



# BAY VIEW HIGH SCHOOL

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31 Scholars Road, Upper Tantallon, NS B3Z 0C3

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September 8, 2023

Good Evening Bay View Students and Families:

With the 2023-24 school year now under way, we wanted to take an opportunity to discuss the ***Student Attendance and Engagement Policy***, which has been reintroduced by the Nova Scotia EECED and how it will impact our students at BVHS.

*The Student Attendance and Engagement Policy*, which applies to all schools across the province, was paused in the Spring of 2020 in response to the onset of the pandemic. As of September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, said pause has been lifted and the policy is now back in effect.

A copy of the policy can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

*“This policy recognizes that regular attendance at school supports greater student success and achievement. Attendance supports student learning and promotes a sense of responsibility that students will need as they transition from the school system to post-secondary studies and/or the workforce. Its objective is to set clear, consistent expectations for regular and punctual student attendance at all grade levels and provide a consistent approach in responding to student absences and chronic lateness.” (NS Student Attendance and Engagement Policy, p.1.)*

With regards to its implementation at Bay View High, our students and families must be aware of section **5.4 Loss of Credit for Grades 10 to 12**. Section 5.4 states that *“in order to earn a course credit in high school, students are expected to be present for at least 80 per cent of class time. A teacher can recommend loss of credit when a student has missed 20 per cent of class time due to any absences, and strong efforts have been made to improve the student’s attendance, but no improvement has been demonstrated by the student.” (NS Student Attendance and Engagement Policy, p.2.)*

**In a semester course at the high school level 20 percent of class time would equate to 18 unexcused absences.**

As a staff, our goal is to make students and families aware when unexcused absences become a concern. To this end, Bay View will take the following steps when unexcused absences begin to add up for students who are not attending class:

- 4-5 unexcused absences – Classroom teacher will contact parent/guardian by phone or e-mail.
- 10 unexcused absences – Administration will send a letter home, by post, making family aware of the trend in all effected classes. Administration will meet with student.

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**D. Kalberlah - Principal**

**Vice Principals**

R. Connors (Surnames A-L & O2)

C. Conrad (Surnames M-Z & NSISP)

**School Counsellors**

C. Parsons (Surnames A-G & O2)

J. Banks (Surnames H-Mc)

J. Mireault-Wiseman (Surnames Me-Z & NSISP)



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- 14 unexcused absences – Administration will request an in-person meeting with the student and parent/guardian.
- 18 unexcused absences – The principal may inform the student and family that the student has lost credit in the course.

An unexcused absence is a class in which a student does not attend and has not been excused by a parent/guardian within seven (7) days of said missed class. An unexcused absence may also be recorded by a teacher or administrator if a student arrives to class and then leaves early, without reason, and does not return or misses a majority of 75 minutes of said period (without reason).

## **Supporting Our Students When an Absence is Beyond Their Control**

As per the document, *“this policy is to be applied in a fair and equitable way and is not intended to punish or marginalize students for circumstances beyond their control. The policy provides flexibility by allowing teachers and principals to use their professional judgment to determine when there may be extenuating circumstances affecting a student’s attendance. In these cases, the school will work with the student and/or their family to respond with the appropriate incentives and supports, and/or to develop accountability mechanisms that recognize the student’s unique situation.”* (NS Student Attendance and Engagement Policy, p.1.)

At Bay View we recognize that there are many reasons why a student may miss a class beyond their control. These reasons may include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (physical or mental)
- Hospitalization
- Surgery and/or post-operative care
- Serious health issues to family members
- Funerals
- Family vacations
- School Trips
- Class Trips
- Sports/Clubs (both school and community)
- Co-operative Education Placements
- Judicial Engagements

Students who miss classes for reasons like the ones listed above will not have these absences coded as unexcused and will not have them counted against the 18 that may lead to loss of credit.

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### **D. Kalberlah - Principal**

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As such, it is imperative that parents/guardians contact our school attendance line to excuse students from class when they will be absent for reasons like the ones mentioned above. As indicated earlier, this call must be done within seven (7) days of the missed class(es).

**Our attendance line can be reached by calling (902) 832-3222 and pressing "1". Attendance is usually updated within 24 hours.**

As a staff, we want to see all our students succeed in our building. The first step to academic success is having our students attend class. We recognize that there will be occasions during a semester that students will miss time due to circumstances beyond their control. The re-implementation of the policy does not seek to punish said cases. However, students who choose not to attend class, on their own accord, may become in jeopardy of losing a credit if non-attendance reaches 20% in any given class.

As always, we encourage you to reach out if you have any questions about the re-implementation of the *NS Student Attendance and Engagement Policy*.

Respectfully,

BVHS Administration

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