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I. **Definitions and Statute References**

1. **Independent Students:**

- 1.1. Definitions: In accordance with the *Education Act* section 1(1)(n), “**independent student**” means a student who is
- (i) 18 years of age or older, or;
 - (ii) 16 years of age or older and
 - (A) living independently as determined by a board in accordance with section 6, or
 - (B) a party to an agreement under section 57.2 of the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*
- 1.2. Section 6 (2) of the *Education Act* says that an independent student is entitled to exercise all the rights and powers and receive all the benefits and is subject to all the obligations under the *Education Act* that the student’s parent is entitled to exercise or receive or is subject to those obligations, and the student’s parent shall not exercise those rights, receive those benefits or be subject to those obligations.

2. **Foreign, Exchange or other Billeted Students:**

- 2.1. Foreign students are those whose citizenship and primary residence is in a country other than Canada and who are not part of a student exchange program.
- 2.2. Exchange students are those whose citizenship and primary residence is in a country other than Canada and who are enrolled in a recognized student exchange program. Alberta Education and the Alberta Teachers’ Association manage recognized programs.
- 2.3. Other Billeted students are Canadian students who have taken up short term residence within the Division.

3. **Adult Students:**

- 3.1. The Guide to Education is specific in its descriptions of how public boards may and may not be involved in programming for adults. It states that Boards are required to concentrate educational programming on students who are six years of age or older and younger than 19 years of age, as of September 1.
- 3.2. Providing appropriate programming to adult students with exceptional education needs may require the offering of appropriate special education programs.

II. **Independent Students**

1. Requests: A student who is between 16 and 18 years of age and wishes to establish independent student status must notify the Principal in writing of the request to be considered an independent student.

2. Criteria: In order to determine independent student status the Principal must consider the following criteria.
 - 2.1. Have the student's parents or the student provided a statement in writing or a statutory declaration that the student is independent?
 - 2.2. Does the student demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Principal that they make decisions with respect to day-to-day living?
 - 2.3. Does the student earn their own living or substantially contribute to their own maintenance or receive government financial support?
 - 2.4. Does the student handle major decisions such as medical treatment?
 - 2.5. Does the student make and maintain arrangements for living accommodation?
 - 2.6. Is the student married or co-habiting?
 - 2.7. Are there any other factors that the Principal considers relevant?
3. None of these criteria alone is a sole indicator of independence, but the response to all of them will assist the Principal in determining whether or not a student is appropriately considered an independent student.
4. If the Principal determines that the criteria are not met, the Principal must advise the parents and student in writing of the Principal's decision.
5. PowerSchool™ and change in status: If the Principal determines that the criteria are met, then the student is recognized as an independent student and the Principal must ensure that this information is entered into PowerSchool™.
 - 5.1. If the student no longer meets the criteria for independent status, the student and parent must inform the Principal in writing of the change in status.
 - 5.2. When the Principal receives the notice that the student no longer has independent student status, the Principal must ensure that this information is entered into PowerSchool™.
6. Residency: An independent student is a resident student of the school board in which the student lives.

III. Foreign, Exchange and other Billeted Students

1. The same degree of care will be provided to billeted students as with any other student in our Division.
2. No tuition fees will be levied against approved reciprocal exchange students.
3. All other foreign students will be required to pay a tuition fee set by the Division.

IV. Adult Students

1. Outreach schools may offer services to adults with the following conditions:
 - 1.1. Adult learners must pay for each course before starting the course (tuition set by the Division).
 - 1.2. Adult learners may call for appointments to meet with teachers.
 - 1.3. School age learners take precedence over adult learners when it comes to teacher time and attention.
2. Outreach schools will partner with community agencies and where possible, direct adult learners to various colleges that offer upgrading for adults.
3. The Vista Virtual School will continue to provide adult programming to learners in the province of Alberta.
 - 3.1. Adult learners must pay tuition for each course. The tuition is set by Vista Virtual School to recover the full cost of offering the course to an adult.

- 3.2. Adult programming information (including records, results and measures) is kept separate and distinct from school age student program information.

V. Education of Adults with Special Needs

1. Students with Special Needs are encouraged to consider completing school with their same-age peers.
2. Schools may provide programs to adult students with special needs who are 18 years of age or older by September 1st of the school year, provided such a program is feasible and is considered to be in the best interest of the student. The following factors will be considered:
 - 2.1. Sufficient enrolments to warrant;
 - 2.2. Program suitability; and
 - 2.3. Availability of resources.
3. Up to a half-time program will be considered for special needs students in their fourth year of high school, and a quarter-time program for those in their fifth year
4. The Division will attempt to provide as much notice as possible of its intent to terminate special education programming for an adult by advising the student(s), the parents or guardians, and the appropriate regional support agencies for adults with disabilities.

Reference

[Rates Annex](#): RA I - Student Fees

[Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act](#), R.S.A. 2000, C-12, Section 57.2

[Education Act](#)

[Alberta Education Guide to Education](#)

[Alberta Education Document: Standards for Special Education Handbook](#)