



**1. Rationale**

The Simcoe County District School Board recognizes its authority under the *Education Act* to determine attendance areas for each school and to assign students to particular schools. The Board also recognizes that schools play a significant role in the life of every student, that students often develop life-long attachments to schools attended, and that the influence of a school affects the larger school community. Therefore the Board wishes to discharge its responsibility for establishing school boundaries in a manner which is fair for students and their families, and which in bringing together various neighborhoods promotes a strong sense of community and continuity.

Attendance areas for each school need to be established with the intent to balance enrolment; to achieve the best program continuity, allocation of staff and transportation costs; and to enhance community stability.

In addition to the necessary planning and management requirements related to the formation of attendance areas, the Board recognizes that parents and students may wish to choose a school which lies outside the family's home school boundary. Therefore, the Board will attempt to grant choice of schools within a framework that it believes is reasonable and necessary to the effective operation of the school system.

**2. Policy**

It is the policy of the Simcoe County District School Board that school attendance areas be established and administered in a manner which is fair for students and their families and which in bringing together various neighborhoods promotes a strong sense of community and continuity.

**3. Definitions**

In this policy and the related administrative procedures:

3.1 "Attendance area" means the area enclosed within a school's attendance boundary. A school accommodates the students who live within its attendance area. If a district or county program(s) is also located in the school then students registered in that program(s) may live outside the school's attendance area.

3.2 "Holding school" means a school that accommodates students who live in a location (often a new residential development) distant from the attendance area of the school. The holding school accommodates these students in an interim placement, as designated by board motion. These students, while part of the school community, are not considered as living within the school's attendance area.

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- 3.3 “Holding area” means the area of residence (often a new residential development) of students who are accommodated at a holding school in an interim placement by board motion. The holding area is not designated as part of the school’s permanent attendance area, but is attached to the attendance area on an interim basis.
- 3.4 “Home school” means the school located within a given attendance area (including any attached holding area(s)). Students are expected to attend their home school, unless they are registered in a county or district program located outside the attendance area of their home school.
- 3.5 “Out-of-attendance-area school” means a school located outside the attendance area (including any attached holding area(s)) of a given school.
- 3.6 “Out-of-attendance-area student” means a student who attends an out-of-area school, other than a student enrolled in a district or county program, or a student in an interim placement due to capacity restrictions or extenuating circumstances in the student’s home school.

**4. Guidelines**

4.1 Establishing School Attendance Areas

4.1.1 Each school attendance area will be approved by the Board.

4.1.2 In determining attendance areas the Board will consider among other factors:

4.1.2.1 efficiencies in bus and walk zones;

4.1.2.2 the capacity of the school and the school site;

4.1.2.3 concentration of population and projected growth/decline;

4.1.2.4 the location and proximity of adjacent schools;

4.1.2.5 the need to accommodate students who live in a holding area;

4.1.2.6 the need to accommodate students in interim placements due to overflow measures resulting from capacity restrictions;

4.1.2.7 recommendations arising from a pupil accommodation review.

- 4.1.3 In order to make the most efficient use of its facilities and resources the Board may, on the recommendation of the Director of Education or designate, direct groups of students within a school attendance area to attend an alternate school.

Such decisions will result in changes to the attendance boundaries of the schools concerned.

- 4.1.4 In accordance with Board Policy 2313, Accommodation Review Facility Services staff will undertake a system enrolment review in the fall of each year, including a review of established school attendance areas.

- 4.1.5 Further to the system enrolment review the superintendent of facility services will identify, in a report to the Board, the schools proposed for attendance boundary changes.

4.1.5.1 Facility Services staff will continue to monitor attendance areas on an ongoing basis, and address issues as they arise throughout the year by proposing further attendance boundary changes.

- 4.1.6 Parents/guardians will be notified of proposed changes to attendance boundaries and be provided the opportunity to respond prior to consideration of any proposed attendance boundary changes by the Board.

- 4.1.7 In normal circumstances, a report will be presented to the Board by March 31 for approval of boundary changes for the elementary panel for September and for the secondary panel for the subsequent September.

4.1.7.1 Notice of changes in attendance areas resulting from a pupil accommodation review may be conveyed after March 31 based on the timelines established for the review process.

4.1.7.2 Changes in interim placements to accommodate students who live in holding areas or due to overflow measures resulting from capacity restrictions will be subject to approval by the Board.

4.1.7.3 The Superintendent of Facility Services, on the recommendation of Facility Services staff and following consultation with the Director of Education, may make a minor change to an attendance boundary at the request of a family (or families) who live in a specific location. Such a change must be agreed to by all families with students who live in the location and who would be affected at the time by the change. The Board is to be informed of the change in boundary.

4.1.8 Students entering grade 8 in September will be given the choice to graduate from their current home school despite a change in attendance areas. Transportation will be provided to those students who choose to remain in their current home school and are currently transported to and from this school. Siblings of grade 8 students provided with transportation, remaining at their current home school, do not have the right to access transportation.

4.1.9 Despite any other provisions in this policy or any other policy of the Board, in unusual and extreme circumstances such as problems with a safe use of a facility, the Board may direct students within a school attendance area to attend an alternate school and forthwith advise the public of its decision and the reasons thereof.

## 4.2 School Attendance

4.2.1 It is expected that students will attend the elementary or secondary school in the attendance area in which they reside, or another school to which they have been admitted to a defined special program, or a school in which they are accommodated in an interim placement as designated by board motion (e.g. a holding school). Students may be permitted to attend any out-of-attendance area school when admittance of out-of-attendance area students will not result in more staff than otherwise would be allocated.

4.2.1.1 Holding schools are closed to out-of-attendance-area students.

- 4.2.2 The responsibility of transportation to and from an out-of-attendance-area school rests entirely with parents/guardians and students.
- 4.2.3 The placement of a student in a county or district program located in a school other than the student's home school does not give a sibling(s) of the student the right to attend the same school.
- 4.2.4 Notwithstanding 4.2.1 above, the Board may require students who wish to transfer, to attend their home school if the Director of Education advises such transfers will adversely affect the operational efficiency or program effectiveness of the home school.
- 4.2.5 Students admitted to an out-of-attendance area school will be permitted to continue in attendance as long as space remains available. Out-of-attendance-area students may be required to return to their home school, or transfer to another school, when the space is required for students residing within the attendance area (including any attached holding area(s)) of the out-of-attendance-area school.

When such action is required, parents/guardians will be notified of the board's intention and given an opportunity to respond. Normally, notification will be given prior to March 31 for changes to be effected for the next school year.

- 4.2.6 When space in a school facility is limited, priority of admission will be accorded to the resident students in the attendance area, the resident students in a holding area(s) attached to the attendance area on an interim basis, students in special placement, and non-resident students in the attendance area or holding area(s) for whom there are special agreements with other boards and agencies. The Director of Education is authorized to establish priorities for the admission of all other students to out-of-attendance-area schools.

**5. Administrative Procedures**

The Director of Education is authorized to provide the administrative procedures necessary to implement this policy.

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