Waterloo Catholic District School Board
Quality, Inclusive, Faith Based Education

Administrative Procedures Memorandum
APF004

Addition & Removal of Portable Classrooms

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Memo To: All Staff

From: Director of Education

ACCESSIBILITY:
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PURPOSE:

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board recognizes that portable classrooms are a viable method of providing pupil accommodation in response to fluctuating enrolment and as short term accommodation pending the construction of permanent classroom spaces. The Waterloo Catholic District School Board is committed to the use and maintenance of portable classrooms as safe, comfortable classroom environments to support student learning.

The purpose of this administrative procedure memorandum is:

- to ensure a consistent process is followed when determining the need for portable classrooms;
- to outline the factors that should be considered when locating portables on a school site; and
- to provide Administrators with direction on the usage of portable classrooms.

REFERENCES:

- Building Code Act, 1992, S.O. 1992, c. 23 and associated regulations as amended
- Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, S.O. 1997, c. 4 and associated regulations as amended
- Local area municipality zoning by-laws
- Long Term Accommodation Plan

FORMS:

- N/A

REPORTS:

- N/A

APPENDICES:

- N/A

COMMENTS AND GUIDELINES:

Portable classrooms are intended to provide short term pupil accommodation where enrolment exceeds the On the Ground (OTG) capacity of the school. OTG capacity is determined by formulae established by the Ministry of Education and may change over time.

How long a portable classroom may be required will vary depending upon enrolment trends, residential growth rates, the availability of funding for permanent classroom construction, programming offered, accommodation / boundary review processes, and the specific needs of the school. In specific circumstances, portables may be added to a site in advance of need if the need is imminent.

Portable classrooms will not be used for any of the following dedicated purposes, unless it can be demonstrated that there are exceptional circumstances, and only with the approval of the Superintendent of Learning and the Executive Superintendent of Corporate Services:

- Special Education
- Core French instruction
- Music instruction
- Teacher planning time
- Meeting space
- Staff work space
- Storage

Portable classrooms used for any of these reasons will be re-evaluated on an annual basis to determine if the need for the portable classroom remains.

Approving the Addition or Removal of Portable Classrooms

Between January and June, or earlier as need be, Planning Department staff and the Executive Superintendent of Corporate Services, will meet to discuss enrolment projections and to determine how many portables should be ordered.

The following processes and timing will be followed to identify portable need and communicate to affected stakeholders:

Elementary Schools

1. In the spring, Administrators will submit enrolment and class organization information to Human Resource Services which is shared with the Planning Department. Class organization information will be compared to the number of available classrooms and existing portables at each school to determine the number of portable additions / removals required for the following school year.
2. The Planning Department will circulate portable additions / removal recommendations to Executive Council for input prior to distribution to Administrators and other affected departments.
3. In late May / early June, the Planning Department will confirm portable allocations with each affected Administrator. The additions / removals will also be shared with Facility Services, Information Technology Services, and Supply and Administrative Services.
4. Facility Services will coordinate the additions / removals and provide Administrators with specific instructions related to the portable moves at their school.

Secondary Schools

1. A variety of methods may be used by the Planning Department to determine secondary portable classroom requirements:

a. The number of portables vs. enrolment from the previous year compared against the number of portables vs. projected enrolment for the upcoming year.

b. The projected enrolment of the school divided by the pupil-to-teacher ratio to provide an estimate of the number of classrooms required.

c. A mid-year assessment of classroom usage is conducted by the Planning Department, when needed.

2. The Planning Department will circulate portable additions / removal recommendations to Executive Council for input prior to distribution to Administrators and other affected departments.
3. In late May / early June, the Planning Department will confirm portable allocations with each affected Administrator. The additions / removals will also be shared with Facility Services, Information Technology Services, and Supply and Administrative Services.
4. Facility Services will coordinate the additions / removals and provide Administrators with specific instructions related to the portable moves at their school.

