



YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Policy and Procedure #665.0, Safe Arrivals and Departures – Elementary and Secondary Students

Executive Summary

Board Policy and Procedure #665.0, Safe Arrivals and Departures – Elementary and Secondary Students outlines the York Region District School Board's commitment to ensuring the safe arrival and departure of all students. It acknowledges and outlines the responsibilities of all school staff, students and parent(s)/guardian(s) and reinforces the importance of ongoing communication between all stakeholders.

What has changed?

Major changes to the document:

Addition of the new secondary safe arrival procedure and updates to the elementary safe arrival procedure.

Reason for review: Four-year cyclical review.

Who is affected by these changes and what is the impact on current practice?

Implementation timelines: Immediate.

Lead Superintendent(s)/Subject Matter Expert(s): Associate Director, Leadership and Schools, Clelia Della-Rovere, Superintendent of Caring and Safe Schools and International Education.

Stakeholder Groups with Responsibilities under this Policy

- Board of Trustees
- Director of Education
- Superintendents of Education
- Corporate Communications
- Principals
- School Staff Members
- Students
- Parents and Guardians

Relationship to Board priorities

Student safety is of paramount importance and is related to every Board priority. When students arrive safely at school, can participate in the learning, and then return home safely to their families, the Board's mission is in action.

Timelines and Next Steps

This policy was scheduled for second review at the April 4, 2023 Policy and By-Law Standing Committee meeting.

Legislative Context

[Education Act](#)

It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property, or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities, will respect the policies and procedures of the Board.



Board Policy #665.0, Safe Arrivals and Departures: Elementary and Secondary Students

1. Policy Statement

The York Region District School Board recognizes that monitoring student attendance is the joint responsibility of parents/guardians and school staff. Communication between parents/guardians, students and school staff members is essential to ensuring student safety. Each school will establish a safe arrivals program and a safe departures protocol to promote and support student safety.

2. Responsibility

2.1 The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- a) reviewing the Safe Arrivals and Departures policy in accordance with the priorities in the Trustees' Multi-Year Strategic Plan and the approved policy review cycle; and
- b) understanding and communicating with members of the community about the Safe Arrivals and Departures – Elementary and Secondary Students policy, as required.

2.2 The Director of Education is responsible for:

- a) implementing the Safe Arrivals and Departures - Elementary and Secondary Students policy.

2.3 Superintendents of Education are responsible for:

- a) ensuring schools develop and implement a safe arrivals program and safe departures protocol and that they are communicated to parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year.

2.4 Corporate Communications is responsible for:

- a) ensuring information about the safe arrivals program and safe departures protocol is included in appropriate communications shared with all students and parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year.

2.5 Principals are responsible for:

- a) developing, implementing and monitoring a safe arrivals program and a safe departures protocol, in consultation with staff and the school council;
- b) ensuring that the school's safe arrivals program and safe departures protocol are delivered in a way that complements other school and community safety programs and initiatives; and

- c) ensuring school staff members, parent/guardians, students and any other members of the school community, as appropriate, are aware of their responsibilities under the safe arrivals program and the safe departures protocol.

2.6 School staff members are responsible for:

- a) ensuring that attendance is taken and any unexplained student absence is addressed immediately.

2.7 Students are responsible for:

- a) ensuring their parents/guardians are aware of their attendance at an afterschool program or event, or if there are any changes in their departure plan, where appropriate.

2.8 Parents/Guardians are responsible for:

- a) ensuring the school has complete and current emergency contact information;
- b) communicating with the school about any absences, lateness or change in safe departure plans for their child as soon as possible; and
- c) making decisions about sending their child to school, using their best judgment, when buses are cancelled.

3. Definitions

3.1 Safe Arrivals Program

A safe arrivals program is a series of steps which are performed together with daily school attendance taking to ensure student safety. A safe arrivals program is a mechanism that parents/guardians and schools can use to account for any student's unexplained absence.

3.2 Safe Departures Protocol

A safe departures protocol is a series of steps that parents/guardians and schools can use to account for:

- the safe departure of students at the end of the school day or following after-school programs and events; and
- any unexplained student absence from a school-sanctioned after-school activity or event.

4. Contact

Education and Community Services

5. History

Approved: 1996

Revised: 2002

Revised: January 2005 (Working Document)

Revised: 2007

Working Document: April 2013

Revised: February 2014

Revised: March 2022

Working Document: June 2022
Final Approval: May 2023



Board Procedure #665.1, Safe Arrivals and Safe Departures: Elementary Students

1. Policy Statement

This procedure outlines the process for developing, maintaining and monitoring a safe arrivals program and a safe departures protocol that enhances the safety of all elementary school students.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 The Director of Education shall:

- a) implement the Safe Arrivals and Departures policy.

2.2 Corporate Communications shall:

- a) ensure information about the safe arrivals program and safe departures protocol is included in appropriate communications shared with all students and parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year.

