

INSTRUCTION GUIDE

Secondary Class Size Reporting

Summer 2023

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the secondary school class size reporting process, requirements, and compliance framework. It is intended to support consistent, accurate reporting of class size information in the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS) and provide transparency in the determination of the secondary average class size (SACS), for both in-person (including remote) and online classes.

Class sizes in Ontario are governed by regulation ([O. Reg. 132/12: Class Size](#)). The regulation outlines class size limits and requirements by grade/panel, the methodology by which class sizes are determined and school board reporting requirements. For secondary school classes:

- the average class size in a given school year shall not exceed 23 for in-person and remote learning
- the average class size in a given school year shall not exceed 30 for online learning

Under the regulation, school boards are required to submit their secondary school class size data by June 30th of each year through OnSIS. School boards are responsible for ensuring the integrity of all data submitted to the ministry. For further details regarding class size limits and requirements, please refer to the regulation.

The class size compliance framework applies to secondary school class sizes. This means that compliance measures may be applied where school boards exceed the maximum class size requirements set out in regulation.

Questions related to class size policy should be directed to csreporting@ontario.ca. Technical questions related to reporting in OnSIS should be directed to the OnSIS Help Desk at onsis_sison@ontario.ca.

As part of Ontario's Open Government Initiative, which aims to create a more open and transparent government for the people of Ontario, class size data may be made publicly available.

New for 2023-24

Online classes are to be reported consistent with the teacher's course load:

- Where a teacher is assigned to teach an online class that is scheduled over different periods/blocks to accommodate students' schedules/timetables, the total enrolment for the different periods/blocks must be reported as one class.

Where a consortium or a school of a school board other than the home school board is providing the instruction for the online or remote class:

- The school board where the student's Ontario Student Record is held (the home school board) must report the enrolment (FTE) of the student for funding purposes. However, the student's participation in the online or remote class at another school board or through a consortium will not be counted for the purposes of determining the home school board's online or remote SACS.
- The school board which employs the teacher providing instruction for the online or remote class or seconds/assigns the teacher to a consortium to teach the online or remote class must report the student and the course enrolment and achievement data for the corresponding online and/or remote learning course in OnSIS, with an FTE of 0.00. In this case, the student will be counted as part of the school board's online SACS.

Reporting Process

School board reporting

Class size information must be based on the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) reported for each pupil on the last school day of October and March. OnSIS reported data used to calculate class size includes pupil, class and school level information.

In any year, a school board that does not complete their October and March secondary OnSIS submission by the deadline may be subject to immediate cash withholdings equivalent to 50 per cent of monthly transfers from the ministry.

OnSIS Secondary Average Class Size (SACS) report

The ministry calculates the secondary average class sizes (SACS) for each school board based on class and course enrolment data submitted through OnSIS. The SACS reports reflect the differentiated average class size for in-person (or remote) classes and online classes. Detailed SACS reports will be made available to school boards outlining the in-person (including remote) and online class size averages at the school and school board level. These reports are generated by ministry staff and automatically filed with the ministry through the OnSIS data collection process upon the sign off by the school board of all its' school-level secondary October and March data submissions.

Reporting guidelines and requirements

The table below identifies the various “class types” that can be identified in OnSIS and how the class is then used in the SACS calculation (for either in-person/remote and online classes). For the purposes of the SACS calculation, a class is defined as a combination of the following: “class code”, “class start date” and “attempted credit value(s)”.

Applicable secondary class type codes

Code	Short English description	SACS calculation in-person (including remote)	SACS calculation online
E	Online (formerly E-Learning)	Excluded	Included
NE	Dual Credit, External Educator	Excluded	Excluded
OTH	Other	Included	
R	Regular	Included	
RCR	Credit Recovery	Included	
S	Special Education	Excluded	

Online learning

- Per Policy/Program Memorandum 167, Online learning graduation requirement, online learning is delivered entirely using the internet and does not require students to be physically present with one another or with their educator in the school.
- Online classes are to be coded with the class type of “Online” in OnSIS to be included in the online SACS. Classes not coded as such will be erroneously counted as in-person/remote classes, regardless of the number of students with a course delivery type of online.
- Online classes are to be reported consistent with the teacher’s course load:
 - Where a teacher is assigned to teach multiple sections of the same online class, each section must be coded as a distinct class.
 - Where a teacher is assigned to teach an online class that is scheduled over different periods/blocks to accommodate students’ schedules/timetables, the total enrolment for the different periods/blocks must be reported as one class.
- If a school board foresees challenges in reporting online class sizes in OnSIS in accordance with the instructions above, they should contact the ministry as soon as possible at csreporting@ontario.ca.

