



## **SUPERVISED ALTERNATIVE LEARNING AND OTHER EXCUSALS FROM ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL**

Responsibility:	<i>Superintendent, Student Achievement &amp; Well-Being (Special Education)</i>
Legal References:	<i>Education Act, Section 28: Ontario Regulation 34/10; Workplace Safety Act</i>
Related References:	<i>Administrative Procedure 2170 – Obtaining Permission from Parent/Legal Guardian for Release of Information To or From a Specified Agency, School Board or Individual Administrative Procedure 2180 – Instructions for Parent/Legal Guardian Permission for Involvement of Non-School Board Personnel Administrative Procedure 2190 – Student Withdrawal from Parental/Guardian Control Guide – Waterloo Region District School Board Student Success Framework, December 2011</i>
Revisions:	<i>September 2016</i>
Reviewed:	<i>September 2016</i>

### **1. Preamble**

- 1.1 The following procedure provides guidelines and expectations pertaining to the duties of principals and staff regarding the process for Supervised Alternative Learning and Other Excusals from Attendance at School. On February 1, 2011, this procedure replaced Administrative Procedure 2320: Supervised Alternative Learning for Excused Pupils – A Guide for Application and Implementation.

### **2. General**

- 2.1 Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL) legislation (Reg. 374/10 of the Education Act) allows for students of 14 years and older who have significant difficulties with regular attendance at school to be excused from compulsory attendance at school. Students will have access to a range of learning activities through the development of a Supervised Alternative Learning Program (SALP) that supports the achievement of their personal and educational goals.
- 2.2 SAL is a procedure whereby students aged 14 to 17, up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, can legally be excused from regular attendance at school with the permission of the WRDSB SAL Committee. As an alternative educational experience, excused pupils can engage in paid work, volunteer activities, community-based programs, and other learning opportunities. The important distinction between SAL and other options such as work experience and co-operative education is that work experience and co-operative education are an integral part or extension of the student's regular school program, while SAL is an alternative to attendance in a regular school program. Most students who apply for SAL approval are interested in leaving regular education for work or some other constructive learning experience.

- 2.3 Coverage under the Workplace Safety Act is not provided for students under the age of 14 years. It is illegal under the Ministry of Labour laws for any child under fourteen years of age to be on a worksite unless it is for a brief tour or job shadowing. In addition, the Occupational Health and Safety Act specifies minimum age requirements for certain work settings as follows:
- Window cleaning – 18 years;
  - Underground mines – 18 years;
  - Logging operations – 16 years;
  - Construction industry – 16 years;
  - Factory operations, repair shops, restaurant, kitchens, produce and meat preparation– 15 years;
  - Offices, stores, arenas, restaurant serving areas – 14 years
- 2.4 SAL students remain on the home school register.

### **3. Parent/Guardian Considerations**

- 3.1 If a student is at least 16 years old and has withdrawn from parental control, the authority or right vested in the parent/guardian is then vested in the student. (Administrative Procedure 2180 - Instructions for Parent/Legal Guardian Permission for Involvement of Non-School Board Personnel)
- 3.2 Arrangements can be made to have a student and/or parent/guardian of a student attend the SAL Committee meeting. The student and/or parent/guardian are entitled to attend the meeting with a support person or have a support person attend in his or her place. The support person has the same rights to attend and be heard as the pupil or parent/guardian.

### **4. The SAL Committee**

- 4.1 The SAL Committee is composed of a Board administrator, a trustee of the Board and a community representative. The committee may meet up to twice each month from September to June.
- 4.2 The SAL Committee may approve a Supervised Alternative Learning Plan (SALP) that consists of employment, full or part time, a life skills course, or another alternative deemed appropriate for the student.