2.3 Principals shall:

- a) regularly inform parents/guardians of their responsibility to:
 - report all absences, late arrivals and/or changes to departure plans to the school in a timely manner,
 - provide the school with complete and current emergency contact information,
 - understand that schools may remain open on days when school buses are cancelled,
 - make decisions, using their best judgment, about whether to send their child to school when buses are cancelled and schools remain open;
- b) review the safe arrivals program and the safe departures protocol annually with all staff, parents/guardians, the school council and new families at registration;
- c) establish a procedure for receiving attendance reports from classrooms for morning and afternoon;
- d) ensure that staff members replacing absent staff members are familiar with their responsibilities with respect to the school's safe arrivals program and safe departures protocol;
- e) ensure a process is in place to reconcile planned student absences or lateness with information obtained through classroom attendance to identify any unexplained absences that will require prompt follow-up;
- f) ensure adherence to Board policies, protocols and procedures for students with prolonged absences;

- g) establish a process for maintaining a log of actions taken by school staff in accordance with the provisions of the safe arrival program, established Board policies and procedures and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act;
- h) ensure a process is in place to contact parents/guardians as soon as possible when their child is identified as absent without explanation. The process may include:
 - prior to calling parents/guardians, office staff will check with the classroom;
 - teacher, staff or other students, conduct an all-call inside and outside of the building, and thoroughly check both inside and outside the school premises to determine the student's possible location;
 - inform the parents/guardians that the student is not present;
 - encourage input from parents/guardians into where the student might be and immediately check these leads in cooperation with parents/guardians;
 - if all contact and emergency numbers have been tried and a student is still deemed to be absent without explanation, contact York Regional Police (YRP) immediately;
 - if the situation becomes escalated and the whereabouts of the student remains unknown, notify Superintendent;
- i) ensure a process is in place when the school communicates to parents/guardians that their child is absent, and the parents/guardians have reported back to the school that their child should be in attendance. The process may include:
 - school office staff must notify the Principal/Vice-Principal of the situation immediately;
 - office staff must immediately contact the classroom teacher to verify the student's presence and/or make an all-call inside and outside of the building directing the student to report to the office immediately;
 - if the student is located, parents/guardians will be informed immediately;
 - if the student's presence cannot be confirmed, the office staff will ask the classroom teachers and other staff members to inquire with other students if they know the whereabouts of the student and/or communicate with any siblings attending the school to attempt to ascertain the whereabouts of the student not in attendance;
 - if the student's presence cannot be confirmed, office staff will advise parents/guardians that the school will contact YRP;
 - the Principal/Vice-Principal will support the parents/guardians and YRP with the investigation through to completion;
 - if all contact and emergency numbers have been tried and a student is still deemed to be absent without explanation, contact YRP immediately;
 - if the situation becomes escalated and the whereabouts of the student remains unknown, notify Superintendent.
- j) contact parents/guardians as soon as possible if a child has missed a bus after school, has not been picked up as planned following an after school activity or event, or if the child has an unexplained absence at a planned after school activity or event;
- k) ensure arrangements are made for students who are returned to the school by a bus driver to be picked up by a parent/guardian or designate;
- l) ensure procedures are in place for staff, parents and students on days when buses are cancelled, including that the school will not follow up on student absences if students are regularly bused, but will do so for students who are not bused (e.g., walkers); and
- m) delay attendance reporting if buses are delayed.

2.4 School staff members shall:

- a) take attendance and report all absences to the office as per school's attendance procedures;
- b) notify the office when a parent has informed them of a planned lateness or absence of a student in their class;
- c) inform occasional staff about their responsibilities with respect to the school's safe arrivals program, safe departures protocol and communication about after-school programs or events;
- d) be aware of alternate pick-up arrangements as communicated by parents/guardians;
- e) communicate the names of any student not picked up to school office staff immediately;
- f) if supervising an after-school program or event;
 - inform parents/guardians of the schedule for after-school programs or events,
 - at the beginning of each after-school program or event, reconcile any unexplained absences that will require prompt follow-up,
 - communicate immediately to the principal/designate if a student is absent without explanation from an after-school program or event,
 - ensure students are safely released to a parent/guardian or designate at the conclusion of after-school programs or events,
 - be aware of departure plans and
 - remain with students who are being picked up until parents/guardians or designates arrive, and
 - release students who are permitted to walk home, as outlined in the school's safe departures protocol, following after-school programs or events.

2.5 Students shall:

- a) inform their parents/guardians of attendance at any after-school program or event; and
- b) inform their parents/guardians of any change to their regular departure plan.

2.6 Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall:

- a) provide the school with complete and current emergency contact information during the first week of September and throughout the school year if information changes; and
- b) inform the school of all absences, late arrivals and/or changes to departure plans of their child as soon as possible.

