



Board Procedure #NP323.0

Exemption for Core French: Grades 4 to 9

1. Procedure Statement

[French as a Second Language \(FSL\)](#) programming in YRDSB is dedicated to the inclusion of all students. Current research supports that all students can learn and benefit from French programming and highlights the positive contributions that students' cultural and linguistic identities bring to our FSL spaces.

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 also teaches empathy, fosters patience, and encourages open-mindedness.

This procedure outlines the guidelines and process that must be followed when an exemption from the Core French program is being considered for a student in Grades 4 to 9.

2. Application of the Procedure

The study of French as a Second Language (FSL) is compulsory from Grade 4 to Grade 9. Participation in FSL programs should reflect the diversity of the student population, including students with special education needs and English language learners.

Any consideration for an exemption from Core French for a student requiring extensive modifications to the Ontario curriculum expectations must be addressed on a case-by-case basis through the In-School Team process. The following guidelines must be considered.

Considerations

2.1 Students in Community Classes

For students in community classes, who are receiving alternative programming which replace French instruction in the elementary panel, an In-School Team review or consultation with parent(s)/guardian(s) is recommended.

This may include students working on alternative expectations outlined in their Individual Education Plan (IEP), as noted in the Student Data Collection (SDC) system. Students receive alternative expectations not derived from a provincial curriculum policy document. Modifications are so extensive that Ontario Curriculum expectations no longer form the basis of the student's educational program. Learning expectations in the areas of life skills and orientation and mobility training are examples of alternative expectations.

An [Exemption from Core French Letter](#) signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) indicating understanding and support of the exemption from Core French will be filed in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR) and reviewed on an annual basis with necessary stakeholders.

2.2 English Language Learners (ELLs)

Research indicates that English language learners benefit from FSL and they often perform as well, or better than English-speaking students in FSL ([Welcoming English Language Learners into French as a Second Language Programs, 2016](#), p. 8).

For those English language learners who are newcomers and in the early stages of English language proficiency, necessary program accommodations and/or modifications should be provided to ensure academic success as outlined in the Front Matter of the FSL Curriculum [Grades 4-8](#) and [Grades 9-12](#) as well as [Growing Success](#).

2.3 Students with Special Education and/or Other Needs

According to research, students with special education needs benefit from FSL programs. English Language Learners (ELLs) with an IEP may be considered in this group. Accommodations and/or modifications for ELLs who have severe language and/or learning challenges in their first language may be considered. ([Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language Programs, 2015](#), p. 11).

On a case-by-case basis, the In-School Team process is required when considering an exemption from Core French based on the strengths, needs and best interests of each student.

Accommodations or modification to the Core French program must be implemented, monitored and reviewed prior to approving an exemption to Core French.

2.4 Students Enrolled in a Native Language Program

A student enrolled in a Native language program may be exempt from learning FSL unless both languages can be accommodated. ([Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Policy Framework, Ontario, Ministry of Education, 2007](#), p. 27).

Alternative programming/supervision will need to be provided during the Core French period and an Exemption from Core French Letter signed by parent(s)/guardian(s) indicating their understanding and support of the exemption in Core French will be filed in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR) and reviewed on an annual basis with the necessary stakeholders.

Process

2.5 Grades 4 to 8

The following process is followed before considering whether a student should be exempt from Core French:

- (a) hold an In-School Team meeting involving the Core French teacher, classroom teacher, special education resource teacher (SERT), English as a second language (ESL) /English language development (ELD) teacher if applicable, principal/ vice-principal and additional Student Services staff, as appropriate to discuss the student's strengths and programming needs;
- (b) consider and record recommendations for accommodations or modifications to the Core French program in the In-School Team Record and the student's Growth Plan or French program page of the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP);
- (c) engage in consultation with the parent(s)/guardian(s) regarding recommendations from the In-School Team;

- (d) ensure program recommendations are implemented by the Core French teacher in consultation with the SERT and/or ESL/ELD teacher; and
- (e) ensure the student's progress is monitored and reviewed and program and instruction are adjusted accordingly.

If all the necessary accommodations and/or modifications to the student's Core French program have been implemented, adjusted and yet have not met the student's needs:

- (a) reconvene the In-School Team to consider next steps;
- (b) consult with the superintendent of schools to identify other options;
- (c) assess programming and/or support availability during the Core French instructional time if the In-School Team is considering an exemption; and
- (d) approve an In-School Team recommendation to exempt a child from Core French only when all steps above have been followed; and appropriate programming and/or support is available during the Core French instructional time.

When a decision to exempt a child from Core French has been approved:

- (a) ensure the [Exemption from Core French Letter](#) is signed by parent(s)/guardian(s);
- (b) complete and sign the [Exemption from Core French Checklist \(Grades 4-8\)](#);
- (c) send the letter and the checklist to the superintendent of schools for signature;
- (d) ensure that the French exemption is recorded in Trillium, and in the Program and Support Description Box and Consultation Log of the student's IEP, and on the Ontario Elementary Progress Report Card and Elementary Provincial Report Card with the statement, "Name is exempt from Core French" and check the "NA" box, and
- (e) review all exemptions from Core French annually.

