



**Sutherland-Chan Schools Inc., *operating as*
Sutherland-Chan School of Massage Therapy**

Withdrawal and Expulsion Policy

The purpose of this policy is to define withdrawal and expulsion at Sutherland-Chan School of Massage Therapy, and to outline criteria and procedures for each one. Since these are transition points in the student journey, the school must ensure that the school's policies and protocols are consistent with Ministry and OSAP requirements. The provisions of this policy apply equally to full-time and partial load students.

1. Withdrawal

Withdrawal is defined as a departure from school that ends the student's contract. Withdrawals can be initiated either by the student or by the school. The following are non-exhaustive examples of reasons for withdrawal:

Student-Initiated

1. Health/medical, personal, financial concerns
2. Decides not to pursue massage therapy
3. Learning needs issues

School-Initiated

1. Student is absent for two weeks without contact and is non-responsive
2. Expulsion reasons (see below)
3. Mandated time away from school due to academic failure
4. Excessive withdrawal and return pattern (at the school's discretion on a case-by-case basis)

The self-initiated withdrawing student must provide a reason for the withdrawal and an official withdrawal date.

Withdrawal does not inherently mean that the student cannot return to school at a future date. It does mean that the student's contract has been terminated and the student file closed. A

return-to-school request must be made to the DE and agreed upon by the school, and will require a new contract at current rates for tuition and fees.

Process:

- To discuss or begin a student-initiated withdrawal, the student will speak to Peter Becker, Director of Education (DE), who will provide initial information (e.g., the student's options, what withdrawal entails) and get the process underway. The student may choose to initiate contact in writing if that is preferable or more convenient.
- For all student-initiated and most school-initiated withdrawals, the DE convenes a meeting of himself, the involved student, Patricia Canal, Finance Office Coordinator (FOC), and Thomas Yau, OSAP & Student Records Coordinator (OSRC). At this meeting, the implications of withdrawal are reviewed, and all documentation is discussed and signed.
- The financial aspects of withdrawal are finalized at this meeting. Refunds are calculated using the Ministry's consumption-based method, meaning that the student may or may not be eligible for a refund depending on how late in a term the withdrawal is taking place.
- For a school-initiated withdrawal based on absenteeism, the DE will make a reasonable effort to contact and communicate with the student. If this is unsuccessful, the DE will establish a formal withdrawal date and communicate the withdrawal decision, in writing, to the email and mail addresses in the student's file.
- In the case of OSAP-funded students, if a refund is owed, the FOC will submit it to the government or to the student based on who originally paid the tuition to the school.
- If the student has an agreement to return to the school at a future date, and has personally paid their tuition (as opposed to OSAP direct funding), the student may elect to "bank" the tuition money with the school if they so choose.
- The student is responsible for required notification of OSAP and any other affected bodies, and the school is responsible for its role in the same regard.
- A copy of the student's withdrawal documentation, and of any refund calculation and refund cheque, will be placed in the student's file by the OSRC.
- The OSRC will send written notification to the student when their file has been closed.

2. Expulsion

Expulsion is defined as the decision to terminate a student's contract as a result of conduct by the student that violates school policy (see end of document) or is otherwise intolerable to the school community. The decision to expel a student is made by the school. The following are non-exhaustive examples of reasons for expulsion:

1. Dishonesty in providing documents or qualifications, including vaccination status
2. Cheating
3. Sexual harassment or assault, or other violations of the school's zero tolerance policy
4. Violation of the school's, and/or the CMTO's, professional standards as they may apply to students
5. Failure to pay tuition as required by contract or signed payment plan with the school

The expulsion process is as follows:

- Peter Becker, Director of Education (DE), will meet with the student to communicate the school's decision, including the reason(s) for it.
- If the school's decision arises from an unanticipated circumstance, e.g., the student is caught cheating on an exam, is found to be intoxicated while treating in Student Clinic, is discovered to have lied on key admissions documents, etc., the student will be asked to leave the school immediately. The DE will schedule a meeting to take place within 1 week (or 5 business days).
- The student may choose to bring a support person to the meeting.
- At the meeting, wherever possible, documentation will be discussed and signed, and implications of the expulsion will be reviewed.
- The financial aspects of expulsion will be reviewed at the meeting. Refunds are calculated using the Ministry's consumption-based method, meaning that the student may or may not be eligible for a refund depending on how late in a term the expulsion is taking place.
- In the case of OSAP-funded students, if a refund is owed, the FOC will submit it to the government or to the student based on who originally paid the tuition to the school.
- If it is not possible to have a productive discussion of documents and finances at the meeting, or the circumstances mean that the school has not had the opportunity to fully process the necessary information, a second meeting may be scheduled in a timely manner to complete the process.
- If it is not possible to meet with the student, e.g., because they cannot be contacted within two weeks of the school's decision, or refuse to meet, the DE will notify the student of the expulsion decision and reason(s) for it, in writing, by sending it to the email and mail addresses in the student's file.
- Where the situation requires an investigation, e.g., a student's allegation of sexual harassment by a classmate, the procedure outlined in the school's Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy (Non-Academic Standards) will be followed.
- The expelled student is responsible for required notification of OSAP and any other affected bodies, and the school is responsible for its role in the same regard.
- A copy of the student's expulsion documentation, and any refund calculation and refund cheque, will be placed in the student's file by the OSRC.
- The OSRC will send written notification to the student when their file has been closed.
- The school will communicate with the student, either in the initial meeting, or following a decision of the management team, whether the student can apply to return to the school at a future time. This determination is at the sole discretion of the school based on the specific circumstances of the case.
- Appeals of expulsion decisions, based on limited grounds related to allegations of improper procedure or discrimination/unfairness in some aspect of the process, will be reviewed and decided upon by the school's management team.