### **5. Excusal from Attendance at School, Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL)**

- 5.1 A student who is approved by the SAL Committee to participate in SAL is excused from attendance at school as long as the pupil's activities are consistent with the SALP terms and the SALP has not expired or been terminated. (SES-12-SAL2)

### **6. Procedures Preceding a SAL Application**

- 6.1 A case facilitator may include attendance referral to the Social Worker for a student having difficulties with regular attendance at school. (Administrative Procedure 2000 - Attendance Counselling Services)
- 6.2 The student case is submitted to the Student Success Team for review, alternative program option development and action plan implementation.
- 6.3 Once the Student Success Team determines that all program options have been taken, the student and parent/guardian may receive information about SAL. (Brochure)
- 6.4 A parent/guardian may submit, in writing, a request to the principal that their son

or daughter participate in SAL.

6.4.1 The principal shall submit an application to the SAL Committee within 15 school days after the day the request is received by the school.

6.4.2 A parent/guardian of a student may make no more than two SAL requests in a school year for an individual student.

6.4.3 A second request may not be made until at least 60 school days have passed since the previous request was made.

6.5 The principal shall ensure a SALP be developed for a student if he or she determined that SAL is a learning opportunity that is in the best interests of the student.

## **7. Application for SAL**

7.1 The possible components of a SAL application are the following:

7.1.1 Input from the student, parent/guardian of the student and one or more staff members may be requested in the course of developing the SALP.

7.1.2 Input may also be requested from one or more members of the board staff, the principal, a member of the staff of a community agency involved in the SAL, and an employer who has indicated an interest in employing the student.

7.2 The case facilitator (primary contact) is identified in the SAL application form.

7.3 A description of the ways in which the student's school monitor will track/log the student's progress is required.

7.4 The student's education goals and personal goals are recorded on the application form.

7.5 A description of the activities in which a student will participate under the SALP may include one or more of the following:

- Enrolment in a course or class for credit;
- Enrolment in a non-credit life skills course or other non-credit course;
- Preparation for employment and development of general employment skills;
- Training for a specific job or type of employment;
- Full-time or part-time employment;
- Counselling;
- Volunteering;
- Any other activity with the potential to assist the student to achieve his or her identified goals.

7.6 The ways in which the student will be assisted with his or her transition from SAL, after the plan expires or is terminated, will be included on the application form.

7.7 The expiry date of the plan will be noted with the approved application form and shall not be later than June 30 of the school year to which the plan applies.

## **8. SAL Application Submission**

8.1 The Principal/Vice-Principal of the school will submit electronically the application to the SAL Committee Secretary. The following components will be completed and submitted by Support for Students System (S4S) and signed documentation faxed five school days before the committee meeting:

- SAL Application Form (S4S) signed by the Principal/Vice-Principal/Guardian and student;
- Attendance Report;
- Student Credit Counselling Summary.

- 8.2 Within 20 school days of receiving the SALP submission, the SAL Committee Secretary will schedule the review of the application. The school case facilitator will be notified of the assigned date and time. It is essential that the parent(s)/guardian(s) are in agreement with the school application and the nature of the SALP being proposed, that they have already signed the required forms for the SALP.
- 8.3 Should the student, parent/guardian, or a student who has withdrawn from parental control, ask to be present at the hearing, arrangements will be made to accommodate the request.

## **9. Notice of the SAL Submission**

- 9.1 The school will notify the student and the parent/guardian, in writing, when the SAL Application is submitted to the SAL Committee. (SES-12-SAL1)

## **10. The SAL Committee Meeting**

- 10.1 The case facilitator or school representative will present the student case by summarizing the program options previously attempted, IEP considerations, OSR details if applicable, and family support.
- 10.2 The SAL Committee shall:
- Approve participation by the student in SAL as described in the plan;
  - Modify the plan and approve the participation by the student in SAL or not approve participation by the student in SAL.
- 10.3 Within five school days after a SAL Committee meeting, the committee shall provide the student, the parent/guardian of the student and the administrator of the student with the written decision, together with the following:
- A copy of the SALP, including any modifications made by the committee;
  - Contact Information for the student's case facilitator;
  - Contact information of an employer if the plan includes employment.
- 10.4 If the SAL Committee did not approve an application the committee will provide the parent/guardian with information about the right to reconsideration and the reconsideration process.
- 10.4.1 Within 10 school days of receiving the committee's decision, a parent/guardian of a student or a student who has withdrawn from parental control, may submit to the principal of the student's school a written request that the committee reconsider the decision.
- 10.4.2 Within 20 school days after the day the committee receives the request, the committee shall hold a meeting to reconsider the decision.

