



Student Attendance and Safe Arrival

Date Approved: 2023

Projected Review Date: 2027

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PURPOSE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to the implementation of their obligations for student attendance under the Education Act and the Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 123 guidelines for safe-arrival programs in elementary schools.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Safe arrival and regular attendance are essential to the academic success and well-being of all students.
- Safe-arrival programs are developed and implemented by schools with advice and cooperation from school councils, Home and School Associations (where they may exist), parents/guardians, volunteers, and other community members.
- It is the legal responsibility of students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure attendance and punctuality.
- Parents/guardians have responsibility for ensuring their child's safe arrival at school.
- The design of specific procedures will reflect local needs and the particular circumstances of the school and the community.
- All schools have procedures in place that are conducted in conjunction with daily school attendance-taking procedures and that aim to account for any student's unexplained failure to arrive at school through reasonable efforts to make timely contact with parents, guardians, or caregivers.

Safe-arrival programs are designed to be flexible, with a view to achieving overall effectiveness, efficiency, and economy.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- Safe arrival and attendance taking procedures are developed and implemented with advice from School Council, Home and School Associations (where they may exist), parents, and school staff.
- The roles and responsibilities of parents, guardians, caregivers, students, the school, school council, Home and School Associations (where they may exist), and others are identified, documented and communicated to families no later than the end of the first week of each school year.
- Digital and paper student enrolment and attendance records in accordance with Ministry of Education regulations and HWDSB administrative procedures are maintain and retained.
- Culturally responsive supports, intervention strategies and best practices to encourage regular attendance and punctuality by all students who are enrolled in a school or program operated by the Board are established and implemented.



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RESPONSIBILITY:

Director of Education
Members of Executive Council
School Principals

TERMINOLOGY:

Parent/guardian: May include parent(s), guardian(s) or any other caregiver legally recognized as acting in place of the parent.

Safe Arrival: Safe Arrival refers to procedures which are performed together with daily school attendance taking and which are designed to account for any student's unexplained failure to arrive at school or their course-related off-site learning location. By using a system of daily attendance-taking, schools can make reasonable efforts to contact parents, guardians, or caregivers.

If the school has not received notice of lateness or absenteeism, the school will try to contact the parent/guardian, or person(s) whose name has been given to the school as a person to contact in an emergency.

ACTION REQUIRED:

Schools are required to implement attendance taking and safe arrival procedures. Attendance taking and safe arrival procedures at the school level shall be reviewed annually by the principal, or when circumstances change that would affect the program, to confirm the effectiveness and to update student information. The school council and Home and School Association (where they exist) shall be invited to review the program.

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Intended Outcome	Assessment
Safe arrival and attendance taking procedures are developed and implemented with advice from School Council, Home and School Associations (where they may exist), parents, and school staff.	Principals engage with their school communities in the fall to review the policy and confirm any feedback with school superintendents.



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The roles and responsibilities of parents, guardians, caregivers, students, the school, school council, Home and School Associations (where they may exist), and others are identified and documented and communicated to families no later than the end of the first week of each school year.	A yearly review of randomly selected schools by school superintendents.
Digital and paper student enrolment and attendance records in accordance with Ministry of Education regulations and HWDSB administrative procedures are maintain and retained.	Regular review through student enrollment and student register procedures.
Culturally responsive supports, intervention strategies and best practices to encourage regular attendance and punctuality by all students who are enrolled in a school or program operated by the Board are established and implemented.	Annual review of attendance supports and intervention strategies by Executive Council.

REFERENCES:

Government Documents

Education Act:

Part X111: Safe Schools

Section 265: Duties of a Principal to register students, record attendance, collect information

Section 21: (1) Compulsory Attendance;
(2) Where attendance excused;
(5) Duty of parent to cause child to attend school

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 123 (Safe Arrivals)

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)