



Safe Arrivals / Safe Departure Program

Date of Issue: June 14, 2000
Reviewed/Revised: August 2002, September 2015, February 2020
Memo To: Administrators, Executive Council
From: Director of Education

ACCESSIBILITY:

To request this file in large print, please email aoda@wcdsb.ca or call (519) 578-3660.

PURPOSE:

To establish a program that parents and schools can use to account for any pupil's unexplained failure to arrive at school or return home.

REFERENCES:

- [Policy and Program Memorandum 123](#)
- [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)

FORMS:

- N/A.

REPORTS:

- N/A.

APPENDICES:

- N/A.

COMMENTS AND GUIDELINES:

Guidance on the Design of Safe Arrival/Departure Programs

It is suggested that safe arrival/departure programs be designed to reflect the following characteristics with respect to program delivery and information and communications. The following characteristics are intended to provide guidance in the design of any safe-arrival/departure programs that are developed.

Program Delivery

1. The program should be delivered in a manner that complements other school and community safety programs and initiatives.



2. The roles and responsibilities of parents, pupils, the school, school councils, volunteers, and others should be clearly identified, documented, and broadly communicated to all those who have an interest in safe arrival/departure programs.
3. The roles and responsibilities of parents and guardians, at a minimum, could be defined as involving the following:
 - Parents and guardians are responsible for their children's safety. Safe arrival/departure programs are a mechanism that parents and schools can use to account for any pupil's unexplained failure to arrive at school or return home
 - Parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for communicating planned pupil absences or lateness to the school on a timely basis. Their reports could be reconciled with information obtained through classroom attendance-taking procedures to identify any unexplained absences that require prompt follow-up contacts
4. Programs should take into account both normal, recurring circumstances and unusual events and conditions. For example, regular procedures could be modified on days when pupils are likely to arrive late/leave early because of inclement weather or bus cancellations.
5. Programs should take into account that a language other than the language of instruction may be used in the absent pupil's home.
6. Programs should specify the steps that are to be taken when a follow-up contact cannot reasonably be made.
7. Individuals involved in delivering the safe arrival/departure program should receive appropriate training and supervision.
8. Programs should be reviewed periodically to confirm their effectiveness.
9. Parents and volunteers can make a tremendous contribution to the delivery of these programs. Efforts should be made to develop this potential and to enlist the aid of parents and volunteers to help reduce demands on the time of school administrative staff.

Information and Communications

- Information about the scope and features of the school's safe arrival program, and about the roles and responsibilities of all interested parties should be communicated clearly and effectively by the principal to school staff, parents, guardians, caregivers, pupils, school councils, and all volunteers and others in the community who have an interest in the matter.
- There should be a reliable method for parents, guardians, and caregivers to communicate planned pupil absences or lateness to the school on a timely basis, particularly outside school hours. For example, a voice-messaging system and, if appropriate, a telephone device for the deaf (TTY/TDD) may have to be installed.
- A reliable system of documenting key information could be developed and maintained. Subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, key information could include:
 - A log of calls from parents or others who report absences or lateness
 - Names and current telephone numbers, in order of priority, of parents, guardians, caregivers, or other individuals to be notified in case of an unexplained pupil absence
 - Parental consent for school staff and/or volunteers to make these contacts, in accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
 - A log of actions taken by school staff in accordance with the provisions of the safe-arrival/departure program

Procedures

1. Teachers will take attendance upon arrival of students for morning and afternoon classes.
2. Attendance logs are sent to the office, where a designate checks the log against the day's list of calls from parents.
3. Parents of students who are absent and from whom no call has been recorded are called by a designate as soon as possible. If no one can be reached the police may have to be contacted.

4. The principal shall ensure that staff filling in for absent teachers are familiar with school's safe arrival/departure procedures.
5. The principal will communicate the school's safe arrival/departure procedures to the parent community at a minimum of twice per school year (e.g., September and February) and as part of the JK/SK registration process.
6. Principals are to ensure that written notification is included in school newsletters in September and again when inclement weather procedures are communicated with parents on what steps a pupil is to take when he/she misses a bus home. For example, schools do include comments such as, "If a child misses the bus after school please remind him/her to stay at school and report to the main office. The school secretary, principal or vice-principal will call the parent and if the parent cannot pick the child up, the school will ask permission for a staff member to drive the child home." It is understood that, particularly with the elementary schools, there can be several different approaches given the unique transportation needs at each school. The minimum expectation is that Principals will communicate to parents, in writing, the procedures used with respect to students who miss the bus home.