



Grand Erie Attendance Strategy



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Section 1: Overview

Introduction

What is the purpose of the Attendance Strategy?

This Attendance Strategy has been created to assist students, parents/caregivers and schools in supporting students to attend school at least 90% of the time.

Why is regular attendance important?

- Research clearly shows that academic success in school is directly related to student attendance. (UChicago Consortium, toandthrough.uchicago.edu)
- Attending school regularly allows students to interact with peers, build relationships and learn how to collaborate effectively, resulting in better social skills, stronger friendships, and a deeper sense of belonging
- Consistency in attendance also allows students to build a sense of routine, and life skills such as punctuality and time management, habits which support success in school, and in future endeavors

The 90 Factor

- Students who attend school or class less than 90% of the time are at risk of decreased success at school.
- Attending 90% of the time means missing fewer than 2 days per month for an elementary student, or 2 periods of a class per month (or 8 periods of a class in a semester) for Secondary students.
 - Therefore, missing even 10 per cent of the school year means missing approximately 20 days

"How much have they missed?"	Elementary student (receives 184 days of instruction per year)	Secondary student (receives 88 periods of instruction per class, per semester)
90 % attendance	Missed: 2 days per month 20 days per school year 100 hours of instruction/year 6000 instruction minutes/year	Missed: 2 periods per month of a class 10 periods per semester of that class 12.5 hours of instruction in that class 750 instruction minutes in that class
80 % attendance	Missed: 4 days per month 40 days per school year 200 hours of instruction/year 12,000 instruction minutes/year	Missed: 4 periods per month of a class 20 periods per semester of that class 25 hours of instruction in that class 1,500 instruction minutes in that class
70 % attendance	Missed: 6 days per month 60 days per school year 360 hours of instruction/year 18,000 instruction minutes/year	Missed: 6 periods per month of a class 30 periods per semester 37.5 hours of instruction in that class 2,250 instruction minutes in that class

The Grand Erie Attendance Strategy will serve as a tool to help parents/caregivers and school staff to promote regular attendance at school through the following strategies:

- Enhances early notification processes
- Increases parent/caregiver awareness and engagement in supporting and promoting attendance
- Supports robust, inclusive, collaborative and personalized strategies to address complex barriers to student attendance, and
- Provides resources to support schools in further fostering conditions for students to feel the sense of belonging, acknowledgement and self-esteem that promotes a positive culture of attendance

Components:

The structure of Grand Erie Attendance Strategy reflects the following priorities:

Section 2: Supports for Students

Section 3: Supports for Parents/Caregivers

Section 4: Supports for Schools

Grand Erie Attendance Strategy



Supports for Students

- Provide schools with strategies to improve attendance by supporting a sense of belonging for all students
- Develop Attendance Support Teams at all schools to identify and address student barriers to attendance

Supports for Caregivers

- Increase caregiver understanding of importance of attendance
- Provide caregivers with early notification of absence patterns
- Provide caregiver resources

Supports for Schools

- Provide positive early intervention supports to schools
- Provide schools with positive strategies and considerations for improving attendance

