

1. Rationale

Section 228 of the *Education Act* outlines various conditions under which trustees vacate their seats. Under normal circumstances, when trustees are absent without authorization from three consecutive meetings, they are deemed to have vacated their seats.

In May of 2017, section 228 (2.1) of the *Education Act* was amended and also states that this circumstance “does not apply to vacate the office of a member of a board who is absent for 20 consecutive weeks or less if the absence is a result of the member’s pregnancy, the birth of the member’s child or the adoption of a child by the member.”

2. Policy

It is the policy of the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) that all trustees of the board shall have the right to take a leave of absence for 20 consecutive weeks or less for the trustee’s pregnancy, birth of the trustee’s child, or adoption of the trustee’s child in accordance with the *Education Act*.

3. Guidelines

- 3.1 Should any trustee foresee that they might need to take a pregnancy and/or parental leave, the trustee will provide the Chairperson of the Board with written notice as soon as reasonably possible. A Trustee Pregnancy and Parental Leave Form is available for trustees to complete. Where the trustee needing to take a pregnancy and/or parental leave is the Chairperson of the Board, the Chairperson will provide the Director of Education with written notice as soon as reasonably possible.
- 3.2 The trustee will indicate the purpose of the leave: trustee pregnancy, birth of member’s child, or the adoption of a child by the member.
- 3.3 The trustee will provide an expected date the leave is to begin and conclude, provided the leave does not exceed 20 consecutive weeks and begins no later than the date of a third consecutively missed regular Board meeting.
- 3.4 The trustee will provide relevant medical documentation (this could include medical certificates confirming pregnancy, proof of birth date, or adoption agency documents).
- 3.5 Trustee honoraria for base and enrolment amounts continue to be provided during the leave period.

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- 3.6 Relevant trustee expenses will continue to be reimbursed as outlined in SCDSB policies and administrative procedures memorandums by applying APM A2502 – Expense Claims.
- 3.7 The trustee will continue to receive board-related material and have access to information during the leave.
- 3.8 The trustee will also consider the following:
- 3.8.1 whether or not they will continue to participate in board/committee meetings either in person or via electronic means; and,
 - 3.8.2 how they intend to notify their community about their leave and how the community will be supported during the leave.
- 3.9 Where the trustee whose approved pregnancy and/or parental leave is the Chairperson of the Board, the Vice-chairperson will temporarily assume the Chairperson's duties. Where the trustee whose approved pregnancy and/or parental leave is the Vice-chairperson of the Board, another trustee will temporarily assume the position of Vice-chairperson. The regular electoral process for the Vice-chairperson position will be followed.
- 3.10 Where the trustee whose approved pregnancy and/or parental leave is on one or more board committees, their alternate on the committee will be assigned to those duties. Where no committee alternate is available, the Chairperson of the Board, in consultation with other members of the Board, may decide to assign one or more trustees to cover the outgoing trustee's duties on the committee.
- 3.11 Once a trustee has been granted and has exhausted their 20 weeks of pregnancy and/or parental leave, they will be subject to the regular provisions of section 228 of the *Education Act*.

4. Administrative procedures

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

**ADOPTED APRIL 24, 2019
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