Remote learning

- Per Policy/ Program Memorandum 164, remote learning occurs when classes are taught at a distance and when students and educators are not in a conventional classroom setting. For the definition of remote learning, please refer to PPM 164.
- Remote classes should **not** be coded as “Online”.

As previously announced in [2023: B04 2023-24, Grants for Student Needs Funding](#), beginning in 2023-24, remote learning will generate funding to support the cost of administration provided remote learning is reported under a remote school in OnSIS.

Shared students/students taking online or remote courses at another school board or through a consortium

- Where a school of a school board other than the home school board or a consortium is providing the instruction for the online or remote class:
 - The school board where the student’s Ontario Student Record is held (the home school board) must report the enrolment (FTE) of the student for funding purposes. However, the student’s participation in the online or remote class at another school board or through a consortium will not be counted for the purposes of determining the home school board’s online or remote SACS.
 - The school board which employs the teacher providing instruction for the online or remote class or seconds/assigns the teacher to a consortium to teach the online or remote class must report the student and the course enrolment and achievement data for the corresponding online learning course in OnSIS, with an FTE of 0.00. In this case, the student will be counted as part of the school board’s online SACS. The school board providing the instruction of the online course may charge the home school board a fee that is established by the ministry (please contact the ministry for the current fee).

Please see the [Enrolment Register Instructions for Elementary and Secondary Schools](#) for more information on reporting students in online classes. Updated instructions are posted annually here: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/enrolment-register-instructions>.

Determination of SACS

A 'class' for the purposes of the SACS as well as the methodology for determining SACS are both defined in the class size regulation.

Using the secondary class and course enrolment data submitted through the October and March OnSIS submissions, the ministry calculates the number of pupil credits and classroom credits for each school board to calculate the SACS. The table below provides examples of the various type of classes, courses, and pupils that are included or excluded from the ministry's calculation of SACS.

Type of class/course/pupil	Inclusion or exclusion from the calculation of SACS
Adult students	<p>Adult students (pupils who are already twenty-one years of age or over or who will turn twenty-one on or before December 31 of the given school year) who are enrolled in continuing education programs are excluded in the class size calculation, regardless of whether the students are in classes during the day or during the evening.</p> <p>Adult students who are reported in day school registers and who are in regular secondary school classes with adolescents are included in the school board's calculation of SACS.</p> <p>Adult students who are in an adult-only secondary school operated as part of the school board's day school program are also included in the school board's SACS.</p>
Classes established for exceptional pupils	<p>Classes for which the teacher salary is charged to the Special Education funding envelope must be recorded as classes established for exceptional pupils for SACS purposes.</p> <p>Classes established for exceptional pupils (i.e., where class type in OnSIS = "Special Education") are excluded from the SACS calculation.</p>
Fully integrated, credit earning students with special education needs	<p>Students with special education needs who are fully integrated into a class where Class Type is not = "Special Education" and are eligible to earn the same credit value as the other students, are included in the SACS calculation.</p>