Supports
for
Students

Supports
for
Caregivers

Supports
for
Schools

Goal:
90%
Attendance
for All
Students

Grand Erie Attendance Strategy



Priority	Goals	Actions
Priority 1: LEARN Supports for Students <i>Support a sense of belonging for all students to promote attendance</i>	<p>Support a sense of belonging for all students through equitable and inclusive school strategies</p> <p>Identify and address student barriers to attendance</p>	<p>Promote attendance through student belonging by providing schools with positive tips, considerations and suggestions that foster inclusion</p> <p>In collaboration with parents/caregivers, In-School Team will address individual student barriers to attendance</p>
Priority 2: LEAD Supports for Parents/Caregivers <i>Provide parent/caregivers with information and supports to promote student attendance</i>	<p>Increase parent/caregiver understanding of the importance of attendance</p> <p>Provide parent/caregivers with early notification of absence patterns</p> <p>Provide parent/caregivers resources</p>	<p>Implement Grand Erie attendance promotion campaign</p> <p>Develop parents/caregiver's webpage on Grand Erie website to explain attendance processes to parents/caregivers</p> <p>Develop messaging process to alert parents/caregivers in a timely manner when students are absent for an increasing number of days (consecutively, and/or non-consecutively)</p> <p>Provide parents/caregivers with information on Grand Erie's attendance processes and materials, and links to online resources that support student attendance</p>
Priority 3: INSPIRE Supports for Schools <i>Provide schools with positive and equitable attendance supports and processes</i>	<p>Provide schools with positive strategies and considerations for improving attendance</p> <p>Provide positive early intervention supports to schools</p>	<p>Provide schools with information, activities, and strategies for promoting attendance through student belonging and engagement</p> <p>Provide schools with timelines and processes for positive early attendance intervention supports</p> <p>Provide schools with supportive messaging that gives timely parents/caregivers notification when student absences are increasing, and offers supports to assist in addressing any barriers to student attendance</p>

Section 2: Supports for Students

Why is student attendance so important?

Your student's attendance matters significantly. When children attend school regularly (at least 90% of the time), they have a better chance of reading proficiently by third grade. By sixth grade, consistent absences become a warning sign for potential academic struggles in high school. Quality instruction and curriculum won't make a difference if students aren't present. Chronic absences, which may arise as the result of health concerns, mental health issues, housing instability, lack of transportation, or food insecurity, affect vulnerable populations. Throughout Grand Erie, students have access to essential support services for their overall well-being, making school a safe space where they can feel a sense of belonging. Regular attendance is important for students to be able to access these services.

Parents/caregivers and school staff are essential partners in encouraging good school attendance.

How can schools try to help students to feel welcome and valued at school?

To foster a sense of belonging for any student, schools should consider the following:

- Schools need to maintain high expectations for learning for all students
- Schools need a welcoming and engaging school environment that emphasizes building relationships with families and supporting students in meeting their needs
- Students need to feel that they are recognized, valued, and welcomed
- Every student needs:
 - A warm welcome
 - A connection to a caring adult, reinforced every day
 - A safe place to take risks
 - Success in their learning
 - Someone who cares, notices when something is wrong and offers to help
 - Someone who believes in them and gives them hope
 - Seeing themselves reflected in the school community, classroom, curriculum and staff

What is an In-School Team and how can it support student attendance?

An In-School Team is a group of staff who provide support to students and work to remove barriers that students may have to their success. Every school has a Team, which is coordinated by an administrator in the school.

The In-School Team will include an administrator, an office clerical staff member, a Learning Resource Teacher (LRT), and the student's classroom teacher. The Team may also include other support staff who the principal believes may be of assistance. These staff may include an Attendance Counselor, school Social Worker, school Child and Youth Worker, Indigenous Education Counselor, Multilingual Language Learner (MLL) support staff, or any other Grand Erie support staff or external agencies who can provide support, and have appropriate parental consent, if required.

The purpose of the In-School Team in supporting student attendance, specifically, is to work collaboratively with students and parents/caregivers to identify barriers to attendance for specific students, and then to determine and provide intentional supports for those students to overcome these attendance barriers. **Parents/caregivers are vital partners in this collaborative process.**

Who at school can help with student attendance?

Parents/caregivers can begin to seek support for attendance by contacting the school office to speak to the Principal or Vice-Principal, clerical staff, or a trusted teacher.

The table below describes which staff may be helpful in supporting the attendance of your child.

