

Policy 18 – School Catchment Areas

The Board will establish school catchment areas and to outline attendance provisions for neighbourhood schools, district-wide programs/schools, and the provisions for non-catchment attendance.

The Board 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:

1. minimizing walking distances and safety hazards;
2. using natural barriers and arterial roads for boundaries where possible;
3. 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:

1. the opening of a new school or closing of an existing school;
2. an overcrowded condition in an existing school;
3. the development of new residential areas;
4. a decline in population within an established area;
5. a change in the school grade configuration model used by the District;
6. establishment of a choice program or school.

The Board 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:

1. a student who has been accepted into a district-wide program and/or school;
2. 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);
3. 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.

Board Policy

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1. 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.

- 1.1 Catchment area child(ren) who attended the school during the previous school year.
- 1.2 Non-catchment area child(ren) who attended previous year.
- 1.3 Siblings of continuing students.
- 1.4 Feeder school students.
- 1.5 Other catchment area students.
- 1.6 Non-catchment/in-district students.
- 1.7 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.

2. Registration Dates

2.1 Neighbourhood Schools

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

2.1.1 First Registration Period (Kindergarten only)

Registration for Kindergarten students will commence the third Monday of January and continue to June 15th. Starting on April 1st, seats will be assigned based on the priorities listed under Registration Priorities above while maintaining some seats for late in-catchment registrants.

2.1.1 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 under Registration Priorities.

2.1.3 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 under Registration Priorities.

2.1.4 Fourth Registration Period

Applications initiated after the start of the school year will be accepted if space and facilities are available. Applications for transfer must be administered by the principal of the school in which the student is currently registered.

2.2 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, Integrated Arts Schools), shall have the entire district as their catchment area.

2.2.1 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 under Registration Priorities.

2.2.2 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. Siblings must attend the same school to receive priority access to available spaces.

2.3.3 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.

3. **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:

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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.

3.3 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.

3.4 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.

4. 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.