1. Rationale

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) believes that everyone has the right to work and learn in a safe, supportive environment. Fundamental to this belief is the expectation that the system will have consistent attendance monitoring procedures to ensure student and staff safety. To monitor the presence/absence of its students, each elementary school has in place procedures for taking student attendance daily. Occasionally a student fails to arrive at school as expected. Safe-arrival programs are used to confirm the safety of a student in the case of such an unexplained absence.

2. Policy

It is the policy of the SCDSB that each elementary school in its jurisdiction follow the safe-arrival program. Each school's safe-arrival program is to reflect the local needs and particular circumstances of the school and its community. Such programs are to be developed and implemented by school administration in consultation with school councils, parents/guardians, and other community members.

3. Guidelines

A safe-arrival program is a system of procedures which are performed in conjunction with daily school attendance taking. Parents/guardians are responsible for their child(ren)'s safety. Elementary safe-arrival programs enhance a safe and supportive learning environment by ensuring that there is a reasonable effort to make timely contact with parents/guardians to confirm elementary student safety.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Parents/guardians, students, school staff and the school council play distinct roles in the implementation of a safe-arrival program. The overall effectiveness and efficiency of the program depends on the way in which each group works co-operatively to fulfill its responsibilities.

4.1 Parents/guardians are responsible for:
4.1.1 their child(ren)'s safety until they arrive at school/are picked up by the school bus and once they have been dismissed from school/are dropped off from the school bus;
4.1.2 reinforcing with their child(ren) that it is a family responsibility (not the school's responsibility) for the child(ren) to report on time to school or to the school bus stop;
4.1.3 submitting notification of participation/non-participation in the school's safe-arrival program;
4.1.4 communicating all planned student absences or lateness to the school on a timely basis prior to the start of the school day;

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4.1.5   providing the school with complete emergency contact information;

4.1.6   advising an individual that they are being designated as an emergency contact;

4.1.7   updating information to ensure that it remains current;

4.1.8   receiving telephone calls to confirm student safety in a courteous and respectful manner; and,

4.1.9   reviewing and responding to all school communications regarding safety of the student.

4.2   Students are responsible for:

4.2.1   attending school and arriving in good time for morning and afternoon classes (after designated lunch/nutrition break); and,

4.2.2   following school procedures with respect to attendance and reporting promptly to the designated location on arriving late at school.

4.3   Principals and school staff are responsible for:

4.3.1   conducting the safe-arrival program in conjunction with procedures for the accurate daily attendance-taking of all students;

4.3.2   communicating clearly and effectively the scope and features of the safe-arrival program to all students, parents/guardians and staff;

4.3.3   ensuring that training is arranged for school staff, and clearly indicating the steps to be taken when a family member cannot be reached;

4.3.4   ensuring that electronic forms for safe-arrival are completed by the deadline to ensure up to date information;

4.3.5   assuming responsibility for the steps to be taken, including immediate involvement of the police, when a child's safety cannot reasonably be confirmed through the safe-arrival emergency contacts; and,

4.3.6   protecting the privacy of confidential information.

4.4   The school council is responsible for:

4.4.1   acting as a link between the school and its community for feedback on the program;

4.4.2   publicizing and promoting safe-arrival as a school community program designed to assist parents/guardians with their responsibility for their own child(ren)'s safety; and,

4.4.3   supporting the school in its efforts to implement a safe-arrival program.

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5. Administrative Procedures

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

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