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**Subject**                            **NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGES/EXPERIENCES  
– GRADES 7-12**

**References**                        APM A1061-Field Trips  
APM A2500-Purchasing Procedures  
APM A7050-Admission of Students  
APM A7220-Volunteers  
APM A7070-Student Fees  
Ministry of Education - Instructions for the Use of Computerized  
Enrolment Registers for Elementary and Secondary Schools  
Education Act Section 49  
Policy 4430

**Links**

**Contact**                            School Services

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## **1. Purpose**

Through Policy 4430 – Field Trips the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) has traditionally encouraged educational exchanges. It is the practice of the Board to encourage and support Board approved exchanges when it is believed the exchanges are suitable for the SCDSB students and schools involved. It is the expectation of the Board that reasonable measures will be taken to prevent risk or harm on school-sponsored student exchange programs. For this reason an approved list of Vendor of Record (VOR) for student exchanges has been established.

Simcoe County District School Board students who participate in an exchange program are likely to benefit from the experience in ways which will enhance the student's learning and result in significant achievements in the areas of knowledge, thinking/inquiry/problem-solving, communication, application/making connections and global understanding.

## **2. Definitions**

2.1 A student exchange implies a SCDSB student will be visiting another city/province/country to receive schooling and visiting students will be attending a SCDSB school.

2.1.1 Individual Reciprocal Exchange

A reciprocal exchange is between an individual SCDSB student and a student from another city/province/country. Typically the SCDSB student hosts the visiting student in their home and school for a specified period (i.e. three months), and the visiting student hosts the SCDSB student for a similar period, usually in the same school year. During each visiting period the visiting student enters into the normal routine of the host family and school, and special events are a part of the exchange. Visiting students to SCDSB schools are excused from paying tuition fees under the Education Act, section 49(7)(a).

2.1.2 Group Reciprocal Exchange

A reciprocal exchange occurs between a group of SCDSB students and a similar-sized group from another city/province/country. Typically the visiting students are billeted with families from the host group for a specified period (eg.. one or two weeks). Visiting students to SCDSB schools are excused from paying tuition fees under the Education Act, section 49(7)(a). Refer to APM A1061-Field Trips.

2.1.3 Service Club Exchange

These are not reciprocal for SCDSB student(s), but there is a reciprocal relationship between communities and sponsoring service clubs. These exchanges involve an indirect exchange of Ontario and foreign pupils, such as those sponsored by Rotary International. In these cases, pupils may come from multiple countries, not necessarily on a one-to-one basis, and not necessarily within the same school year. They might be thought of as reciprocal between communities. Typically these exchanges last a full school year and the visiting student(s) may be hosted by several local families during that time. Visiting students to SCDSB schools may be excused from paying tuition fees, or pay a reduced tuition fee, at the discretion of the Board, under the Education Act, section 49(5).

2.1.4 Non Reciprocal Individual or Group Experiences

These are non reciprocal short stays and are considered a field trip, covered by APM A1061 for outgoing SCDSB students. Incoming students are considered visitors and are required to pay fees as this is not considered an exchange. All incoming students should be referred to the Newcomer Welcome Centre – International Student Program for admission to the SCDSB system.

2.2 Student/Family Initiated Experiences

These experiences are solely initiated, organized and implemented by the student, parent or guardian with non-approved SCDSB organizations. SCDSB assumes no responsibility for these experiences and the reciprocal student(s) will not be accepted by SCDSB schools.

### **3. Registration and Fees**

- 3.1 The principal shall ensure that pupils participating in an educational exchange program between school boards or other educational authorities six months or greater in duration and in accordance with clause 49(7)(a) of the Education Act, are recorded in the register as follows:
- 3.1.1 the pupil leaving to go on an exchange must be shown as a “retirement.” The date of the retirement is the day following the last day on which the pupil attended his/her home school.
- 3.1.2 The pupil admitted to the school must be enrolled as a regular “external admission”, and is considered to be a pupil of the board for the duration of his or her stay at the Ontario school.
- 3.2 Where the duration of an educational exchange program is a period of five months or less and each side of the exchange occurs within the same school year, the school principal at his or her discretion, may record the pupils as follows:
- 3.2.1 the pupil leaving the school to go on the exchange remains in the register for the duration of the exchange.
- 3.2.2 The pupil admitted to the school is not entered into the register for the duration of the exchange. This pupil must not be charged a tuition fee.
- 3.3 Section 49(6) and (7) of the Education Act requires Boards to charge tuition fees for foreign students except where there is a reciprocal exchange. This reciprocity does not have to occur within the same school year but it must occur within the succeeding school year. However, there must be actual or potential pupil reciprocity and each company or agency must meet the reciprocity criteria.
- 3.4 Any shortcomings in reciprocity would be covered by the contract with the exchange companies, which would require that outstanding tuition fees are paid.