Related Policies

These policy documents include content relevant to why a student may be expelled from Sutherland-Chan School of Massage Therapy. In some instances, excerpts from these documents are included here for greater clarity, and in others the page references are listed below. All are documents a student receives during the admission process, on enrolment, or in the first term at school, and is responsible for reviewing in full (in most instances, has signed off on as part of the admission process).

1. Sutherland-Chan Non-Academic Standards Policies

This group of documents includes:

- How the School Addresses Non-Academic Standards (explains the educational side versus the discipline side; outlines problem behaviours and professional readiness considerations)
- Zero Tolerance Policy (see below)
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy (defines both categories, in general terms and also in the context of health professionals in training; outlines how the school will respond to disclosures and complaints, the rights of students to privacy and support, reporting and investigation processes)
- Non-Academic Standards – Processes and Procedures (outlines in detail complaints processes for non-academic standards situations, specifying student, instructor and administrator roles and responsibilities, as well as the steps the school will undertake in handling such complaints)

If there is a conflict between the school's Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy and its Deferral, Withdrawal and Expulsion Policy, the Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy prevails.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

Some behaviours fall into the “zero tolerance” category and may be addressed by penalties that can include expulsion. We use the term zero tolerance to convey that some actions/behaviours are unacceptable to the school community, and once a suitable verification process has been conducted, may generate consequences involving disciplinary measures up to and including expulsion of the student. The school reserves the right to make such determinations at our own discretion in ways that express our values and behavioural code and that are based on our assessment of harm caused or risk of harm. Considering the Problem Behaviours list above, some are outright intolerable (e.g., sexual assault) while others would fall into the zero-tolerance category only at the severe end of their scale (e.g., disrespectful, disruptive behaviours). To give a few examples:

- Making common types of “street jokes” or bantering among friends may include homophobic or racist aspects in the opinion of classmates or school community

members who overhear them. Depending on the specific circumstances, this behaviour might be addressed as a learning moment; however, intentional racist or homophobic comments directed at anyone in the school community in a hurtful or abusive manner would likely be disciplined with a “zero tolerance” approach.

- While hugging a patient who doesn't want to be hugged or pestering a classmate for a date are inappropriate and could be captured under a few items in the Problem Behaviors list, they might be addressed as learning moments, especially in the first instance; making sexual advances to a patient or stalking a classmate would likely be disciplined with a “zero tolerance” approach.

Zero Tolerance List *[not an exhaustive list]*

1. Dishonesty in provision of required documents, security checks, etc.
2. Academic dishonesty (cheating)
3. Video recording in the classroom or in clinic; photographing or video-recording instructors, classmates or other members of the school community in settings outside the classroom/clinic without their permission; uploading, posting, or otherwise making use of images of school community members in any fashion without their permission
4. Severe types of threatening, coercive, sexually inappropriate comments, sexually offensive gestures, or intolerant communications
5. Severe types of unprofessional behaviour, disregard for patient safety, professional boundary violations, bullying/harassment behaviours
6. Providing treatment while under the influence
7. Jeopardizing the safety of others in the school environment
8. Criminal behaviours such as assault, sexual violence, theft, etc.
9. Severe types of unwillingness to engage in necessary communications, conflict resolution or remedial behaviours

2. Evaluation and Standards Policy

This document contains the full set of policies and procedures related to academic standards, testing and grading, procedures when grading components are missed or incomplete, consequences of course and term failure, appeals procedure, etc. Two specifically relevant excerpts follow below:

DEFINITION OF CHEATING [p. 17]

Academic dishonesty (cheating) includes but is not limited to:

- observing or attempting to observe another student's answers
- copying or attempting to copy another student's answers
- placing one's answers where another student may observe or attempt to observe them
- inappropriate communication with another student during a test/exam
- concealing any form of cheating information on one's person or belongings
- unauthorized consulting of notes, texts or electronic devices during exams

