
CORE FRENCH EXEMPTION OR SUBSTITUTION REQUESTS

1) PURPOSE

Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board provides programs and services to support all students to achieve success. This procedure outlines the process to be followed when considering an exemption from the Core French program in Grades 4 - 9.

2) BACKGROUND

Core French is mandatory from Grades 4 – 8 for all students in English-language elementary schools. Policy and program requirements for elementary school Core French indicate that students entering Grade 4 receive French instruction in every year from Grade 4 to Grade 8, and have accumulated a minimum of 600 hours of French instruction by the end of Grade 8. (The Ontario Curriculum French as a Second Language (FSL): Core French Grades 4 – 8).

FSL programming in Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board (HPEDSB) is dedicated to the inclusion of all students. Current research supports that all students can learn and benefit from French programming and it also highlights the positive contributions that multi-language learners bring to the local, national and global context. Research indicates that learning multiple languages has many benefits and English language learners benefit from French as a Second Language curriculum. Learning an additional language is linked to significant benefits such as: higher overall academic achievement, increased first language competency, improved divergent thinking skills, memory, and attention spans, and a heightened sense of respect for and the valuing of cultural diversity. Learning French not only challenges the mind, it teaches empathy, fosters patience, and encourages open-mindedness. Newcomers and those in the very early stages of English Language proficiency are best supported by any necessary accommodations and/or modifications to support the success and in their language proficiency in French similar to other areas of the curriculum.

Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Resource Guide (2017) supports French as a Second Language learning for all learners and indicates that programs should not generally exclude students with special education needs from accessing opportunities for second language learning. Programming and participating decisions for individual students should be made on a case-by-case basis, by all stakeholders, while recognizing the strengths and needs of the student.

3) EXEMPTION FROM INSTRUCTION

Any consideration for an exemption from Core French for a student requiring extensive modifications to the Ontario curriculum expectations will be addressed on a case-by case basis begin with consultation within the school team. The school team consists of the Core French Teacher, Learning Support Teacher, Principal or Vice-principal, Student Services Coordinator, and FSL Coordinator.

- a) Accommodations or modifications to the Core French program are implemented, monitored and reviewed prior to approving an exemption to Core French.

- b) A student may be exempted from Core French Language Instruction in consideration of the learner's exceptional needs. School teams consider the student's cognitive capacity to learn language as indicated in psychological assessments
- c) Grade 4 – 8 Suggesting a student for consideration of a French Exemption
The following process is followed before suggesting a student should be considered for an exemption from Core French:
 - i) Teacher with responsibilities for Core French, classroom teacher, Learning Support Teacher, principal/vice-principal consult as appropriate to discuss the student's strengths and programming needs.
 - ii) Consider, monitor and record the results of accommodations, modifications, intervention strategies and the observed results as per the Continuous Assessment Model. If the implemented, monitored and adjusted accommodations or modifications to the student's Core French program have not yet met the student's needs, program consultation with the FSL Coordinator should be pursued.
 - iii) Form 220-1 supports the recording of interventions, modifications, accommodations and is a mandatory requirement should the school team determine that consideration for a French exemption should be pursued. Through this process, evidence of changed programming and student outcomes must be provided as part of the request.
 - iv) Ongoing communication of accommodations and/or modifications should be shared with parents/guardians as part of effective teaching practice. Parents must not be told an exemption will occur until the review process is undertaken and Form 220-1 is received by the school indicating an approval.
 - v)

d) Process for French Exemption

The following process is followed for the French exemption:

- i) After all accommodations, modifications, and consultation has been exhausted, an exemption request is pursued.
- ii) Principal signs Form 220-1.
- iii) Curriculum Services supports the review of French exemptions and the processing of pending results. Complete and submit Form 220-1 to Curriculum Services curriculum.services@hpedsb.on.ca. Exemptions received by means other than emailing, will be returned to schools.
- iv) A member of the curriculum services team with responsibilities for second language learning, will consult with the appropriate learning support coordinator, and school based team if necessary.
- v) Curriculum Services submits Form 220-1 to the Superintendent of Curriculum Services for consideration of the request for exemption.
- vi) The Superintendent of Education, Curriculum Services, reviews, dates and signs Form 220-1 and in doing so indicates the decision regarding approval or denial of the French exemption with rationale.
 - (1) If the exemption is not approved, the school will receive feedback on further accommodations or modifications to be implemented.
- vii) If an exemption is approved, the parent/guardian have the right to accept or decline the offer of French exemption and the alternative program. Parent/Guardian signs and dates Form 220-1.

- viii) Completed and signed Form 220-1 is filed in the documentation section of the student's OSR and a copy will be retained in the office of Curriculum Services for system reference.
 - ix) Record the French exemption in the student information system (Aspen), into and on the appropriate communication of learning through the Individual Education Plan (IEP), Progress Report, and Report Cards.
 - x) Exemptions will be reviewed annually each spring, prior to planning for the upcoming school year. If a continuation is necessary, a subsequent Form 220-1 will be submitted for review.
 - xi) In the case of an exemptions, the proposed alternative program is implemented at the school level.
- e) **Process for Grade 8 – 9 for French Exemption/Substitution**
The following process is followed for transition students from elementary school to secondary school:
- i) For a Grade 8 student who has been exempt from Core French, an in-school team meeting will be held and should involve the team responsible for transitioning students between the elementary and secondary panel. A French substitution is to be provided in secondary school for all students exempt from French in elementary.
 - ii) Principals may substitute up to three compulsory credits with courses from other subject areas specified in the list of compulsory credit requirements Ontario Schools K-12 (page 67). It should be noted that there is no policy or program requirement suggesting that such substitutions should be made for FSL in particular. If a substitution for a compulsory credit is deemed necessary or in the best interest of an individual student, there are a variety of options.
 - iii) A collaborative team including the teachers, administrators, the Student Services Coordinator, and the FSL Coordinator may consult regarding the need to substitute the compulsory secondary French credit.
 - iv) Completed Form 220-1 is submitted to the FSL Coordinator to review with the Superintendent of Curriculum Services, who will approve or deny the request.
 - v) The FSL Coordinator will provide a signed copy of Form 220-1 indicating the decision to the school administrator who will ensure that a copy is filed in the OSR. A copy will be retained in the office of Curriculum Services for system reference.
- f) The following process is followed for students and families seeking a substitution of Indigenous language studies for FSL.
- i) Consult with the Indigenous Education Lead, who will work in collaboration with the FSL Coordinator.
 - ii) Completion of Form 220-1 and the Indigenous program plan, where language resources and materials are available, are to be submitted to the Superintendent of Curriculum Services for approval of the FSL substitution.

Legal References:

- *Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language Programs (2015)*
- *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Program Requirements (2016)*
- *Special Education in Ontario, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Resource Guide (2017)*
- *The Ontario Curriculum, French as a Second Language: Core French, Grades 4-8 (2013)*
- *Welcoming English Language Learners into French as a Second Language Programs (2016)*

District References:

- Administrative Procedure 312 - Ontario Student Record (OSR)
- Administrative Procedure 388 - Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting Grades K-12
- Administrative Procedure - Form 220-1 Consideration for French Exemption

District Resource:

- Connections Resource Guide, Seamless Transitions for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Additional 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, Grades 9 to 12, French as a Second Language: Core French, (Extended French; French Immersion); (2013).
- Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan (2017)