Type of class/course/pupil	Inclusion or exclusion from the calculation of SACS
Combined courses in a class	<p>When pupils are enrolled in different courses in the class, and the courses are of the same credit value, those pupils are considered to be part of the same class.</p> <p>When pupils, together in a class, are enrolled in different courses and the courses are of different credit value, a class for the purposes of the SACS calculation will be based on each group of pupils earning the same credit value.</p> <p>For example, a class with 20 students where 15 students are earning one full credit and 5 students earning one half credit would be counted as two separate classes (i.e., one class of 15 students with a credit value of 1.00 and another class of 5 students with a credit value of 0.50).</p>
Continuing education/summer school classes	These classes are excluded in the calculation of SACS regardless of whether the classes occur during the day or the evening.
Co-operative education classes	Co-operative education classes are included in the SACS calculation in the same manner as in-person/remote or online classroom classes.
Correspondence/self-study courses	Courses recorded in the Continuing Education Correspondence/Self Study registers are excluded from calculation of SACS.
K courses	<p>K courses are non-credit courses and, therefore, are excluded in the SACS calculation.</p> <p>When pupils, together in a class, are enrolled in different courses and the courses are of different credit value, a class for the purposes of the SACS calculation will be based on each group of pupils earning the same credit value. As such, where a pupil is integrated into a regular class and is not eligible to earn a credit in that class, the pupil is not counted in the enrolment of the class.</p>
Non-credit courses	All courses in which pupils do not earn credits such as non-credit English as a Second language and remedial classes are excluded from the SACS calculation. (See also K courses)
'Quadmester' classes	Classes running on a quadmester schedule will be included in the SACS calculation only if the class was active on the October 31 st or March 31 st count dates. Generally, only quadmester 1 and 3 courses would be included for SACS purposes.

Type of class/course/pupil	Inclusion or exclusion from the calculation of SACS
'Octomester' classes	Classes running on an octomester schedule will be included in the SACS calculation only if the class was active on the October 31 st or March 31 st count dates. Generally, only octomester 2 and 6 courses would be included for SACS purposes.
Not full-year, semester, quadmester or octomester classes	Only classes with non-traditional start and end dates that were active on the October 31st or March 31st count dates are included for SACS purposes.
Education and Community Partnership Program (ECP)	These classes are excluded in the calculation of SACS.
Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL)	Pupils enrolled in SAL programs are included in SACS for the classes that they attend in a regular day school.
Transfer courses	Transfer courses are excluded in the class size calculation.
Independent study day school classes	Classes recorded in the Independent Study Register for Day School Pupils are excluded in the calculation of SACS.
Programs for expelled pupils or pupils on long term suspension	These programs are excluded in the calculation of SACS.
Credit recovery classes	These classes are included in the calculation of SACS.
Multi-Subject Instructional Periods (MSIP) classes	These classes are excluded in the calculation of SACS. Note: MSIP classes are dedicated periods in the school day where time is taken from each timetabled period to create the MSIP (part of the Student Success Strategy).
Dual credit courses	Team-taught dual credit classes are included in the calculation of SACS. Where dual credit courses are externally delivered (i.e., through a college), the classes are excluded from the calculation of SACS.

Type of class/course/pupil	Inclusion or exclusion from the calculation of SACS
Remote learning	Remote learning classes are included in the calculation of SACS.
Pupils that audit classes	Pupils that audit classes (i.e., students stay for a short period of time and do not intend to earn credits) are excluded in the calculation of SACS.

Secondary class size compliance framework

Since 2022-23 school year, the class size compliance framework applies to the secondary provisions of the class size regulation.

Consistent with the elementary class size compliance framework, the secondary class size compliance framework requires school boards to submit a class size compliance management plan in the first year of non-compliance, where school boards have exceeded the maximum average class size requirements. If school boards continue to be non-compliant in the second year and beyond, a reduction in the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) envelope for school board administration and governance, as defined in the GSN funding regulation will be applied. This is effectively a requirement to re-direct these funds to the classroom to assist with compliance with the class size regulation.

The compliance measures set out under the framework are as follows:

Number of consecutive years of non-compliance	Compliance measure (applied in the school year following the year of non-compliance)
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">school board chairs and directors will be notified by the ministry and required to submit a compliance management plan detailing how the school board will become compliant with the class size regulation. For example, if school boards are non-compliant for 2023-24, year 1 begins in the 2024-25 school year.
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a one per cent reduction in the GSN envelope for school board administration and governance, as defined in the GSN funding regulation. For example, if school boards are non-compliant for 2023-24 and 2024-25, the one per cent reduction (redirected to assist with class size compliance) applies to the 2025-26 school year.
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a three per cent reduction, to the same envelope as the year two reduction. For example, if school boards are non-compliant for 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26, this reduction applies to the 2026-27 school year.
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a five per cent reduction to the same envelope as the year two reduction. Following the examples above, this reduction would apply to the 2027-28 school year.