- removal of exam papers, questions, or any exam materials from the exam room
- recording or improperly obtaining questions from exams
- any behaviour which seeks to obtain exam materials from the offices or personal possessions of faculty or staff

- **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is more related to work that is presented in assignment or report form, and is defined as:

- submitting as one's own work something that has been completely or substantially prepared by someone else, including from online sources
- failing to credit or reference someone else's work
- overuse of direct quotes or paraphrasing, even when credited/referenced

The penalty for plagiarism will generally be assignment of a zero for the grade component. The course or clinical instructor who identifies the plagiarism will make this determination in most instances, but in situations involving more than one incident, or particularly egregious plagiarism conduct, the teacher will bring the case to the attention of the Assistant Director of Education for consideration of disciplinary options up to and including expulsion.

FEES-RELATED ISSUES [p. 22]

Students are responsible for full payment of their tuition in accordance with the schedule set out in their student contract. Having access to the education provided by the school requires paying fees and tuition in a timely manner.

If a student's tuition is not paid on the first day of term, the following steps will occur:

End of first day	The FOC emails an invoice and reminder letter.
One week later (non-OSAP and OSAP-delayed students)	The FOC emails a reminder letter, referencing the payment plan option and the policy relevant to consequences of non-payment.
Two weeks post deadline Three weeks for OSAP good-standing students	The FOC emails a letter referencing the risk of suspension for tuition non-payment, and reiterates the need to meet in person if a payment plan needs to be discussed.
Four weeks post deadline	The FOC issues a suspension warning letter indicating that the student must pay the balance owing or meet in person by a designated deadline in order to avoid suspension.
Six weeks post deadline	The student will be suspended from school until payment is made, for up to two weeks.
Eight weeks post deadline	The student will be officially withdrawn from the program.

Adjustments to this timetable can be made, at the discretion of the Finance Office Coordinator, if the student has a verifiable, dated guarantee of funding due to be received during the term. In all

instances, timely engagement and communication with the Finance Office is important to securing the school's cooperation.

Payment plans are available – they must be approved by the Finance Office Coordinator. Please reference the *S-C Tuition Payment and Refund Policy* for further details.

Any student who falls into arrears is expected to be in communication with the Finance Office Coordinator so they can work together to the extent possible to resolve the problem.

As a result of being on suspension for monies owed, a student may miss important deadlines or course components. The student must meet with the DE to address these missed components before moving forward with the term. These situations will be addressed in the usual ways based on policies in this manual or in the Clinical Handbook, whichever is applicable. The student also forfeits the right to appeal any failures incurred for this reason. If a student remains on suspension because of unpaid fees for a period longer than two weeks, the student will be formally withdrawn from the program.

It should be noted that the concept of expulsion in this policy does not apply to students who must leave the school as a result of academic failure or reasons for withdrawal as outlined in the previous section.

3. Tuition Payment and Refund Policy

This document includes policies and procedures related to tuition payment, including payment plans. Its late payment process is outlined above (as summarized in the *Evaluation and Standards Policy*). What follows is the excerpt specific to default on payment plans:

Payment Plan Default

A student will be in payment plan default at any point that a scheduled payment is missed.

A missed payment immediately incurs a late penalty of 6% interest, compounded monthly.

- After one week from the missed payment due date, the FOC will issue a letter warning of suspension for non-payment of fees if the student does not pay the amount owing or meet with the Finance Office Coordinator within a week. This letter will be sent by email and placed in the student's school mailbox.
- After two weeks, the payment plan is considered void and the full amount of outstanding tuition becomes due. The FOC will send a letter by email and place a copy in the student's school mailbox. This letter will include a suspension warning.
- After three weeks, the student will be suspended from school until payment is made. The FOC will both send this letter by email and place a copy in the student's mailbox.
- After five weeks, the student will be officially withdrawn from the program. This letter will be issued by the Assistant Director of Education and Registrar and sent by post as well as by email

3. Privacy Policy

This policy defines personal information and outlines from whom (clinic patients, applicants, students) and why the school collects personal information, as well as how such information is protected and can be accessed, privacy breach procedure, and how a person could make a complaint if they believe their privacy has been breached.

The school's privacy policy is mentioned in this document because a student could potentially be expelled for extreme violations of this policy, especially as it relates to patient information.

4. Clinical Handbook

This handbook includes a section (Chapter 3, pp. 11-23) that outlines jurisdictional, regulatory and school-specific professional requirements related to the therapeutic relationship, including: privacy, confidentiality, treating people with disabilities, massage therapy contraindications, informed consent, standards for assessment and draping, treating sensitive tissues, infection control, documentation and unacceptable behaviours such as treating under the influence, treating without supervision and practicing without a license.

While it is rare, and the school usually approaches cases from an educational perspective, especially initially, severe or recurrent transgressions may require that a decision be taken to expel the student.