



Toronto High School

ATTENDANCE

POLICY

1. Rationale:

At Toronto High School we recognise the direct relationship between attendance and student achievement and success.

Attendance is recorded and monitored through the electronic system *Attendance Management System (AMS)*. Regular attendance is promoted and valued by parents and staff via regular communication, monitoring and recognition of student efforts (attendance certificates are issued at Formal Assemblies).

2. Aims:

To develop clear guidelines for the attendance of students at Toronto High School and to provide parents and carers with relevant information for the explanation of student absences from school.

3. Implementation:

Attendance (Students) Policy

Contents:

- Roll marking and Organisation
- Partial Attendance, Late Arrivals, Early Leavers, Sickness at School
- Truancy, including sport truancy
- Early Leavers – Seniors, TAFE students
- Notes for absences and parental information
- Welfare Initiatives and Communicating with Parents
- Teachers' responsibilities, an overview for staff
- Assemblies and Drills
- Attendance at Exams

Roll Marking and Organisation

- Roll call is held every day at 8.15am in the COLA. On Fridays and on any days when extreme weather conditions prevail, roll call is held in timetabled rooms. The morning roll call assembly is also used to disseminate information and messages to all students.

- Toronto High School utilises an electronic attendance system (AMS). Rolls with identification photographs of students are printed weekly and placed in roll folders. These rolls are used by roll teachers to record a student's absence. The procedures are as follows:

- 1) All students who are not physically present in roll call are marked absent by the teacher, by placing the letter "a" in the correct box under the student's name to indicate that the student is absent on that day.
- 2) The roll call teacher marks all students, who are present, by making a diagonal line (top right corner to bottom left corner of the box) in the appropriate box underneath the student's name
- 3) Teachers sign their rolls to indicate that the roll is correct.
- 4) If a mistake is made, there is a grid at the front of the roll for the teacher to record the correction.

- A daily absentee sheet, listing all student absences, is generated from the rolls. It is distributed to all staff rooms to enable teachers to check for anomalies. The absentee sheet is usually distributed during Period 2. An anomaly is when a student is present in the classroom but marked as absent on the daily sheet OR when a student is absent from the class and NOT on the daily sheet. All such anomalies must be reported to the Deputy Principal who supervises that year. Suspected trancies are reported on the buff coloured Truancy Slips. After a class roll check each lesson, these truancy slips must be completed and sent to the relevant Deputy for follow-up.

- Students on excursions or some other form of approved leave are entered onto the system by the front office. This then records the student as present. A list of students attending an excursion must be given to the front office, for the daily notices before the excursion. It is then entered onto the system and printed as part of the daily absentee sheet. If a student does not attend a planned excursion, the teacher in charge of the excursion, communicates this information to the front office in order for records to be adjusted. This should occur the following day.

Partial Attendance, Late Arrivals, Early Leavers, Sickness at School

- "Late" is defined as arriving any time after 8.15am, because of late buses, illness, appointments or for any unforeseen circumstances. Students who arrive after 8.15am will not join normal roll call. Instead they must report to the front office, and enter their late arrival on the AMS system. This will be then be recorded as a Partial Attendance. A LATE slip is generated which becomes both the pass to enter class, as well as the note to be taken home, to be explained/signed by a parent or guardian and to be returned to school the next day. It should be given to the roll call teacher or the front office staff.

- There is a system in place to deal with students who are persistently late. All late arrivals may provide a parental note to escape any further punishment. If no parental note is provided to explain the lateness to school, the LATE slip mentioned in paragraph 1 above, will indicate that no note was provided. AMS is able to generate a list of late arrivals. Each student, who has no parental note, will be advised to report to a detention room and will receive a half lunch detention, which will be supervised by a member of the school executive. Failure to attend the lunch detention will be treated as an incident of disobedience and non-compliance and the usual school consequences will be applied. Ongoing issues will be dealt with by the Senior Executive and may include the use of monitoring cards (both attendance and behaviour), parent contact, afternoon detentions or suspension from school.

