

# HALIFAX YOUTH ATTENDANCE CENTRE

## What is Halifax Youth Attendance Centre (HYAC)?

HYAC addresses the needs of medium to high risk youth, under court order, living in the Halifax Regional Municipality, by providing a variety of structured group and individual programs and services.

## Who operates this program?

The Department of Justice, Correctional Services Division, is responsible for HYAC. A number of government and non-government partners are also engaged in various components of the operation.

## How many youth will be served?

The program is designed for up to 20 youth in the day program. These youth receive educational and/or employment preparation at HYAC. In addition to the day program, other youth under supervision participate in programs related to cognitive skills, anger management, substance abuse and recreation. These programs are delivered by HYAC staff on site during daytime hours and to additional youth at off site locations outside of daytime hours.

## Has this been done before?

A similar model, Centre 24/7, has been operating in collaboration with the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board since 1999. Over 275 students have participated in that program.

## Who delivers the programs at HYAC?

- There are teachers on site to provide an education program.
- Youth Workers and Probation Officers assist the teachers and provide onsite supervision to the youth each day.
- The Provincial Principal for Education Programs in correctional facilities is based at HYAC.
- Professionals from partner departments and organizations provide support services as required, both on and off site.
- There is a full time administrator for HYAC.

## Who are the “partners”?

Our partners include, but are not limited to, the following:

- the Departments of Education, Health and Community Services;
- the IWK Health Centre – mental health, addictions and youth forensic services;
- the Halifax Regional School Board;
- the Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program, Capital Health and other community agencies.

## How are students selected for the day program at HYAC?

- Youth referrals are forwarded to the program.
- A Selection Board reviews all applicants.
- Appropriate candidates are interviewed.
- Final approval is made by the Administrator (Deputy Superintendent) of HYAC.

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## What factors are considered in selecting participants?

Among the factors considered are:

- the youth's desire to make positive change;
- the youth's commitment to improve their education;
- the availability of adult/community supports for the youth;
- the youth's age and assessed risk factors.

## What supervision arrangements are in place for HYAC participants?

- HYAC has dedicated space in the school building.
- HYAC youth are restricted to areas designated for use by HYAC.
- HYAC staff are well-trained to provide support and supervision for the youth on site.
- Arrival, departure, lunch and transportation of participants are all fully supervised.

## What programs are offered by HYAC?

### Academic Education

Using the Department of Education accredited curriculum, there is an emphasis on social and personal growth. The program aims to address education deficits and strengths while providing growth opportunities with respect to civic, social and moral responsibility.

### Experiential Education

This program helps youth develop personal goals through activities that promote problem solving, self-awareness, perseverance, goal setting, trust, leadership skills, getting along with others and to transfer the skills learned to their daily lives.

### Recreation

This program identifies year round physical activities that promote healthier lifestyles, develops skills that improve attitude and encourages participation in scheduled group activities.

### Career Development

The program helps youth to discover, explore, develop and acquire knowledge and competencies that enable them to participate in the labour market in their communities.

### Cognitive-Based Life and Social Skills Programs

These programs provide an opportunity for the youth to learn techniques and skills that allow them to address issues relating to school, family or social settings. They can practice these skills in a controlled and safe setting while developing the confidence to use them in their daily lives. Group programs enable youth to develop the skills and confidence to independently make positive, appropriate decisions. Gender specific and cultural programming are also available.

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