School Catchment Areas

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines that establish school catchment areas and to outline attendance provisions for neighbourhood schools, district-wide programs/schools, and the provisions for non-catchment attendance.

Policy

The Board of Education is committed to long-range planning to establish school catchment areas that will minimize the need for boundary changes. When establishing school catchment areas and school locations, primary consideration is given to:

- minimizing walking distances and safety hazards.
- using natural barriers and arterial roads for boundaries where possible.
- the student capacities of each school and its neighbouring school with a view to minimizing the use of portables.

The Board also recognizes certain conditions may require a change to a school catchment area, which could include:

- the opening of a new school or closing of an existing school.
- an overcrowded condition in an existing school.
- the development of new residential areas.
- a decline in population within an established area.
- a change in the school grade configuration model used by the District.
- establishment of a choice program or school.
The Board of Education believes that the educational interests of most students can be served by attendance at the student’s catchment school.

However, the Board recognizes and provides for certain exceptions such as:

- a student who has been accepted into a district-wide program and/or school.
- a newly arrived student who registers after June 15th and whose catchment school does not have the capacity, necessary resources, or educational program to meet the student’s needs (as determined by the Superintendent of Schools or designate).
- a student who has applied and been accepted for, non-catchment attendance.

Note: Students of parent(s)/guardian(s) who initiate non-catchment and district program placements are not eligible for transportation services or allowance.

Procedure

**Section I: Registration Priorities**

Section 74.1 of the School Act establishes priorities for enrolment in public schools. The following priorities are in effect to determine the acceptance of students in a particular school or program.

1. Catchment area child(ren) who attended the school during the previous school year.
2. Non-catchment area child(ren) who attended previous year.
3. Siblings of continuing students.
4. Feeder school students.
5. Other catchment area students.
7. Non-catchment/non-district students – did not previously attend school in our district.

Provided application deadlines and other requirements have been met, priorities within the above categories will be by date and time of receipt of application.

Section II – Registration Dates

A. Neighbourhood Schools

If space and facilities are determined to be available, the following registration periods will apply.

1. First Registration Period (Kindergarten only)
   Registration for Kindergarten students will commence the third Monday of January and continue to June 15th. Seats will be assigned based on the priorities listed in Section I.

2. Second Registration Period
   Registration applications will be received at the school between February 1st and June 15th. Seats will be assigned based on the priorities outlined in Section 1 above.

3. Third Registration Period
   Applications will be received between June 15th and the end of the first week of the following school year. If space remains after assigning seats to those applications received during the second registration period, seats will be assigned based on the priorities outlined in Section 1 above.

4. Fourth Registration Period
   Applications received after the end of the first week of the school year will be accepted as they are received if space and facilities are available.
B. District Programs and Schools

Programs/schools that are established by the Board as district programs and/or schools, (e.g. International Baccalaureate (IB), Traditional Schools, Fine Arts Schools, Career Technical Centre, etc.), shall have the entire district as their catchment area.

1. First Registration Period (Kindergarten only)
   Registration for Kindergarten students will commence on the third Monday of January. Seats will be assigned on the fourth Monday of January based on the priorities listed in Section I.

2. Second Registration Period
   Up until March 1st, siblings and feeder school students, if applicable, have priority (e.g. King, Auguston, South Poplar Traditional Elementary students moving on to Abbotsford Traditional Middle School), followed by in district applications, then out of district applications.

3. Third Registration Period
   After March 1st students will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, based on available space.

Note: The French Immersion schools have defined catchment areas for each individual school.

Section III: Placement of Newly Arrived Students (Enrolment Subsequent to June 15th)

In some circumstances, it may not be possible to accommodate newly arrived students in the catchment school. It is the intent to place newly arrived students (those who enrol after June 15th) using a process that treats all students equitably, and minimizes disruption to both the family and the school.

The following provisions shall apply:

1. Students who register after June 15th shall be assigned a district placement priority based on the time and date the student presents him/herself for registration and the school placement priorities. These students, however, cannot be guaranteed a spot in their catchment school.

2. Such new registrants will be admitted to their catchment school in priority order, by grade. Any student, who cannot be
accommodated will be referred to the District office for alternate placement. It is the intent to have elementary students placed within the first week of school opening.

3. After October 1, when classes have been established for the school year and additional students move into the school’s catchment area who cannot be accommodated in the school for the remainder of that year due to capacity limitations, the District office will determine an appropriate placement in another school. In such cases where this school is beyond walk limits, bussing will be arranged or a transportation allowance will be paid by the school district.

4. A student who is placed in a school other than their catchment school, may return to his/her catchment school as soon as circumstances (i.e., school capacity, program requirements) allow.

Section IV: Non-catchment Requests

The Board of Education recognizes that under certain circumstances, it may be desirable for a student to attend a school outside their designated catchment area, or outside their designated school district. Form 9.150-2 (Non-Catchment Request) or Form 9.150-3 (Out-of-District Request) must be filled out and submitted.

Appendices

9.150-1 Registration of New Students - Definitions  
9.150-2 Non-Catchment Request Form  
9.150-3 Out-of-District Request Form