## **11. SALP Implementation and Monitoring**

- 11.1 When the student's program involves employment or volunteer placement, this shall occur at an approved work site. Work site or volunteer site approval is the responsibility of the school and requires that school personnel complete a SAL Site Assessment Guide. (SES-12-SAL3) This form is to be faxed to the SAL Committee Secretary following the SAL meeting. The Site Assessment Guide verifies for the SAL Committee that the work site or volunteer site is appropriate and safe for the student.
- 11.2 If the student's SAL is to include employment, employment search or volunteer activity, the SAL chair shall provide a letter verifying that employment, job search or volunteer activity is to be part of the student's program and that the student is excused from attending school for the purpose of participating in SAL. (SES-12-SAL2)
- 11.3 A Work Education Agreement is required for students who are involved in employment

or a volunteer placement.

- 11.4 A report card shall be issued indicating the progress of each student enrolled in SAL at the same time as the principal issues report cards for other students. (SES-12-SAL6)
  - 11.4.1 The principal will provide a copy of the report to the student, the parent/guardian of the student and place a copy in the student record (OSR).
- 11.5 The case facilitator or designate will contact the student at least one time in each month and more frequently if required.
  - 11.5.1 The school monitor will keep records of the observations, discussions with the student, parent/guardian or site supervisor.
  - 11.5.2 The school monitor may contact the student in person or using other methods such as telephone conversations and e-mail.
  - 11.5.3 Monitor contacts are denoted in Trillium with "C".
- 11.6 The social worker will have the same powers and perform the same duties in respect of students enrolled in SAL as the social worker has in respect of other students.

## **12. SALP Review and Transition Planning**

- 12.1 The case facilitator may make adjustments to the plan at any time if the plan remains substantially the same and if input was first requested from the student and parent/guardian.
- 12.2 If in the opinion of the school monitor it would be in the student's best interests to make modifications to the plan that would result in the plan being changed substantially, the school monitor will review the proposed modifications with the case facilitator.
  - 12.2.1 The case facilitator shall make the proposed modifications to the plan if the case facilitator believes it would be in the student's best interests, the SAL chair is informed, and input was initially requested from the student and parent/guardian.
  - 12.2.2 If a plan is modified the case facilitator will provide the student and parent/guardian with an updated plan.
- 12.3 The school monitor will review the SALP 15 days before it expires and submit one written report to the case facilitator, parent/guardian and student.
- 12.4 If in the opinion of the case facilitator it would be in the student's best interests to continue to participate in SAL, the case facilitator will submit a recommendation to the SAL Committee to renew the plan, with the written consent of the parent/guardian and student.
- 12.5 Within 20 school days after the day the committee receives the recommendation, the SAL Committee will renew the student's plan or renew the plan with specified modifications.
  - 12.5.1 The plan may be renewed for a maximum of one school year in total for non-semestered schools.
    - 12.5.2 The plan may be renewed for a maximum of one school year or two consecutive semesters in total.

## **13. Termination of SALP**

- 13.1 A Non-Compliance Letter is sent to the parent/guardian and student, if the student is not participating in his/her SALP. (SES-12-SAL4)

- 13.2 A plan is terminated/revoked if :
- The student provides the school monitor with a written statement that he or she wants to return to school or;
  - The student monitor provides a written statement verifying the pupil is not complying with the SALP, and;
  - The case facilitator determines with the agreement of the SAL Chair that termination is in the student's best interests.
- 13.3 The SAL Chair will send written notice of the termination of a plan to the student, parent/guardian, SAL Committee and any individual who is involved in the implementation of the student's plan. (SES-12-SAL5)

#### **14. Transition Plan for Student**

- 14.1 The case facilitator will ensure that a transition plan has been developed to assist a student who's SALP has been terminated before the end of the school year.