

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE

Title: Safe Arrivals for Elementary Students

Effective Date: December 13, 2022

Responsibility: Superintendent of Safe Schools

Near North District School Board (“the Board”) promotes the safety of our elementary pupils through the development and implementation of a safe arrival program, as outlined in *Safe Arrivals* Policy Program Memorandum (PPM) 123. The purpose of the program is to create a system of procedures which are performed together with daily school attendance to ensure that parents and schools can account for any student’s unexplained failure to arrive at school.

1.0 Roles and Responsibilities of the Board, Schools and Staff

The Board clearly communicates the scope and features of the safe arrival program to principals, staff, parents, guardians and other stakeholders through the creation and implementation of this Administrative Guideline. The Board must enlist a reliable system of notifying parents, guardians and caregivers and document key information in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Such information includes:

- 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 program

Elementary teachers have a responsibility to complete daily attendance within 15 minutes following the entry bell each morning. Teachers must take extra care to ensure that attendance is accurate to prevent inaccurate reporting to parents/guardians. Elementary schools will complete the same procedure as described above following their second nutrition break. The afternoon attendance ensures that no student has unknowingly left school property and is completed in accordance with the Ontario Enrolment Register Instructions.

School staff will utilize the designated platform, as determined by the board, to generate automated callouts no later than 30 minutes following the entry bell each morning.

Schools will provide parents, guardians and caregivers with information regarding attendance procedures at the beginning of each school year. This information will include the method(s) in which parents can report their child's absences from school. Schools will provide parents with a Student Index Card at the beginning of each year for the purpose of verifying that the information on file is accurate and up to date.

2.0 Roles and Responsibilities of Parent(s), Guardian(s), and Caregivers

Parent(s), guardian(s) and caregivers ("parents") are responsible for their children's safety. Safe arrival programs are a mechanism that parents and schools can use to account for any student's unexplained failure to arrive at school.

Parents are responsible for communicating pupil absences or lateness to the school. This can be done in advance if the absence is planned, or on the same day if the absence was not planned. Parents can indicate that they are aware of their child's absence using the options provided by the automated callout program or in a method(s) specified by the school at the beginning of the year (see Section 1.0).

Parents are responsible for providing the school with complete and current emergency information to enable the school to make any necessary follow-up contacts should a child be inexplicably absent from school. Parents must ensure that the information contained in the Student Information System (SIS) is accurate and up to date. This information is verified at the beginning of each school year via the Student Index Card and can be updated in-year by contacting the child's school.

3.0 Program Delivery

At this time, the board uses the SafeArrival module within the School Messenger program to conduct automated callouts to any parents whose child is inexplicably absent from school. This aligns with other Board and School communications, which are also sent via School Messenger. In the future, the board may select another platform to fulfill this purpose.

All elementary schools in the Board will utilize the designated program to conduct automated callouts. This will ensure consistent practices across the district and allow for system-level data collection which supports accurate resource allocation and supervision.

4.0 Program Implementation

Within 30 minutes of the entry bell, designated school staff will generate an attendance report. That data is imported into a communication platform (i.e. SafeArrival) thereby generating the callouts. The automated program will call the phone numbers listed under each designated priority contact as reflected in the Student Information System (SIS).

If a parent does not want a specific number called, such as a business phone number, the designated school staff can change the priority of that number, which will prevent the program from using it in the future.

Once automated callouts are complete, designated school staff must verify if any students remain unaccounted for and act accordingly. This may include calling the parent again or calling one of the emergency contacts listed within the SIS. Under the direction of the school principal, the designated school staff will determine how many attempts to contact the parent will be made, ensuring that all responsible efforts have been taken. Should a school principal or designated staff be unable to explain a child's absence and believe that the child may be lost or missing, police will be notified.

4.1 Inclement Weather Days, Buses and Late Arrivals

As per PPM 123, safe arrival programs should consider both normal, recurring circumstances and unusual events and conditions.

In the case of inclement weather days, designated school staff should continue with automated callouts, but recognize that an approved parent absence on that day must be marked as a 'G' in the SIS, as per ONSIS student attendance policies.

Designated school staff should not hold off commencing automated callouts due to late buses (i.e. for those arriving 30 minutes after the entry bell).

Students who arrive after attendance has been taken in the classroom (i.e. for those arriving 15 minutes after the entry bell) must report to the office to be marked as late by the school secretary or designated staff overseeing attendance.