



## ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE

### Online Learning Graduation Requirement

**Effective Date:** April 30, 2022

**Responsibility:** Superintendent of Schools

#### 1. PURPOSE

The Online Learning Graduation Requirement policy (PPM 167) provides direction to Ontario schools on the implementation of the online graduation requirement and opt-out process.

This requirement is designed to support students to enroll in online learning courses as part of their secondary school program, in order to support the development of digital literacy and other important transferable skills that will help prepare them for success after graduation and in all aspects of their lives.

Teacher led online learning will enable students to:

- Access a wider variety of courses no matter where they live or go to school, allowing them to shape their education based on their individual needs and goals
- Learn in engaging new ways, such as through hands-on, interactive features, simulations and collaborations with peers across the province
- Increase their digital fluency and gain transferable skills to support lifelong learning and employment opportunities

#### 2. ONLINE LEARNING GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

Beginning with the cohort of students who entered Grade 9 in the 2020-21 school year, all students must earn a minimum of two online learning credits as part of the requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma unless they have been opted out or been exempted. Adult learners entering the Ontario secondary school system in 2023-2024 or later will also be required to meet this graduation requirement unless they opt themselves out of the requirement.

Students working towards other certificates (for example, the Certificate of Accomplishment or an Ontario Secondary School Certificate) are not required to complete the online learning graduation requirement yet may be encouraged to enroll in online learning courses to

support the development of digital literacy and other important transferable skills that help prepare them for success after graduation and in all aspects of their lives.

### 3. ELIGIBLE CREDITS

Online learning courses or online learning credits, also known as “e-learning” courses or credits, are Grades 9 to 12 credit courses that are delivered entirely using the internet and do not require students to be physically present with one another or with their educator in the school, except where they may be needed for:

- Examinations and other final evaluations
- Access to internet connectivity, learning devices, or other school-based supports (for example, academic, guidance, special education, mental health and well-being supports, and required initial assessment and in-person learning for English language learners)

Students must successfully complete the equivalent of at least two full online credits to fulfill the graduation requirement. Online learning credits towards the graduation requirement may be earned at any time during the student’s secondary school program or, under exceptional circumstances, an individual student in grade 8, with parental consent, may be given permission by the principal of a secondary school to “reach ahead” to take secondary school courses, either during the school year or in the summer prior to entering Grade 9.

All online learning credits earned at a school authorized to offer credits towards an Ontario Secondary School Diploma may count towards the graduation requirement.

### 4. INELIGIBLE CREDITS

Credits that shall not count towards the online learning graduation requirement include those earned through;

- **In-person learning**, in which students are physically present with other students in the same course and their educator in the school environment
- **Blended learning**, in which digital learning resources are used in an in-person learning setting, or in which students are taught part of the time in person in the school environment and part of the time online
- **Flipped classrooms**, a type of blended learning in which students are introduced to content online and practice working through it in person with their educator in the school environment
- **Remote learning**, characterized by minimum synchronous learning requirements, among other requirements as defined in Policy/Program Memorandum 164

#### **Exception: remote learning credit earned in 2020-21**

As outlined in Policy/Program Memorandum 167, the Ministry recognizes the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, up to one secondary school credit completed by Grade 9 students in the 2020-21 school year during the province-wide closures (from April 2021 to June 2021) may be counted towards the graduation requirement. Schools should select one of these credits and record it in the School

Information System and this should be reflected when reporting through the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS) towards the student's online learning graduation requirement.

#### **4. OPT-OUT PROCESS**

A parent/guardian, a student who is 18 years of age or older, or a student who is 16 or 17 years of age and has withdrawn from parental control, may opt out of the graduation requirement for any reason during the student's secondary school program by submitting the form (Appendix A) to the school that the student attends. Once the form has been submitted, the school will acknowledge receipt. In any school year, the form must be submitted by May 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### **5. PRINCIPAL'S DISCRETION**

The principal of the school will have the discretion to exempt students under 18 years old and still under parental control from the online learning graduation requirement without parental consent if they determine the need is pressing and in the best interests of the student and the parent cannot be reached. However, this authority shall not be used to circumvent parent/guardian choice.

Where principals make a determination to exempt a student, if possible, the parent/guardian shall be electronically or physically mailed a notification by the principal in writing with a rationale outlining why the exemption was made, and a copy of the notification must be included in the student's Ontario Student Record. Once the notification is included in the student's Ontario Student Record, the graduation requirement shall not apply to the student.

# Appendix A: Online Learning “Opt-Out” Form



## NNDSB Form for “Opting Out” of the e-Learning Graduation Requirement

### Part 1: The New e-Learning Graduation Requirement

Students are required to earn two e-Learning credits to graduate from secondary school, beginning with students who entered Grade 9 in the 2020-21 school year. Adult learners entering the Ontario secondary school system in 2023-24 or later will be required to meet this graduation requirement.

This graduation requirement is intended to support students in developing familiarity and comfort with working and learning in a fully online environment, as well as developing digital literacy and other important transferable skills that will help prepare them for success after graduation and in all aspects of their lives.

Meeting the e-Learning graduation requirement should not pose a barrier to graduation for students. As with all learning, students taking e-Learning courses will have access to the supports they need through their school including guidance and services for English Language Learners. If the student has an Individual Education Plan, the plan will be shared, when appropriate, with an educator instructing an online course delivered by another publicly funded school board, with the necessary consent.

Parents/guardians may choose to opt their child out of the mandatory e-Learning courses required for graduation. Students 18 years of age or older or students who are 16 or 17 years of age and have withdrawn from parental control may also opt out of the graduation requirement. Students and parents/guardians may choose to opt back into the e-Learning graduation requirement should their decision change.

If you have decided now to opt out your child or yourself (18 years of age or older or student who is 16 or 17 years of age and has withdrawn from parental control), please complete and submit this form at this time.

## Part 2: Confirmation

I agree with the following statements:

- Having reviewed the e-Learning graduation requirement and the availability of supports for e-Learning through this school, I would like to opt my child/myself out of this requirement.
- The benefits of e-Learning have been shared with me by the school, including how the development of digital literacy and other important transferable skills are intended to help prepare students for success after graduation and in all aspects of their lives.

I understand the following statements:

- Upon receipt of this form by my child's school/my school, my child/I will not be required to earn two e-Learning credits to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.
- My child/I will face no academic penalties for opting out of this graduation requirement.
- My child/I will continue to complete all other applicable graduation requirements.
- My child/I has/have the opportunity to opt back into the e-Learning graduation requirement.
- This will be recorded on my child's/my transcript as "Online Learning Graduation Requirement - Non-Applicable."

## Part 3: Student/Parent/Guardian Confirmation of "Opting Out" of e-Learning Graduation Requirement

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Last Name, First Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Email

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Last Name, First Name (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date (YYYY/MM/DD)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian or Student Age 18 or older, or Student who is 16 or 17 and has withdrawn from parental control

Please note: When you return this form, it will be included in your child's/your Ontario Student Record.

For additional information about the opt-out process, please contact your school.

### Disclaimer

The information on this form is collected under the authority of the *Education Act* R.S.O. 1990, c E.2, s.8.1, and will be used by the NNDSB for the general administration of its schools. All personal information collected on this form will be maintained in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O., 1990, c. M.56, s. 29. Questions or concerns about this collection should be directed to NNDSB Communications Officer, 963 Airport Road, North Bay, ON P1B 8H1.

To provide opportunities that empower all learners to develop their potential by providing diverse pathways which lead students to become model citizens who achieve life goals and contribute to the betterment of society.