



Near North
District School Board

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE

BEAR PROTOCOL

Effective Date: December 2008

Responsibility: Superintendent

Revised Date: November 16, 2021

of Program and Schools

While this is a “bear” protocol, it is understood that it applies to any wildlife deemed to be potentially dangerous to students and staff. This would include cougars, rattlesnakes, etc.

The following procedures have been put into place at Near North District School Board to ensure the safety and protection of all staff and students from the potentially precarious situation that exists with bears and humans.

As a precautionary measure, during the months of September, October, April, May, and June when bear sightings are highest, all staff who are responsible for outdoor supervision of pupils during the school day are required to have a whistle with them at all times.

A. Bear Sightings in the School’s Vicinity:

If the authorities, a parent or community member notifies the school that a bear has been sighted in the vicinity of the school:

- The secretary will phone the proper authorities to get accurate information and advice regarding the bear sighting. Call 1-866-514-2327 or North Bay MNR District Bear Wise Program Office: 475-5543 (March – December, during business hours – 8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.). In case of immediate emergency, call 911.
- The principal, upon verification of a bear sighting from the proper authorities or with a clear understanding that the animal is in the vicinity, will inform all students and staff about the bear sighting.

To provide opportunities that empower all learners to develop their potential by providing diverse pathways which lead students to become model citizens who achieve life goals and contribute to the betterment of society.

B. Bear Sightings on School Property

I. DURING THE SCHOOL DAY:

- If a bear is sighted immediately outside of the fenced area that borders the school property or within the school grounds while students are outside (either during recess, lunch hour, or instructional time) the supervising staff member(s) will blow their whistle three times as a warning to the students.
- Upon hearing the warning whistle, students must immediately walk slowly off the playground area and go directly into the school. The supervisor on duty must ensure that all students have vacated the school grounds. Students and staff should not run as this could encourage a bear to give chase.
- Students must enter the school immediately and proceed quietly to their classrooms.
- All staff and students must be notified of the situation and will be asked to proceed immediately to their classrooms.
- All teaching staff are required to take attendance promptly and must notify the office that all students are present and accounted for.
- Proper authorities will be immediately contacted by the secretary.
- If the problem bear still persists on school property during the day, students will not be allowed to go outside or leave the school building unless supervised by a parent/guardian.

II. DURING SCHOOL DISMISSAL:

- If the problem bear still persists on school property at dismissal time, office staff will contact parents of students who normally walk home so that parent pick up can be arranged.
- Office staff will notify the transportation operator and may arrange to have students picked up at an alternate entrance of the school if appropriate. Changes to dismissal procedures will be communicated to staff and students as required.
- Staff must remain with students until all students have been picked up by a parent/guardian or transported home by bus. All educational assistants and teachers without other responsibilities at dismissal time shall assist with the dismissal as requested by the principal at the designated entrance of the school. Students will be escorted out to the bus by an adult.

C. Duties of the Principal:

- Make sure that yard supervisors carry a whistle during bear season.
- Endeavour to ensure that no attractants (e.g. someone's leftover lunch) are left in the school yard.
- Conduct a bear drill in early September and March of each year so that all staff and students understand their roles and responsibilities during a bear sighting.
- Review the bear procedure at the September staff meeting.
- Ensure that staff and students are compliant with the bear protocol.

D. Duties of the Secretary:

- Notify the proper authorities of bear sightings.
- Notify the transportation operator and arrange pick up students at an alternate entrance of the school, as necessary.
- Activate the emergency phone list plan to notify parents/guardians of walkers who will need to be picked up at the school.
- Answer any incoming telephone calls and relay updated instructions to staff/students as required.

E. Prevention:

- Reduce garbage odors.
- Keep garbage in bear-proof containers (steel is best).
- Do not fill bird feeders until late fall, and empty them in the spring when bears wake up from hibernation and are hungry.
- Refrain from planting fruit trees or shrubs, as bears are attracted to them.
- Keep picnic tables clean of food debris.

For more information on bears visit the Ministry of Natural Resources website at www.bears.mnr.gov.on.ca.