

YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



BOARD POLICY	
<i>Policy Section</i> Community	<i>Policy Number</i> 602
<i>Former Policy #:</i> 703	<i>Page</i> 1 of 5
<i>Original Approved Date:</i> December 21, 1999	<i>Subsequent Approval Dates:</i> April 6, 2010

POLICY TITLE: SAFE ARRIVAL/SAFE DEPARTURE - ELEMENTARY

SECTION A

1. PURPOSE

The York Catholic District School Board recognizes that monitoring pupil attendance is the mutual responsibility of the home and school. When a pupil is absent from school or late coming to school or returning home from school, communication between the home and school must be an automatic procedure. This is especially important in the case of an unexplained failure to arrive at school or return home on time. Principals are required to establish an effective program for managing and monitoring pupil attendance and to inform parents/guardians/caregivers and school staff of these procedures.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the York Catholic District School Board that each elementary school shall establish a safe arrival/safe departure program.

3. PARAMETERS

- 3.1 The safety of children is the collective responsibility of the parent/guardian/caregiver and school.
- 3.2 The responsibility for communicating pupil absences or lateness to the school on a timely basis is the parent(s), guardian(s) and/or caregiver(s).
- 3.3 School staff is responsible for communicating late departure to the parent, guardian or caregiver.
- 3.4 The safe arrival/safe departure procedures shall be communicated to the school community at a minimum of twice per school year (e.g. September and February) and during the JK/SK registration process.
- 3.5 The safe arrival/safe departure program should be delivered in a manner that complements other school and community safety programs and initiatives.
- 3.6 Parent volunteers may be used to support the safe arrival program.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Director of Education

- To ensure that a safe arrival/safe departure program exists in every elementary school of the Board.

4.2 Principal/designate

- To establish a safe arrival/safe departure program (see Appendix A);
- To inform the school community of the program a minimum of twice a year;
- To implement a procedure for monitoring and recording pupil attendance each morning and each afternoon of every school day, and during specialist/rotary classes;
- To maintain an effective message system that will receive calls outside of school hours;
- To establish a procedure for informing parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) when a child will be late leaving school/arriving home;
- To obtain from the parent(s)/guardian(s) at the beginning of the school year information on how and where they (including a caregiver) may be contacted by the school during the school day (Form S2 – Emergency Procedures);
- To ensure that current and accurate pupil information is kept at all times;
- To ensure that staff filling in for absent teachers are familiar with the school's safe arrival/safe departure procedures;
- To ensure that the parent/guardian/caregiver is contacted as soon as possible and informed of the child's absence when an unexplained absence is recorded;
- To ensure a log of outgoing calls is maintained;
- To notify the police of the child's absence at your discretion in situations where contact cannot be made with the parent, guardian or caregiver;
- To ensure that volunteers submit current Vulnerable Sector Screening references; and
- To ensure that the parent/guardian/caregiver of any regular bus riding pupil, who is unexpectedly late, is notified immediately.

4.3 Parent/Guardian

- To provide current and accurate 'emergency contact' information to the school;
- To inform the school when the child will be absent or late; and
- To provide a reason for the absence or lateness.

4.4 Classroom teacher

- To record attendance after the opening exercises of each morning and afternoon session; and
- To send attendance logs to the office immediately after attendance is taken.

4.5 Other Staff (including but not limited to teaching staff, custodians, educational assistants)

- To be vigilant in ensuring that all pupils are in their respective classroom during the times school is in session; and
- To report to the principal where a pupil is not attending his/her class as required.

4.6 Pupils

- To arrive at school on time; and
- To attend school/class each day, as required.

Safe Arrival/Safe Departure Program Checklist

➤ **The Safe Arrival/Safe Departure Program:**

- Review the details of the program prior to the start of each school year;
- Obtain current and accurate parent/guardian/caregiver contact information (S2);
- Establish an effective procedure for filing/recording of contact information;
- Review the accessibility of information by principal/designate (hard copy/binder);
- Review the message on school answering system;
- Ensure Synrevoice, where available, is ready; and
- Make available York Region Police contact numbers (local detachment).

➤ **Office plan for monitoring/managing attendance/lateness:**

Clarify the following:

- The roles of the principal, secretaries, volunteers;
- Procedure to record information from messaging system (parent calls);
- Procedure for receiving attendance reports from classroom (morning and afternoon);
- Procedure for contacting parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) with respect to unexplained absence;
- Process for maintaining/filing documentation related to attendance management:
 - ❖ notes explaining absence (see below)
 - ❖ daily reports
 - ❖ calling logs; and
- Where volunteers are used – training, guidelines, Vulnerable Sector Screening.

➤ **Communication of the safe arrival/safe departure program to school staff:**

- Expectations of staff in general;
- Morning and afternoon expectations for classroom teachers;
- Expectations of rotary/specialist teachers;
- Expectations when an 'unexplained absence' is noted;
- Expectations for late departure of a student; and
- Information to be made available to supply teachers.

➤ **Communication of the safe arrival/safe departure plan to parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s):**

- Safe arrival/safe departure program to be communicated twice a year;
- Safe arrival/safe departure program to be communicated during JK registration;
- Remind parent(s)/guardian(s) of responsibility to inform school in advance of lateness or absence and to provide a reason;
- Encourage the use of the messaging system to inform school of a child's absence/lateness; and
- Provide the phone number dedicated to Safe Arrival (where available).

➤ **Procedure for Responding to Unexplained Absence(s)**

- Prior to calling parent or caregiver - check with classroom teacher, other students, do an all-call, check both inside and outside school premises.
- Inform the parent/guardian/caregiver that the pupil is not present. Encourage their input into where pupil might be and check out these leads in cooperation with parent/guardian/caregiver.
- If pupil's whereabouts cannot be determined immediately contact York Region Police at the local detachment and ask to speak to the desk sergeant who will work with you.

➤ **Recording Reasons for Pupil Absence(s) Regulation 298 Sec. 23(2)**

- Clarify when an absence must be accompanied by a written note.
 - ❖ A typical practice is to ask for a written note from the parent/guardian after three (3) days of absence.
 - ❖ Medical notes should be requested with discretion, as there is often a cost associated with these notes.
 - ❖ A written note must be provided from a parent/guardian to 'temporarily excuse' a pupil from school (e.g. an extended vacation).
 - ❖ Pupils with prolonged absences (of fifteen or more days) must have medical documentation or an attendance counsellor's report on file.
- Retention of notes
 - ❖ Refer to Records Management for detailed information.
 - ❖ Notes for temporary absence, medical documentation and attendance counsellor's reports must be retained for four (4) years.
 - ❖ Retention of all other written notes is at the discretion of the school however best practice would be retention for two years (current year plus one).