- No teacher is empowered to allow a student to leave school premises other than at the normal dismissal times. Only the Principal, Deputy Principals or their delegates may give permission for a pupil to leave the school grounds. All other staff wishing to allow students to leave the school grounds must make arrangements through the Principal and/or Deputy Principals. Students seeking permission to leave the school grounds should report to the front office where the following routine is applied:

- Students are expected to hand requests for early leavers to the relevant Deputy Principal before 8.15am each day. If there is advance knowledge of any partial absence, the parental note may be brought in to school, the day before the intended absence. This note will be signed by the Deputy Principal, who may or may not ring parents to confirm the details. Students take the signed note to the front office, where an early leaver's pass is generated. Before leaving school the student signs out at the front office, as this will electronically record the absence on school records. Students will be given an Early Leavers' Pass by Front Office staff at this time. Students are not to leave the school before the agreed time.
- If a student is sent home to retrieve uniform or other items this occurs with parental knowledge and students carry an official DET pass. This is approved only by the Principal or Deputy Principals.
- If a student becomes sick at school the class teacher will provide the student with an out of class note, to allow the student to report to the sick bay. If a student needs to go home, the front office/sick bay staff, will contact parents and make appropriate decisions about sending the student home. If no parent or carer is available to collect the student from school, the student will remain at school, in the care of the sick bay staff, or may return to class, if his/her condition has improved.

Truancy, including Sport Truancy

- Truancy is the unauthorised absence from class or school. It is a serious matter and is treated as such. Each lesson, teachers mark the class roll and compare this to the daily absentee sheet. Until the daily absentee sheet becomes available (usually during period 2), all students who are not in class for the class roll check, must be considered as truants. Absent student names must be entered onto the buff-coloured Truancy slips and sent to the year Deputy by student runner. When the daily absentee sheet becomes available, any student who is not in class and not on the absentee sheet and cannot be accounted for in another way (sick bay, early leavers, interview) is considered to be a truant. The name of any student missing from class, without a suitable explanation, should be entered on the Truancy Slip and sent to the relevant Year Deputy, who will follow-up the student to determine if the student is a truant. The student will be interviewed and sanctions imposed, if it is confirmed that the student has truanted from class/school. Sanctions may include:
 - Senior Executive after-school detention, parent contact, attendance card, parent interview with DP.
 - A student who truants a whole day may be placed on an attendance card for a minimum of two weeks. Parents will be informed.
 - In extreme cases a referral to the HSLO may be completed.
- Truancy in sport is defined as a student who fails to attend his/her designated sport, without a prior excuse. If a student fails to report to sport, the sport - teacher must first ensure that the student has not left with an early leaver's pass, or been to sick bay, or attended another sport. If the student cannot be accounted for in any of these ways a truancy slip must be completed and passed on to the Sports' Co-ordinator. If a student has attended another sport, and been permitted to do so by another teacher, the Sports' Organiser must impose a consequence for disobedience.

Early Leavers – Seniors, TAFE students

- Some senior students may be completing TAFE courses and as a result may have periods at school when they do not have a scheduled class. If the free period/s occur/s towards the end of the day and they have no further timetabled periods for the day, Year 12 students are permitted to leave school at the conclusion of their timetabled classes. Year 11 students, who have only period

5 as a non-timetabled period, must wait until the end of lunch, before signing out. (This allows the Year 11 students who volunteer for lunch canteen duty, not to be disadvantaged, as no Year 11 student should leave school grounds before the end of lunch). Students must sign out at the front office as they leave the school grounds. If a student has to leave school to attend TAFE they will sign out, at the front office, after their last period at school. This process will be coordinated by the Careers Adviser, who will provide the Front Office and the Deputy Principals, with a detailed list of all students involved in TAFE courses, the days they are to attend and the times that they will leave school. **Note, that there are NO LATE STARTS for senior students, even if their day starts with a free period. These times must be spent in the library, completing homework and/or assessments, making study notes, revising, accessing the support resources available in the library etc.**

