



## Request for Core French Exemption/Substitution

Board Received: January 27, 2020 Review Date: February 2024

### Accountability

1. Frequency of Reports – As needed.
2. Criteria for Success – Schools will follow the procedure and include parents/guardians in decision making  
– Exemption requests will be rare

### Background

#### Vision

In Ontario, the vision for French as a Second Language is “Students will communicate and interact with growing confidence in French, one of Canada’s official languages, while developing the knowledge, skills and perspectives they need to participate fully as citizens in Canada and the world.”

*The Ontario Curriculum  
French as a Second Language*

#### Goals

There are three goals to support this vision:

1. Increase student confidence, proficiency and achievement in FSL.
2. Increase the percentage of students studying FSL until graduation.
3. Increase student, educator, parent and community engagement in FSL.

*A Framework for French as a Second Language  
In Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12*

#### Benefits of Learning A Second Language

As outlined in the curriculum, there are many benefits of learning a second language:

- an additional language strengthens first-language skills;
- the ability to speak two or more languages enhances cognitive development, reasoning and creative-thinking skills;
- enhances student confidence as a learner;
- facilitates the learning of additional languages; and,
- academic achievement.

As their strengths develop, French language learners become more flexible and adaptable in new and unforeseen situations. For example, second language learners tend to be more divergent thinkers, with improved memory and attention span.

#### Core French as a Second Language Programs are for All Students

Core French is taught in English-language schools of Ontario to provide students with the opportunity to become bilingual in the two official languages of Canada. The study of French as a second language is compulsory in elementary school from Grade 4 to Grade 8, and secondary school students are required to earn at least one credit in French as a second language to graduate.

French as a Second Language educators strive to meet the diverse needs of all students through the use of differentiated instruction and by providing accommodations and/or modifying expectations if necessary. Participation in French as a Second Language programs should reflect the diversity of the student population, including students with special education needs and English Language Learners.

If students have the opportunity to take Native languages in place of French as a second language in elementary school, they may use a Level 1 or 2 Native language course to meet the compulsory credit requirement for French as a second language in a secondary school.

## Procedures

### Elementary Requirements

The *Ontario Curriculum, French as a Second Language: Core French 4 - 8*, (Extended French (4–8), French Immersion (1 – 8), page 15 indicates “Core French is mandatory from Grades 4 to 8 for all students in English-language elementary schools.” However, in some very rare cases principals may recommend that exemptions be granted and therefore, need to be aware of the criteria, process and documentation required for such exemptions.

### Process and Documentation

- Accommodations and/or modifications to the FSL program must be attempted and documented through an IEP for French. “The development, implementation, and monitoring of an IEP is a collaborative effort that involves the student, parents/guardians, and school staff.” (Page 24, *Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language Programs: A Guide for Ontario Schools; (2015)*.
- The needs and strengths of the student must be considered in light of the benefits of continuing instruction in French. In very rare circumstances, after considering all the relevant information, the parents/guardians and the school team may feel that a student should be exempted. An exemption would normally be considered only for students in Grades 6, 7 and 8 where accommodations and/or modifications during Grade 4 and 5 have proved unsuccessful.
- There needs to be a collaborative team effort in reaching a decision to request an exemption from French. The parent/guardian must be made aware that their child will be discussed at School Team and consent to their child being discussed at School Team. The school administrator will consult with staff who work with the student including the Core French teacher, the classroom teacher, the Learning Resource teacher, and, if applicable, the ELL Itinerant teacher. Consultation with the Special Education Teacher Consultant, the FSL Teacher Consultant, the Indigenous Education Lead Teacher Consultant and, the ELL Teacher Consultant can support the school’s decision-making to ensure that all reasonable avenues for accommodations and modifications have been exhausted.
- Once the team believes that the student cannot benefit from FSL instruction, the principal arranges a meeting with the parents/guardians. The reasons for exemption are discussed and the short and long-term implications of exemption are explained using the following Ministry materials as reference:
  - Excerpts from *Ontario Schools K-12 Policy and Program Requirements 2016*, Section 6.1 The requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma; Section 6.2 Substitution for Compulsory Credit Requirements.