Changes to Portable Needs After September 1st

- Where portable classrooms must be added after the beginning of the school year, the Superintendent of Human Resource Services will notify the Planning Department of the addition / removal of classes that result in changes to the number of classrooms required. The Planning Department will notify Facility Services immediately.
- The time required to provide a portable classroom during the school year is dependent upon the availability of a portable classroom unit, municipal approvals, and the scheduling of contractors to move the portable to the site and make it ready for occupancy. This process can vary from a few weeks to several months.
- Schools will be required to organize classes using available alternative space within the existing school (e.g. library, gymnasium) while they wait for a portable to arrive.

Placement of Portable Classrooms

Prior to the end of June, and as needed, Facility Services will coordinate portable placement with the following:

- Administrators of the affected schools,
- Information Technology Services,
- Supply and Administrative Services, and
- the respective contractors involved.

Consideration shall be given to the following when Facility Services makes decisions related to the placement of portable classrooms:

Building & Site Considerations

1. Immovable existing structures preventing access (i.e., garbage receptacles, electrical transformers, mature trees, property fences, other buildings, etc.).
2. Underground utilities or easements (i.e., gas main, municipal storm sewer).
3. Significant grade changes on site (i.e., hills, swales).
4. Building Code requirements that include fire separation from the main building or other portable classrooms.
5. Zoning requirements such as required number of parking spaces, set-backs from front, rear and side yard property lines.
6. Outdoor program space (i.e., play structures, outdoor classrooms, etc.).

7. Agreements with local municipalities for the use of sports fields.
8. Monument gardens and trees.
9. Areas designated for snow storage.
10. Future development of the site (i.e., addition, future portables, etc.).

Financial Considerations

1. School renovations required for Building Code or Fire Code compliance (i.e., available washroom capacity).
2. Electrical capacity of the school.
3. Fire access routes and hydrants, fire rating of the school's or other portables' exterior walls and windows, etc.
4. Site grade modifications to accept portable(s) (i.e., retaining walls, storm water drain installation and connections to remove standing water, etc.).
5. Need for additional utility poles.
6. Removal of leased portables before removing owned portables to minimize lease costs.
7. Site costs for portable installation including moving costs, hydro connections, paving, etc.

Safety Considerations

1. Protecting access routes for emergency vehicles (i.e., Fire Route)
2. Maintain sight lines for outdoor supervision.
3. Provision of additional outdoor lighting.
4. Short, direct travel path to a fobbed, exterior door of the main building.
5. Travel routes that avoid passing through or near parking areas or access driveways or require the installation of guards or barriers.
6. Provision of a hard surface walkway between the portable and the main building to minimize the risk of slips and falls and to prevent mud, snow and water from being tracked into the portable and school.

Portable Classroom Usage

Administrators shall consider several factors when deciding class allocations in portable classrooms, including:

1. Staff or students who may require regular access to in-school resources (i.e., barrier free washrooms, etc.).
2. Need for ramping, hard surface walkways or barrier free exterior entrances if placing staff or students with mobility challenges in a portable classroom.
3. Student needs / program considerations.
4. Time and distance for travelling back and forth to the main building.
5. Student age and maturity.
6. Program requirements for sinks, specialized equipment, etc.
7. Supervision of students.
8. Access to washrooms within the school.
9. Timely access to support staff.

Wherever possible, students and staff with mobility challenges should be accommodated within the school building to avoid the need for portable modifications. If this is not possible, the Administrator should contact Facility Services and submit an APF003 – Proposed Alterations and Renovations to Schools Form

Furniture and Equipment for Portables

Portable classrooms, including furniture and equipment, are a system resource.

- Where new portables are added, the Administrator or Custodian is responsible for completing a work order to request furniture. Facility Services will use existing furniture where possible or coordinate with Supply and Administrative Services to order new furniture.
- For portable removals, the Custodian is responsible for emptying the portable and completing a work order to return the furniture to Facility Services so it can be redeployed.

Facility Services, Supply and Administrative Services and IT Services will supply portables with essential equipment (i.e., BrightLink, curtains, etc.).