Notes for Absences and Parental Information

- Students who have been absent from school are expected to bring a letter of explanation from parents or caregivers to explain their absence on their return to school. If no note is received within five days of the student's return to school, a standard letter will be issued from the Front Office, requesting an explanation from parents/caregivers. This letter must be signed by the parents/carers and returned to the school. It is a legal requirement that all student absences are explained. The mailing of these letters is done retrospectively, allowing for a period of time where parents can send in an explanation note. This may mean that parents are informed of the absence at a later date and after they have already sent in a letter of explanation.
- A proforma to explain student absences is regularly sent out to parents in the Parental bulletin. This proforma may be used to explain absences from school, or parents/carers may write a letter of explanation. The letter must include student surname, Christian name, student roll class, date of absence and reason for the absence.
- When a note is received the explanation is entered into the attendance system, using the codes "S" (sick), "L"(leave), "E"(exclusion). The administration staff enter absences on to the computer system every day. This is used by executive staff and the HSLO to monitor student attendance through print-outs of records.
- If a parent wishes to apply for extensive leave for his/her child (i.e. exemption from attendance at school), the parent must apply to the Principal and must supply details about the leave, including dates, reasons, visas etc. The principal may then issue a Certificate of Exemption.
- An Attendance Committee meets weekly. This committee comprises the deputy principals, HT Maths, AEW's and HSLO. Student attendance patterns are inspected and discussed. Interviews may be held with students and members of the committee, to address any concerns. Chronic student patterns of attendance may require the invitation of parents/carers and their attendance and support, at such a meeting.

Welfare initiatives and communicating with Parents

- Students who achieve 100% attendance in a term will receive an attendance certificate at the school formal assembly, which is held early the next term.
- Information about student absence/attendance is reported to parents via student reports which are completed twice a year. The information on the reports is drawn from the electronic attendance system which is compiled from information from roll call.
- Parents may contact the Year Advisor, Head Teacher Welfare, members of the attendance committee, or the relevant Year Deputy Principal, if they have concerns about their child and/or would like additional information about their child's attendance.

Teachers' Responsibilities

Teachers play a very important role in monitoring and promoting good attendance patterns. Most classroom teachers have a morning roll call group and they are responsible for accurately marking the roll and ensuring students return absence notes. Roll call begins at 8.15am each morning, under the COLA Mondays – Thursdays and in a designated roll call room on Fridays or when extreme weather conditions prevail. Teachers must collect rolls from the roll cabinet in front of the front office in time to report to roll call punctually to mark the roll on which absences are recorded. Teachers must not make changes to the rolls, however if an error is made there is a grid at the front of the roll to make a note of the error. Rolls are signed daily by the teacher who marked it. The roll is returned to the front office for the electronic scanning process to begin. From this scanning, the daily absentee sheet, which is distributed to staff, is generated.

An Overview For Staff:

- Pick up your roll by 8.15am. Be ready to start your duty punctually (COLA or Roll Call Room).
- Hand out any notes that may be in the roll.
- Roll call is held in the quad, under the COLA. There are markings on the quad that indicate where roll call groups are to be seated. Students must form two lines per roll group, in alphabetical order. The teacher should then move along the line checking attendance, identifying present students by name and/or photo from the roll. A final head count should be taken to reconcile student numbers against names. It is important that teachers take extra care when marking the roll on the quad to ensure no errors.
- If a student is absent, an 'a' is placed in the box under the student's name, with that day's date. If a student is present, a diagonal line (top right to bottom left) is drawn in the box under the student's name for that day.
- Head Count students in your roll group, to reconcile the number of bodies with what you have recorded.
- Never make changes to the roll, especially do not add or delete students. The 'alteration grid' included in your roll folder is for this purpose.
- Never permit late students (after 8.15am), to join the roll call group or enter the room. They should be directed to the front office to sign in late.
- If a student has not returned an absence note, issue a pink reminder note. Spare copies are at the front of your roll.
- If you have concerns about a student's absence or lateness refer them to the relevant Year Deputy.
- Mark your roll in black pen only.
- It is the professional responsibility of all staff to ensure that the roll is marked accurately at all times. It is a legal document and may be introduced into court, along with the staff member whose responsibility it is to mark it accurately. Teachers should seek help from the supervising Head Teacher (See Admin/School Org/Year Advisers and Roll Teachers) or Deputy if help is required.
- A few teachers are reserves for roll call. They should check each day to see if they have been given a roll. It is important that roll call reserves are at school on time to mark a roll.
- Teachers are also expected to mark the roll every lesson and to maintain accurate class rolls. Their class rolls are to be checked against the daily absentee sheet and any anomalies/absences must be reported to the relevant Year Deputy.
- If a teacher detains a student, he/she must provide that student with a note in order for the student to enter his/her next class.
- Parent enquiries regarding rolls will be directed to the year Deputy. Consequently, staff accuracy, ownership and responsibility are central to maintaining accurate records.

Assemblies and Drills

· In the event of an emergency evacuation or drill, teachers are responsible for their roll call. Students are evacuated to the far end of the oval, where they are positioned in the same year/roll group order as if they were preparing for a normal roll call under the COLA.