### **4. Exchange Organization Purchasing Procedures**

- 4.1 A request for proposal will be issued to establish a list of Vendors of Record. Successful providers will remain on the list for three years with the option of two-one year extensions. This list will be approved and maintained by the Exchange Coordinator. All SCDSB staff are required to use this list when initiating Board sponsored exchanges.
- 4.1.1 Refer to APM A2500 - Purchasing Procedures to ensure employees do not benefit personally from the Board's purchase of goods/services.
- 4.2 Approved vendors will be required to provide proof of the following documents including but not limited to:
- 4.2.1 A minimum of \$5 million Commercial General Liability Insurance is required, naming Simcoe County District School Board as an additional insured. A certificate of insurance shall be provided with the contractual agreement and at each annual renewal for as long as exchanges continue with the organization.
- 4.2.2 Contractual agreement including a cancellation policy for pandemic, war, insurgence or upset.
- 4.2.3 Appropriate admission procedure is in place regarding reciprocity and tuition.
- 4.2.4 Completed exchange student application form.

- 4.2.5 Parental consent forms are provided to identify and detail potential activities and risks involved for school trips, etc.
- 4.2.6 Health insurance for travelling in Canada, specifically in Ontario is required for each student coming to a SCDSB school.
- 4.2.7 Criminal Background Checks, Vulnerable Sector Screening and Pardoned Sex Offender validation is required for all members of the host family currently 18 years of age and older.

## **5. SCDSB Responsibilities (In Relation to the Student Exchange Process)**

The Newcomer Welcome Centre will facilitate all student exchanges in coordination with the School Exchange Liaison Person who will be the Principal or designate at each school. The following duties will be the responsibility of the identified individual(s):

- 5.1 Supervisory Officer
  - 5.1.1 Supervisory authority for exchange information or issues.
  - 5.1.2 Appoint Exchange Coordinator.
  - 5.1.3 Support Exchange Coordinator.
- 5.2 Exchange Coordination Services - delivered by Newcomer Welcome Centre, Adult and Continuing Education
  - 5.2.1 Remain informed about exchange opportunities available to SCDSB students and share information with people within the system as appropriate.
  - 5.2.2 Issue student exchange Request for Proposal as per section 4.1.
  - 5.2.3 Exchange information between approved outside organizations and the School Liaison Principal.
  - 5.2.4 Facilitate feedback from SCDSB participants.
  - 5.2.5 Publicize exchange-related achievements of SCDSB students.
  - 5.2.6 Notify Area Superintendent, Principal and Admissions and Enrolment department of students leaving and arriving.
  - 5.2.7 Ensure commercial liability insurance is on file.
- 5.3 School Exchange Liaison Person (principal or designate)
  - 5.3.1 Publicize approved exchange opportunities within the school.
  - 5.3.2 Assist potential exchange applicants to make informed decisions about their own readiness for an exchange experience.
  - 5.3.3 Assist exchange applicants in preparing their applications as necessary.
  - 5.3.4 Inform the principal about exchange plans and time lines.
  - 5.3.5 Advise SCDSB employees that they are not to benefit personally from the approved organization (other than expenses related to the cost of the trip) (refer to APM A2500).

## **6. School Procedures**

- 6.1 Prior to the approval of all SCDSB student exchanges arranged through an Exchange Organization, the organization's forms must be signed by the principal.
- 6.2 The principal will receive an application package from the Newcomer Welcome Centre prior to the approval and enrolment of incoming exchange student(s).

- 6.3 Placement of the visiting student in courses and grade levels is at the discretion of the principal.
- 6.4 Refer to Section 3 regarding the admissions and demission of student into the SCDSB student information system.
- 6.5 Guidelines for Credit and School Awards (APPENDIX A)

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**Revised**

***Issued under the authority of the Director of Education***

## Credits and School Awards

Simcoe County students who participate in an International Exchange may receive credits for their school and life experiences while away from their home school in Ontario. These credits could be in the form of an equivalency credit or an actual credit showing a percentage grade. The following documents should be used to help you decide how recognition may be granted for the unique experiences of the exchange:

### OSS Grades 9 – 12

Section 6.6 outlines Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition which provides guidelines for recognizing knowledge and skills acquired outside Ontario secondary schools.

Appendix 8 of this document outlines “Equivalent Diploma Requirements”. The last paragraph of this appendix (page 78) describes the requirements for students who complete some credits in Ontario, leave Ontario to continue their education, and then return to the Ontario education system.

### PLAR – PPM 129

This document details the formal evaluation and credit-granting process which allows students to obtain credits for knowledge and skills acquired outside Ontario secondary schools. This document outlines the process for both PLAR challenges and PLAR equivalencies.