2.6 Grades 8-9

For a Grade 8 student who has been exempt from French or had extensive modifications in French, an in-School team meeting will be held and should involve the Grade 8 Core French teacher and classroom teacher, principal/vice-principal from both panels and as appropriate, a SERT from both panels, ESL/ELD teacher, and additional Student Services staff. Consider student strengths, interests and areas of need. This must occur prior to the start of the Course Selection window.

2.7 Student Pathways

The following options are available on a case-by-case basis:

Student Studies Native Language Course

Native Language Level 2 requires four consecutive years of study in elementary school. The principal may initiate consideration of whether a prerequisite should be waived. ([Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12 Policy and Program Requirements 2016](#)) Native Language Level 1 does not require prior years of study.

Student Studies French (FSF 1O)

This course is for students who have not acquired 600 hours of French instruction or who have acquired 600 hours of French instruction but have received modifications that have significantly impacted French Language learning.

A list of student names that qualify for the FSF 1O course will be collated by the In-School Team and given to the secondary school guidance department. Please refer to the [FSL Student Pathways Template](#) for a sample format.

Student Studies French (FSF 1P or FSF 1D)

This is for students who have completed 600 hours of French instruction with or without accommodations.

Student approved for Credit Substitution for French

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](#) pg. 67.

The In-School Team meeting notes will be documented in SSNet. A list of student names will be collated by the In-School Team and given to the secondary school guidance department. Please refer to the [FSL Student Pathways Template](#) for a sample format. The [substitution form](#) will be completed by the secondary In-School Team.

3. Definitions

3.1 Community Class

A partially integrated class in a local community school that is not necessarily the home school. The class has the specific program, human and/or physical resources required to most effectively respond to a student's needs.

3.2 Grade 9 Core French Open (FSF1O)

An introductory course for students who have had little or no knowledge of French or who have not accumulated the minimum number of hours (600) of elementary Core French. Students who have acquired 600 hours but have had extensive modifications from grades 4 to 8 in Core French may also be considered for this course. There is no pre-requisite for this course. Schools must offer FSF1O. A student wishing to continue with French upon the successful completion of this course would take FSF2O or an equivalent French course.

3.3 In-School Team

Meets to discuss, problem solve and recommend strategies to support a student's academic, behavioural, social and/or emotional areas of strength and need. The team may include but is not limited to administration, school staff members, Student Services staff, students and/or parents/guardians, as appropriate. Ongoing interventions and progress are also monitored through the In-School Team process.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 The Director of Education shall:

- (a) allocate staff and resources to support the Exemption from Core French, Grades 4 to 9 procedure.

4.2 Superintendents of Schools shall:

- (a) support administrators, school staff and parent(s)/guardian(s) in understanding that FSL is mandatory for students from Grade 4 to Grade 9;
- (b) consider on a case-by-case basis, whether an exemption from Core French in Grades 4 to 8 is justified; and
- (c) authorize an exemption from Core French.

4.3 Principals shall:

- (a) ensure that process for Grades 4-8 and Grades 8-9 are followed when considering whether a student should be exempt from Core French; and
- (b) on a case-by-case basis, ensure that the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) are aware of the student pathway options.

4.3 Core French Teachers shall:

- (a) communicate with parent(s)/guardian(s) and students the benefits of learning French as the official language in Canada;
- (b) understand individual students' strengths, needs and interests and program requirements appropriately;
- (c) ensure planning, instruction and assessment reflect the principles of universal design and differentiated instruction;
- (d) engage in professional learning to further their understanding of curriculum, teaching and learning;
- (e) continually assess the effectiveness of their instructional methods in motivating, engaging and promoting success for all learners, and
- (f) work collaboratively with the special education resource teacher to understand and support students' interest, strengths and needs; and provide required accommodations and modifications as outlined in a student's Individual Education Plan.

4.4 Parents/guardians shall:

- (a) understand the benefits for their child in learning and using French, an official language in Canada;
- (b) understand that FSL is mandatory for students from Grade 4 to Grade 9;
- (c) monitor their child's progress and work collaboratively with the school, teacher and child to plan for their child's improvement; and
- (d) communicate regularly with the teacher and understand how they can contribute to their child's success in FSL.

5. Contact

Curriculum and Instructional Services

6. Relationship to Board Priorities

Champion Equity and Inclusivity. Build a collective understanding of; the ongoing impact of colonialism on Indigenous Communities, Anti-oppression, and Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP).

Build Collaborative Relationships. Build trust and collaborative relationships with students, families and staff through respectful and responsive communication focused on shared solutions.

7. Related Documents

[Flowchart to Support NP#323.0 Exemption from Core French Grades 4 to 9](#)

[Achieving Excellence](#)

[A Framework for FSL in Ontario Schools](#)

[Including Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language Programs](#)

[Growing Success](#)

[Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Policy Framework, Ontario, Ministry of Education](#)

[The Ontario Curriculum. French as a Second Language](#)

[Welcoming English Language Learners into French as a Second Language Programs](#)

8. History

Working Document June 2014

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It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property; or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities will respect the policies and procedures of the Board. The term "parents" refers to both biological/adoptive parents and guardians in all Board policies and procedures.