Attendance at Exams

- Student attendance at every exam is recorded. This process is coordinated by the Head Teacher Administration. An overview is as follows:
- Students complete attendance slips for every examination
- One supervising teacher, as nominated on the exam roster, checks the attendance slips against the list of students attached to the bundle of exam papers.
- The slips and checked list are returned to the Head Teacher of the faculty for each examination, so that the HT may catch up with absent students to redo missed exams..
- Absences are then communicated to the front office to be recorded on attendance system.

Senior Attendance Policy and Procedures

As a senior student of Toronto High School you have some extra rights and responsibilities. Good attendance will result in successful learning and achievement. Your enrolment as a senior student is conditional on your knowing and understanding your responsibilities. If you do not understand any points that are listed below you need to speak to your Year Advisor or Year Deputy Principal.

Roll Call

- Year 11 and Year 12 students are expected to attend roll call at 8.15am and to be on time for roll call and all other classes. **There are no regular late starts for Senior students.** Late arrivals will be monitored by the Deputy Principals. Privileges provided to Seniors to leave early, will be revoked if Seniors persistently arrive late.

Leaving Early, Lateness, Sick At School (Partial Absence)

- If you are late to school you must follow normal school procedures, as described above for late Arrivals - sign in at the front office, be provided with a late pass (one for your class teacher and one to take home for parent signature and explanation) and proceed to class. You must return the note to explain your lateness and this should be given in at the front office or given to your roll call teacher. Persistent lateness is not acceptable and offenders will be given lunch detentions and may be placed on an attendance card. Habitual lateness may also result in ALL early leaving entitlements for senior students, being revoked.
- If you have to leave early, for a medical appointment or other appointment, you must to bring in a note from your Parent/carer, explaining why you need to leave and the time you will be leaving. The note needs to be signed by either of the Deputy Principals before school and then handed in at the office. An early leaver's pass will be issued. You must collect this pass from the front office and use it to leave class/school, after you have been signed out.
- If you become sick at school you must ask your class teacher for an out of class note to report to sick bay. If it is necessary to send you home, your parents will be contacted and arrangements made. If you leave school grounds without following this process you will receive a consequence for failing to follow procedures – after school detention.

Whole Day Absence from School

- By returning to Year 11 and 12 you have made a commitment to senior studies and as such you must maintain regular and consistent attendance. If your attendance slips below a reasonable level you will be interviewed by the Attendance Committee and/or a member of the Senior Executive. If no valid reason exists, your status may be reviewed, you may be placed on a UPL program, with expulsion procedures pursued if need be.
- If you are absent from school you must bring a note explaining your absence on the first day you return to school. This note should be given to your roll call teacher during roll call or handed in at the front office.

Leaving The School Grounds and Truancy

- Year 12 students may leave the school grounds on those days when they have no further timetabled lessons for that day. Year 11 students do not have this privilege and, if they have no timetabled lesson for period 5, they must wait until the end of lunch-time before they sign out and leave school. This arrangement is in place so as not to penalise

those year 11 students who have volunteered to work during lunch-time at the canteen. Year 11/12 students who do leave school grounds before the correct time, will be considered truants.

· Truancy is a very serious issue. If you are caught truanting you will be given a consequence. A first offence will result in an afternoon detention. A second offence will result in another detention and your parents will be contacted. You will also be interviewed by the Deputy Principal responsible for your year. Persistent offenders will have their enrolment status reviewed, with expulsion procedures pursued if need be. Persistent breaches of this early leaving advice, may also result in early leaving privileges being revoked for all senior students.

Sport

· Year 11 and Year 12 students do not participate in Tuesday sport and may leave school at the beginning of lunch without swiping out.

TAFE

· Some senior students complete TAFE courses, requiring them to leave school early on some days. Students must sign out at the front office before they leave. The Careers Adviser will provide the front office staff and deputy principals with a list of students participating at TAFE, complete with days and times that they must leave school in order to arrive on time at TAFE.

Uniform

· If you are not recognisable as identifying with this school, you will be sent home to change by the Deputy Principals or Principal. You are expected to attend school in full school uniform every day. **Full school uniform must also be worn throughout all examination periods, including the Higher School Certificate examination.**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department's policies and procedures as follows:

- **Student Attendance in Government Schools – Procedures**
- **School Attendance Policy (Intranet)**

4. Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last updated

May 2011