- Excerpts from The Ontario Curriculum, French as a Second Language: Core French 4-8: The Purpose of the Ontario Curriculum, French as a Second Language: Core French 4-8, page 2; The Role of Parents, page 12; Core French for Exceptional Students, page 5, and Planning French as a Second Language Programs for Students with Special Education Needs pages 35-37.
- Elementary principals should make students and parents/guardians aware of the process for substitution in secondary schools (see below) and ensure that appropriate discussions take place for the Grade 8 to 9 transitions.
- If the parent/guardian supports the request, the Request for Elementary Core French Exemption form (Appendix A) is completed and a copy of the proposed individual learning plan ; (i.e. Alternative learning Program Plan; or ESL/ELD Support Plan for ELLs)/ including details of supervision, is attached. In all cases of exemption, a written individual learning plan must be in place for the exempted student.
- The request is forwarded to the Family of Schools Superintendent for review and approval.
- The form and individual learning plan is returned to the school and filed in the O.S.R. A copy will be retained in the office of the Superintendent.
- On the student's "Hours of Instruction in French" card a zero (or pro-rated number of hours) will be entered in the appropriate section.
- The exemption form must be renewed every year and signed by the parent/guardian; Principal/Vice-Principal; and forwarded to the Elementary Family of Schools Superintendent for review and approval The review for the IEP or individual learning plan and the signature required for that document could take place at the same time.

Once approved by the Superintendent, the following shall be completed in PowerSchool to accurately report Grade 4-8 French requirements:

1. *Recording Elementary Grades 4-8 Mandatory French Hours:*  
For each school, the school would select "create/edit Language Program Minutes" where you can define the number of instruction minutes as set by the Ministry.  
By default, all students (Grade 4 – 8) when assigned their homeroom are enrolled in a French class. The French class is linked to Language Program Minutes.
2. *Recording Superintendent Approved Exemptions:*  
Students can be un-enrolled in a French class by assigning the student to a special program called French Exempt which does not report in OnSIS.

### Secondary Requirements

Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements, 2016 indicates that "Students must earn 1 credit in French as a second language in order to obtain the Ontario Secondary School Diploma." Principals may grant substitutions in some limited cases based on the procedures set out in Section 6.2 of *Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Program Requirements, 2016*.

### Criteria for a Substitution

- Under certain rare circumstances, usually involving Exceptional students, a substitution may be granted.
- The determining factor will be the inability of the student to benefit from instruction in a second language.

### Substitutions for Compulsory Courses

"It should be noted that there is no policy or program requirement suggesting that such substitutions should be made for French as a Second Language in particular. If a substitution for a compulsory credit is deemed necessary or in the best interests of an individual student, there are a variety of options." (p. 23 of *Including Students with Special Needs in FSL Programs (2015)*). For more information see *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements, 2016*.

### Process for a Substitution

- In *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements, 2016* it states:
- "...substitutions may be made for a limited number of compulsory credit courses from the remaining courses offered by the school that meet the requirements for compulsory credits. Principals may replace up to three of these courses with courses from the remainder of those that meet **the compulsory credit requirements**." If a parent/guardian or students wish to consider this option, they shall contact the secondary school Principal or designate to consult and discuss the process.

### Consultation Required

Teachers and administrators should consult the FSL Consultant, the ELL Consultant, Indigenous Education Lead or the Special Education Consultant regarding the criteria or process for exempting students from Core French classes or for the substitution of the compulsory secondary French credit as required.

### Resources

- *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools (First Edition), Grades 1 to 12;(2010)*.
- *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12;(2013)*
- *A Framework for French as A Second Language in Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12; (2013)*.
- *The Ontario Curriculum, French as a Second Language: Core French 4 - 8, (Extended French (4 – 8), French Immersion (1 – 8); (2013)*.
- *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12, French as a Second Language: Core French, (Extended French; French Immersion); (2013)*.
- *Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language Programs: A Guide for Ontario Schools; (2015)*.
- *Welcoming English Language Learners into French as a Second Language Programs; (2016)*.
- *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12 Policy and Program Requirements; (2016)*.
- *Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan (2017)*



APPENDIX A

REQUEST FOR ELEMENTARY CORE FRENCH EXEMPTION

School Name	
Student's Name	

Exemption Reason	Exceptional <input type="checkbox"/>	ELL <input type="checkbox"/>	N.S.L. <input type="checkbox"/>
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**NOTE:** "If a student requires accommodations and/or modified or alternative expectations in FSL, it is important to include the FSL teacher as part of the team creating and implementing that student's IEP." page24 *Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language (2015).*

Date of Birth	MM / DD / YY	Present Grade Level	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
Address							
Phone Number							
Reason for Exemption							

Attached is a copy of the IEP, and individual learning plan (Alternative Learning Program Plan, or, ESL/ELD Support Plan for ELLs) which outlines the proposed instructional plan for French time, including supervision details, for this Request for Exemption.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ am aware of the implications of this exemption.

Dated \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal/Vice-Principal

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent of Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date