DDSB Ignite Learning

PROCEDURE

School Operations (SCO)

PR SCO 99-10

Title: **Resident Student Out-of-Area Enrolment**
Adopted: February 3, 1997
Effective: February 3, 1997
Amended/Reviewed: November 17, 2026

This procedure must be interpreted, applied, and implemented in ways that uphold Indigenous and human rights and responsibilities, promote accessibility, and prevent and address (and do not reinforce) discrimination/discriminatory barriers.

1.0 RATIONALE

1.1 The Durham District School Board establishes attendance boundaries for schools to ensure equitable access to educational programs and effective management of school accommodation.

1.2 Students are expected to attend the school designated for their residential address.

1.3 While students are assigned to a designated home school, caregivers may request enrolment at an alternate Durham District School Board (DDSB) school. Subject to the criteria in this procedure and where circumstances permit, the Board may approve placement at a school outside the student's home attendance area.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 Home School: the school designated for student attendance by the Durham District School Board based on the student's residential address and permanent school boundary.

2.2 Out-of-Area Application: A request by a caregiver to attend a DDSB school other than their designated home school.

2.3 Receiving School: The school to which an out-of-area Application is submitted

2.4 Projected Utilization Rate: The percentage of a school's on-the-ground capacity that is occupied by projected enrolment, as determined through Board enrolment projections and accommodation planning processes. For secondary schools, limits based on programming offerings at the school may be considered when determining projected utilization.

2.5 Open School: A school identified by the board as being available for consideration of out-of-area applications.

2.6 Closed School: A school identified by the board as not available for consideration of out-of-area applications due to enrolment, accommodation, or utilization pressures.

2.7 Caregiver: A parent, guardian, or other person who has lawful responsibility for the care of a student.

2.8 Appeals Review Committee: A committee of independent Family of Schools System Leads who will review the appeal and render a final decision.

2.9 Partner School: An existing school identified by DDSB to temporarily accommodate students residing within a growth boundary area until a new community school becomes operational.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

The DDSB Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the development and implementation of new and revised Board policies and procedures.

The Superintendent responsible for Student Services and School Operations is responsible for the oversight and implementation of this procedure.

Family of Schools System Leads in consultation with school administrators, Planning Services staff, and other appropriate Board staff are responsible for administering this procedure.

4.0 APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This procedure applies to resident DDSB students seeking enrolment in a school other than their designated home school.

This procedure applies to discretionary out-of-area requests, historical and future, for both elementary and secondary schools and does not limit any attendance rights that may arise under the Education Act or other applicable legislation.

This procedure does not apply to:

- students placed through Inclusive Student Services' processes;
- students placed through Positive School Climates' processes;
- students attending programs for which separate application, admission, or placement procedures have been established by the Board;
- non-resident students.

5.0 PROCEDURES

5.1 General Principles

5.1.1 Students are expected to attend their designated Home School.

5.1.2 Caregivers, or adult students where applicable, may request enrolment at another Durham District School Board (DDSB) school through the Out-of-Area Application process.

5.1.3 Transportation to and from the receiving school is the responsibility of the caregiver and will not be provided by the Board.

5.1.4 Approval of an Out-of-Area Application is subject to available space, enrolment projections, staffing considerations, facility capacity, section 5.3.6, and Board enrolment planning requirements.

5.2 Annual School Status

5.2.1 The Board will annually review enrolment projections, enrolment pressures, and utilization rates to determine the status of schools for Out-of-Area Applications. Students who are already attending a school as out-of-area students will be included as part of the school complement when calculating utilization rates annually.

5.2.2 Schools will be identified as either Open or Closed to Out-of-Area Applications.

5.2.3 Schools with a projected utilization rate at or above capacity, as determined by the DDSB Planning department and in conjunction with DSTS Transportation Policy, will be designated Closed by default.

5.2.4 The Board reserves the right to designate a school as Closed where enrolment pressures, enrolment concerns, staffing considerations, program requirements, recent boundary review impacts, or capital plans may affect the school's ability to register additional students.

5.2.5 The annual Open and Closed School List will be communicated directly to Principals and made available to caregivers as part of the Out-of-Area Application process.