Supportive staff who can be accessed through the school	
<p>Teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide students with a caring, welcoming classroom environment ○ Monitor attendance patterns to provide early information on student absences to parents/caregivers and school administration ○ Work on classroom/school concerns that are brought forward by parents/caregivers/student ○ Support overcoming academic barriers ○ Provide learning around self-regulation and managing emotions ○ Help provide/support reasons to attend, such as clubs, teams, school events, and social connections
<p>Administrator (Principal or Vice-Principal)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide students with a caring, welcoming school environment ○ Provide information to parents/caregivers on how the administrators can support students with attendance ○ Serve as member of the In-School Team ○ Refer student to the In-School Team, who will support the student, parents/caregivers, and school in finding solutions to absences ○ Organize In-School Team Meetings to discuss with parents/caregivers how to best support students with attendance concerns
<p>Learning Resource Teacher (LRT) (Elementary and Secondary)</p> <p>Student Success Teacher (Secondary)</p> <p>Guidance Counsellor (Secondary)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support students with issues or concerns at school ○ Make individual student plans to support achievement, belonging and attendance (e.g., IEPs, Student Success Plans) ○ Support self-regulation, anxiety interventions, and student academic success (i.e., success getting credits) ○ Support students to acquire courses that students find engaging and require for graduation and success in their career pathway.
<p>System Support Staff (as determined appropriate in conversation with the school administrator and parents/caregivers)</p> <p>NOTE: <i>These support staff are accessed through the school administrator. Please contact the school to discuss these supports if you feel that</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact admin or school office for further information and to access these supports ○ May include any of the following in consultation with the parents/caregivers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School Social Worker (SW) ▪ Child and Youth Worker (CYW) ▪ Attendance Counsellor (AC) ▪ Behaviour Counsellor (BC) ▪ Indigenous Cultural Mentor ▪ Indigenous Education Counsellor ▪ Indigenous CYW ▪ Multilingual Language Learner (MLL) support staff ▪ Any other Grand Erie support staff, or external agencies

<i>they may support your student's attendance.</i>	
Clerical (Office) staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Keep parents/caregivers informed of student absences○ Make phone calls to parents/caregivers to offer supports and to seek information regarding reasons for absences○ Provide absence information to the administrator for planning effective and specific attendance supports

Section 3: Supports for Parents/Caregivers

How will parents/caregivers be informed that a child is absent?

Parents/caregivers will receive notification (electronic messaging or telephone call) every day that a student is absent for at least half of the day (Elementary students), or for any period (Secondary school).

Parents/caregivers who have not already signed up for the School Messenger app can [click here](#) to download and sign up for the app.

How will parents/caregivers be notified those absences are starting to add up?

Notification of Non-Consecutive Absences, Subject to Administrator discretion

- After 3 days of non-consecutive absences, parents/caregivers will receive an electronic message offering opportunity to discuss the student's academic progress
- After 5, 10, 15, 20 days of non-consecutive absence (elementary), or 20, 40, 60, or 80 class periods (secondary), parents/caregivers will also receive a communication (phone call, electronic message, or letter)
- Please see [Non-Consecutive Absence Timeline](#) for details

Notification of Consecutive Absences

- In addition to daily notification whenever a student is absent, after more than 3-5 consecutive days of absences for elementary students (consecutive periods of absence for secondary students), parents/caregivers will begin to receive notification by phone, electronic messaging, and/or letters from school administration
- After 11 days/periods of consecutive absence Attendance Counsellors will make telephone contacts and offer home visits to support student attendance
- Please see [Consecutive Absence Timeline](#) for details

Websites and Resources for Parents/Caregivers

[Attendance Works website](#)

[Attendance Works website for Parents/Caregivers and Parents/Caregivers Organizations](#)

[Grand Erie Guide to Fostering the Development of Self-Regulation Skills](#)

[Grand Erie Guide to Supporting Students with Anxiety](#)

[Grand Erie Mental Health Website](#)

Non-Consecutive Absences (Early Intervention)