### Ontario Student Transcript (OST) 2010

This document describes the recording of equivalency and challenge credits on a student transcript (specifically, pages 8 – 14). An example of a transcript containing an entry for PLAR equivalency credits for course work completed outside the Ontario Secondary School system is given on page 33.

### Procedure:

The principal of the home school in Ontario may use the PLAR process to grant up to a maximum of four PLAR credits to a student for each semester spent taking part in an approved exchange at a school outside of Ontario. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is the formal evaluation and credit-granting process that may be used to grant credits for prior learning, including knowledge and skills that students acquire in both formal and informal ways, outside secondary schools in Ontario. The PLAR process involves two components that may be used in granting credits to students who have taken part in an exchange program: “**challenge**” and “**equivalency**”.

The “**challenge**” process is the process whereby student prior learning is assessed for the purpose of granting credit for a Grade 10, 11 or 12 course developed from a provincial curriculum policy document. A student who has participated in an exchange program and has taken a specific course for which they would like to receive a mark on their Ontario transcript, could challenge this course. For example, a student taking an English course in Japan may feel that this course is equivalent to the ENG3U taught in Ontario. In order to challenge this course, the student must provide reasonable evidence that they would likely be successful in the challenge process. Evidence may take the form of official documentation from the host school showing content covered and level of success achieved.

If the principal feels that the student will be successful, he or she may present the challenge to the student. The assessment and evaluation for a course being “challenged” must include 70% formal tests (practical and written) and 30% for a variety of other assessments, based on the curriculum expectations and achievement charts in the curriculum documents. It must be based on all strands and all categories of knowledge and skills and the level of achievement will be recorded as a percentage grade on the student’s transcript.

Note: Although, “challenge” is a possibility, boards are not obliged to let students challenge courses not actually taught in schools within their board.

Also, students cannot challenge as a way to improve a mark in a course in which the credit has already been earned here in Ontario; they cannot challenge to obtain a credit for a course previously failed here in Ontario; they cannot challenge if a credit in that subject has been granted in that or a later grade (including credits granted through an equivalency evaluation), or for a course with significant overlap (e.g. applied/academic), and they cannot challenge an LDC or co-op course, a transfer course, or an ESL/ELD course if an ENG credit has already been obtained.

Although students may challenge for credit at the grade 10, 11, and 12 levels he/she may challenge for no more than 4 credits, and no more than 2 in any one discipline. Although a student may be granted up to 4 credits per semester that they were away on the exchange, there is a maximum of 4 credits that may be challenged during one’s high school career. So, any additional credits over and above the 4 challenged credits would have to be in the form of equivalency credits. For more details please refer to PPM 129.

The “**equivalency**” process is a process that is used to grant equivalent credits with no percentage grade attached. As stated in Appendix 8 of the OSS document, equivalency credits are granted for placement purposes but in the case of an exchange, they may also be used to give recognition for the exchange experience.

The process involves evaluation of the education and experiences of the exchange. On return from an exchange, the student must provide the principal with the host school’s report showing appropriate attendance, effort, and conduct while on exchange. Upon receipt of this documentation, a principal may grant up to 4 equivalency credits per term that a student was on the exchange. These credits would appear as one block of PLE (Prior Learning Equivalent) credits on their transcript and no marks would be awarded. In most cases these credits would be considered optional or non-pre-requisite courses.

### **Compulsory courses & Pre-requisite courses**

For equivalency to be granted for a compulsory course which may also be a pre-requisite course, a student must provide evidence that the work actually done during the exchange represents the same standards of achievement as credits granted to students who have taken the course in Ontario. For example, a student may wish to receive credit for a grade 10 compulsory math course such as MPM2D to take a grade 11 U level math course in Ontario.

Although the principal may agree to consider granting an equivalency credit for MPM2D, it would still appear on the transcript as a credit within a block of PLE credits. If the principal agreed that the expectations of MPM2D had been met during the exchange, then the grade 10 math compulsory requirement would have been met.

In both cases the evidence would usually take the form of official documentation from the host school showing the content covered and level of success achieved. The principal must then decide if the courses taken during the international exchange shows evidence of learning that relates directly to the Ontario curriculum expectations for specific courses in order to allow the student to receive an equivalent credit for the grade 10 compulsory math credit and continue in a grade 11 math course.

**What will appear on the student's transcript:**

All "equivalency" credits will appear on the transcript as a block of PLE credits and will assist in increasing the students credit count towards their OSSD. If a student wishes to have a specific credit and a mark appear on their transcript based on the work completed outside of Ontario, the student must "challenge" for credit the specific subject. For procedures of the Challenge process, the student will be directed to the board policies concerning PLAR Challenges.

Ultimately, the principal, after considering the experiences gained from the International Exchange and in consultation with the student and the guidance department, will decide on the number of credits being granted for the exchange and the number of credits, including compulsory credits that the student requires in order to qualify for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma under OSS.