5.3 Application Process

5.3.1 Caregivers or adult students, as applicable, will submit an online Out-of-Area Application using the Board’s designated application process. To access the online application form, students must first register at their designated Home School.

5.3.2 Applications must be submitted within the timelines established annually by the Board.

5.3.3 Students must register at, or remain registered at, their designated Home School until a decision on the Out-of-Area Application has been communicated.

5.3.4 Submission of an Out-of-Area Application does not guarantee approval.

5.3.5 Subject to section 5.4.3, applications for schools identified as Closed will not be considered.

5.3.6 Students graduating from Grade 8 will be transferred by default to their designated residential Home School for Grade 9 unless an Out-of-Area

Application has been approved. Out-of-Area Applications for Grade 9 students may only be considered in exceptional circumstances and require approval by the Family of Schools System Lead.

5.3.7 For any students who are in an approved out-of-area placement in Grade 6, schools will discuss with families the available option to return to their home school for grades 7 & 8 so that they are able to transition to their home high school for grade 9 with their home elementary school cohort.

5.3.8 Out-of-Area Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis where a student wishes to remain at a partner school after the opening of a new school.

5.4 Review and Approval Process

5.4.1 The Family of Schools System Lead will review Out-of-Area Applications in consultation with the receiving school Principal where appropriate, the sending school Principal where appropriate, and other appropriate Board staff.

5.4.2 Out-of-Area Applications may be approved when:

a) the requested school has been identified as Open;
b) space is available in the requested grade;
c) approval will not require the creation of additional classes;
d) approval will not require additional staffing;
e) approval will not negatively affect program delivery; and
f) approval aligns with Board accommodation and enrolment management strategies.

5.4.3 When reviewing an application where space is limited, or when considering an exception request for a Closed school, the Board may consider several factors, including, but not limited to:

a) approved *Ontario Human Rights Code*-related needs and circumstances, and accessibility accommodations;
b) legal considerations; and
c) whether the applicant has a sibling currently attending the requested school (note: sibling attendance does not guarantee approval).

5.4.4 The Family of Schools System Lead may approve or deny an Out-of-Area Application.

5.5 Notification of Decision

5.5.1 Caregivers or adult students will be notified of the decision through the Board's designated application process.

5.5.2 Approved students may begin attending the receiving school only after approval has been granted and registration requirements have been completed.

5.6 Duration of Approval and Ongoing Conditions

5.6.1 All out of area requests are approved for one school year. Once an Out-of-Area Application is approved, it is with the intent that the student may remain at the receiving school through its highest grade without the need to submit an annual renewal application, provided that caregivers continue to arrange transportation, the school utilization rate continues to allow for ongoing attendance, and the student maintains regular and punctual attendance. Where significant attendance or punctuality barriers arise due to travel distance, the receiving Principal, in consultation with the Family of Schools System Lead and caregivers, may review the placement and require the student to return to their designated Home School at a natural transition point.

5.6.2 Where local enrolment pressures or school accommodation constraints necessitate, the Family of Schools System Lead, in consultation with the receiving Principal, may review previously approved Out-of-Area Applications. Students who are attending an out of area school are not required to submit a renewal application; instead, the Board will conduct an internal review of school utilization and notify caregivers in writing by April 30 each year whether the placement can be extended for the following school year.

5.7 Appeals

5.7.1 The Appeals Review Committee will consider caregiver or adult student appeals that are received within five (5) business days of the original decision being communicated. Caregivers or adult students will have an opportunity to share any additional information and context beyond what was already provided.

5.7.2 Appeals will be reviewed by the Appeals Review Committee.

5.7.3 The Appeals Review Committee may consult with school administration, Planning Services staff, and the Family of Schools Superintendent of Education when reviewing the appeal.

5.7.4 The decision of the Appeals Review Committee is final.

6.0 APPENDICES

N/A

7.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- Education Act, R.S.O. 1990
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
- Anti-Racism Act, 2017
- Ministry of Education Policy and Program Memoranda
- DDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan
- DDSB Indigenous Education Policy
- DDSB Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy
- DSTS Transportation Policy