medical or mental health concerns, hospital/homebound teaching services are available. Parents can request this service by calling Mr. Ray Irwin, Director of Instruction, at 774-2591 or by contacting the Fort Nelson Secondary Administration.

## **Student Attendance Criteria and Procedures:**

Classes may have volunteer peer student mentors/teaching assistants, students gaining teacher assistant credits, or Support Staff Educational Assistants to review missed assignments after students return from an absence.

Teachers will keep copies of hand outs/assignments/tests etc. available for peer helpers, EAs, or student Teaching Assistants to use. A location other than the classroom may be used for the completion of missed assignments if appropriate/ available.

At 5 absences from class in any one subject, teachers will meet with students and parents or have a documented phone call to parents.

At 10 absences from class in any one subject, the School Counselor will meet with students and a letter will be sent to their parents/guardians. Other teacher or administrative support interventions should be ongoing and other school, community, or district resources may be accessed at this time, i.e. hospital/homebound instruction; drug and alcohol counseling; academic assessment, etc.

At 15 absences from class in any academic core subject (English, Math, Science, Social Studies), the FNSS Administration will meet with students and their parents or guardians.

At 20 absences from class in any academic core subject, students who are not passing may be withdrawn from the class or classes. A student may complete the course(s) through an alternate program of studies, receive a support class to assist with his/her success in other classes, and/or be referred to the District Discipline Review Committee (DRC).

**NOTE:** Students in grades 8, 9 and 10 do not have partial programs/timetables unless directed by the District Discipline Review Committee, School Administration, or FNSS Special Education Department.

Parents will be informed in writing of any timetable changes that have been applied and this option will have been discussed at previous parent-student meeting(s).