The ministry may also conduct an analysis of the school board's use of other revenues for administrative purposes to determine if further restrictions are necessary.

When a school board, which has been non-compliant the previous year(s) and demonstrates compliance with the class size regulation through reporting in the following year, it will have the above restrictions lifted, subject to the approval of the Minister, and the calculation of consecutive years for the purposes of compliance will be reset.

As noted above, the secondary class size compliance measures restrictions will be imposed **in the year following the year of non-compliance** to accommodate the existing reporting timelines (June 30th). As such, the compliance framework will apply separately for elementary and secondary class sizes for the purposes of determining consecutive years of non-compliance. For illustrative purposes, please see the scenarios below:

- 1) If a school board is non-compliant in year 2 with secondary class sizes and non-compliant in year 3 with elementary class sizes (assuming non-compliance for both began in the 2023-24 school year), the 1 per cent reduction would be applied to the GSN envelope for school board administration and governance (for the secondary panel non-compliance) and a further 3 per cent (for the elementary panel non-compliance), for a total of 4 per cent reduction in the GSN envelope for school board administration and governance for the 2025-26 school year.
- 2) If a school board is non-compliant in year one with secondary class sizes and year 2 with elementary class sizes (assuming non-compliance for both began in the 2023-24 school year), no reduction would be applied (for the secondary panel non-compliance); however, the school board would need to submit a Compliance Management Plan to the ministry and a 1 per cent reduction in the envelope would be applied (for the elementary panel non-compliance) in the 2024-25 school year.

General FAQs

1. Are school boards required to attest to the data submitted?

School boards are not required to submit an attestation for secondary school class size purposes as the ministry calculates the school board's secondary school average class size using class and student course enrolment data submitted through OnSIS. However, as part of the OnSIS submission sign-off process, school boards are required to ensure that data submitted through OnSIS is complete and accurate.

2. When is the secondary class size reporting due to the ministry?

The regulation sets out a June 30th submission due date, and since the SACS reports are calculated using data submitted through OnSIS, school boards are asked to complete their OnSIS data submissions on or before the submission due dates. If your school board is unable to meet the OnSIS submission timelines, please e-mail the OnSIS Help Desk at onsis_sision@ontario.ca and csreporting@ontario.ca and provide details on the reasons for the delay.

3. How can I tell if my data has errors?

Once all secondary schools in a school board have completed their October or March OnSIS submissions, school boards will receive an email from the ministry with information on accessing their school and board level SACS reports through the Secure Online Data Transfer (SODT) tool. School boards should review their in-person (including remote) and online class sizes to ensure accuracy and compliance.

4. What are the remote learning class size requirements?

Classes delivered through remote learning are not considered online classes for the purpose of the class size regulation. As such, these classes are bound by same class size requirements as in-person classes.

5. How should class sizes for remote learning be reported?

Class size data for the purpose of regulated class sizes is only reported by the school board delivering the instruction, however, the ADE of the students must be reported by the home school board for funding purposes in the remote learning school.

6. Are school boards required to complete and submit separate class size reports based on the delivery model?

School boards are not required to submit separate secondary school class size reports to the ministry. Upon the sign off of all secondary school October and March OnSIS data submissions, SACS reports are generated and automatically filed with the ministry based on the data submitted by school boards through OnSIS.

7. How should students who are participating in asynchronous remote learning be counted?

If students are participating in asynchronous remote learning with a school board, they should have an assigned teacher and they should be counted as part of the SACS report.

Please ensure that the school board is meeting the minimum requirements for asynchronous learners as set out in [Policy/Program Memorandum No. 164](#), including daily attendance tracking and a daily schedule or timetable in accordance with the 300-minute instructional day.

8. How should class sizes for online learning classes be reported?

All online learning (formerly e-learning) classes must be reported in OnSIS with class type of "Online".