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1. Rationale

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) has 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. The board will establish school attendance areas in a manner which is fair for students and their families.

Attendance areas for each school are established to balance enrolment, achieve program continuity, allocation of staff and minimize transportation costs.

In addition to the necessary planning and management requirements related to attendance areas, the board recognizes that parents/guardians and students may wish to choose a school which lies outside the home school's attendance area. The board will consider a choice of schools within a framework that maintains an effective operation of the school system.

2. Policy

It is the policy of the SCDSB to establish school attendance areas that are viable and efficient, while promoting a strong sense of community and continuity.

3. Definitions

The definitions in this policy apply to the related administrative procedures:

- 3.1 Attendance area - the area enclosed within a school's regular program or French Immersion (FI) program boundary as designated by Board motion. 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 - 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 on a temporary basis, as designated by Board motion. A Board motion is not required when designating areas of new residential development where units have yet to be occupied.
- 3.3 Holding area - the area (often a new residential development) of students who are accommodated at a holding school as designated by Board motion. A Board motion is not required when designating areas of new residential development where units have yet to be occupied.

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- 3.4 Home school - 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 - a school that students attend that resides outside the attendance area (including any attached holding area [s]) of a given school.
- 3.6 Out-of-attendance-area student - a student who attends a school other than their home school, not including a student enrolled in a district or county program, or a student in a holding school due to extenuating circumstances in the student's home school.
- 3.7 School Capacity - the number of pupil places available for students within the school, considering capacities established by the Ministry of Education's On The Ground (OTG) Rated Capacity, washroom capacity, Reasonable Land Use Capacity (septic limits), and unique site restrictions. The OTG capacity means the number of pupil places assigned by the Ministry of Education and does not include portables.
- 3.8 Non-resident student - a student who resides in the jurisdiction of another school board and may be admitted to a SCDSB school in accordance with the *Education Act* s.35(1), subject to the approval of the superintendent of education where there is available space.

4. Guidelines

4.1 School Attendance Areas

- 4.1.1 Each school attendance area will be approved by the Board of Trustees. It is expected that students will attend the elementary or secondary school in the attendance area in which they reside, or a school to which they have been admitted in a defined special education program, or a school in which they are accommodated in a holding school as designated by the board, or a specialized program at a school within a specified secondary school's family of schools.
- 4.1.2 In determining attendance areas the Board of Trustees will consider among other factors:
- 4.1.2.1 efficiencies in bus and walk zones;
 - 4.1.2.2 capacities of schools and sites;
 - 4.1.2.3 demographics;
 - 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;

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- 4.1.2.6 the need to accommodate students in interim placements due to extenuating circumstances in the student's home school; and,
- 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, change attendance areas.
- 4.1.4 Facility Services staff will undertake a review of enrolments and attendance areas annually and recommend schools for attendance area reviews as part of the Accommodation Plan in the fall/winter of each year.
- 4.1.5 A minimum of one public meeting and/or online consultation will be organized to inform parents/guardians, and solicit feedback on proposed changes to attendance areas prior to consideration by the Board of Trustees.
- 4.1.6 In normal circumstances, a report will be presented to the Board of Trustees by March 31 for approval of attendance area changes for the elementary panel for September and for the secondary panel, excluding incoming Grade 9 students for the subsequent September.
 - 4.1.6.1 Changes in attendance areas resulting from a pupil accommodation review will be implemented based on the timelines established by the board.
 - 4.1.6.2 Changes in and implementation of holding schools and holding attendance areas are subject to approval by the Board of Trustees. Board approval is not required when designating areas of new residential development where units have yet to be occupied.
 - 4.1.6.3 The Superintendent of Business and Facility Services, on the recommendation of Facility Services Department staff and following consultation with the Director of Education, may make a minor change to an attendance area at the request of a family (or families). Such a change must be agreed to by all families with students who would be affected at the time by the change. The Board of Trustees is to be informed of the change in boundary.
- 4.1.7 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 only be provided to those students who choose to remain in their current home school for Grade 8 and are currently transported to and from this school.
- 4.1.8 Despite any other provisions in this policy or any other policy of the board, or in unusual and extreme circumstances such as issues with the safe use of a facility, the Superintendent of Business and Facility Services, in consultation with the Director of Education, may direct students within a school attendance area to attend an alternate school and forthwith advise the public and the Board of Trustees on the decision and the reasons thereof.

4.2 Out-of-Attendance Area

- 4.2.1 Students may be permitted to attend any out-of-attendance-area school when admittance will not result in more staff than otherwise would be allocated and/or jeopardize the program in the sending or receiving school.
- 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 section 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. Normally, notification will be given prior to March 31 for changes to be in effect 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, 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.
- 4.2.7 Schools may be identified and recommended to be closed to out-of-attendance area students through the Accommodation Plan due to servicing restraints and/or as a result of changes to attendance areas.

4.3 Establishment of New School Attendance Area

- 4.3.1 Attendance areas for new schools will be established by the board, having regard for parameters set out in section 4.2.1.
- 4.3.2 New elementary school attendance areas will be approved by the Board of Trustees no later than February for opening the following September.

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- 4.3.3 New secondary schools will be approved by the Board of Trustees no later than October for opening the following September.
- 4.3.4. All students residing within the approved attendance area will be expected to attend the new school.
- 4.3.5 New schools will be closed to out-of-attendance-area students for a minimum of one year following the opening of the school.

4.4 Dispute Resolution

- 4.4.1 All attendance area disputes will first be received by the SCDSB Planning Department for resolution or redirection.
- 4.4.2 Disputes outside the mandate and expertise of the Planning Department will be directed to the appropriate department or entity.
- 4.4.3 The Superintendent of Business and Facility Services will receive the dispute for resolution and communicate the decision to the parent/guardian/student involved.

5. Administrative Procedures

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

**ADOPTED MAY 8, 1991
REVISED APRIL 26, 1995
REVISED OCTOBER 22, 2003
REVISED SEPTEMBER 24, 2008
REVISED JANUARY 23, 2013
REVISED MAY 24, 2017
REVISED OCTOBER 26, 2022**