Subject to Principal discretion

<p>3 days* Phone Notification</p>	<p>5 days* 1st Notification</p>	<p>10 days* 2nd Notification</p>	<p>15+ days* 4th Notification</p>	<p>20 days* 5th Notification</p>
<p>Early Intervention</p>	<p>Awareness</p>	<p>Awareness and Assistance</p>	<p>Attendance and Team Planning</p>	<p>Awareness and Co-Planning Meeting</p>
<p>3rd non-consecutive day absent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher phone call (or electronic message or email sent) offering an opportunity to discuss the student's academic progress </p>	<p>5th non-consecutive day absent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic message sent </p>	<p>10th non-consecutive day absent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic message sent offering additional supports to the family, if needed </p>	<p>15th non-consecutive day absent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter sent Parent/Caregiver contacted for information on possible attendance barriers In-School Team (IST) convened to discuss potential supports/strategies to address barriers identified Supports/resources offered to parents/caregivers as appropriate </p>	<p>20th non-consecutive day absent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter sent offering parent/caregiver an intervention planning meeting with administrator or the IST (as available and appropriate) </p>



* For secondary schools, notification timelines reflect number of periods absent from a specific class. 14 to 17 year old's can only remain on the register for a maximum of 60 consecutive days, and then they must be removed from the register and their names placed on the demitted students list.

Consecutive Absences

3rd to 30th day

3-5 days*
1st
Notification

3rd – 5th
consecutive days
absent

- Daily calls made home
- Electronic message sent

6-10 days*
2nd
Notification

6th – 10th
consecutive days
absent

- Daily calls made home
- Electronic message sent
- Attendance Counselor (AC) referral considered by In-School Team (IST)

11-14 days*
3rd
Notification

11th – 14th
consecutive days
absent

- Daily calls made home
- Electronic message sent
- Early intervention AC referral made
- Home support visits offered by AC
- IST convened to discuss potential attendance supports/strategies

On 16th day*
4th
Notification

Once at 15
consecutive days
absent

- AC referral made on the 16th day
- letter sent
- IST meeting
- AC home support visits continue

16-30 days*
Two-Way
Contact

16th – 30th
consecutive days
absent

- Two-way contact must be made with home
- "C" entry in PowerSchool
- Notes made in log entry
- AC home support visits continue



* For secondary schools, notification timelines reflect number of periods absent from a specific class. 14 to 17 year olds can only remain on the register for a maximum of 60 consecutive days, and then they must be removed from the register and their names placed on the demitted students list.

Consecutive Absences

31st to 60th day

On 31st day*
5th
Notification

Once at 30th consecutive day absent

- Referral made on 31st day
- Letter sent
- AC home support visits continue

31-45 days*
Two-way
Contact

31st – 44th consecutive days absent

- Two-way contact must be made with home
- "C" entry in PowerSchool starts on 31st day
- Notes made in log entry
- AC home support visits continue

46th day*
6th
Notification

Once at 45th consecutive day absent

- Referral made on 46th day
- Letter sent
- AC home support visits continue

46-60 days*
Two-way
Contact

46th – 60th consecutive days absent

- Two-way contact must be made with home
- "C" entry in PowerSchool starts on 46th day
- Notes made in log entry
- AC home support visits continue

60th day*
7th
Notification

Once at 60th consecutive day absent

- Referral made on 61st day
- letter sent
- AC home support visits continue



* For secondary schools, notification timelines reflect number of periods absent from a specific class. 14 to 17 year old's can only remain on the register for a maximum of 60 consecutive days, and then they must be removed from the register and their names placed on the demitted students list.

Section 4: Supports for Schools

A strong sense of belonging for all students plays a significant role in creating a positive culture of attendance within a school.

In this section of the Attendance Strategy, schools will be provided with ideas for assisting in creating positive environments and encouraging students to attend and attain success.

From a school perspective, the Attendance Strategy serves as a toolkit which focuses on the following components:

- a system to provide early notification to parents/caregivers of increasing non-consecutive absences
- information for parents/caregivers about the notification process
- a positive and supportive approach to informing parents/caregivers
- the inclusion of the In-School Team in attendance support planning
- tips and strategies for activities that encourage student recognition, belonging, and attendance



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