2.7 School Bus Drivers shall:

- a) contact Student Transportation Services if the parent/guardian (or designate) of a vulnerable student or a student with special needs is not present at a bus stop location, and if directed to do so, return the child to the school.

3. Contact

Education and Community Services

4. History

Approved 2007

Working Document April 2013

Revised February 2014

Revised March 2022

Working Document June 2022

Reviewed: April 2023



Board Procedure #665.2, Safe Arrivals and Departures: Secondary Students

1. Policy Statement

This procedure outlines the process for attendance reporting in all secondary schools to ensure parents/guardians and students are promptly informed about absences. This process enhances safety for all secondary students and provides for effective communication with parents/guardians and students.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 The Director of Education shall:

- a) implement the Absence Reporting: Secondary Students procedure.

2.2 Corporate Communications shall:

- a) ensure information about the safe arrivals program and safe departures protocol is included in appropriate communications shared with all students and parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year.

2.3 Principals shall:

- a) regularly inform parent(s)/guardian(s) and students aged 18 and older and students who have declared their independence of their responsibility to;
 - report all absences, late arrivals and/or changes to departure plans to the school in a timely manner,
 - provide the school with complete and current emergency contact information,
 - understand that schools may remain open on days when school buses are cancelled,
 - make decisions about whether to send their child to school, or to attend school, when buses are cancelled and schools remain open,
 - ensure that for students aged 18 and older, the Consent for Information Sharing-Student of the Age of Majority is completed,
 - ensure that when a child is driven to school late, the parent/child must report to the office;
- b) review the safe arrival program and safe departure protocols annually with all staff, parents/guardians, and students aged 18 and older;
- c) communicate that on days when buses are cancelled, the school will not follow up on student absences for bused students and will be marked as absent, but will do so for students who are not bused to school (e.g., walkers);
- d) delay attendance reporting if buses are delayed;

- e) establish a procedure for receiving attendance reports from classrooms for each period of the day and ensure that staff members, including supply staff, submit attendance to the Main Office within 15 minutes of the beginning of every period during the day;
- f) establish a procedure to reconcile planned student absences or lateness with classroom attendance to identify unexplained or prolonged absences that require prompt follow-up;
- g) ensure that parents are contacted through the automated school attendance system before the end of first period, after the end of lunch and at the end of the day when their child is identified as absent without explanation;
- h) ensure all contact numbers are used; if a student is still deemed to be absent without explanation, determine the need to contact York Regional Police (YRP) where appropriate (e.g., for a vulnerable student or exceptional student, etc.);
- i) maintain a record of all contact made to parents regarding absent students through the automated school attendance system;
- j) contact parents/guardians as soon as possible if a child misses the bus after school, or is otherwise left at school for any reason and reports to the Main Office (e.g., has not been picked up following an after school activity, etc.);
- k) ensure arrangements are made for pick up for students returned to the school by a bus driver;
- l) ensure arrangements are made for community class students that are not picked up from the bus stop to be brought back to school;
- m) ensure a process is in place when the school communicates to parents/guardians that their child is absent, and the parents/guardians have reported back to the school that their child should be in attendance. The process includes:
 - school office staff notify the Principal/Vice-Principal of the situation immediately;
 - office staff must immediately contact the classroom teacher to verify the student's presence and/or make an all-call inside and outside of the building directing the student to report to the office immediately;
 - if the student is located, parents/guardians will be informed immediately;
 - if the student's presence cannot be confirmed, the office staff will ask other staff members, where appropriate, if they know they know the whereabouts of the student and/or communicate with any siblings, where appropriate, attending the school to attempt to ascertain the whereabouts of the student not in attendance;
 - if the student's presence cannot be confirmed, office staff will advise parents/guardians that parents/guardians may contact YRP;
 - if the student is vulnerable or exceptional, the school shall contact YRP where appropriate;
 - the Principal/Vice-Principal will support the parents/guardians and YRP with the investigation through to completion; and
 - if the situation becomes escalated, inform Superintendent;
- n) ensure procedures and protocols are followed for students with patterns of prolonged absences by period and/or full day; and
- o) review the secondary attendance reporting procedure annually with all staff members, parents/guardians and the school council and as needed for new families during registration.

2.4 School staff members shall:

- a) take attendance and report all absences to the office within 15 minutes of the beginning of each period, using the school attendance procedure;

- b) inform occasional staff about their responsibilities with respect to the school's safe arrivals program, safe departures protocol and communication about after-school programs or events;
- c) if supervising an after-school program or event for which student attendance is mandatory for continued participation:
 - establish a safe dismissal plan for events that end after 6:00 p.m. or off school priority, and
 - inform parents/guardians of the schedule for after-school programs or events.

2.5 Students shall:

- a) inform their parents/guardians of attendance at any after-school program or event;
- b) inform their parents/guardians of any change to their regular departure plan; and
- c) if they are 18 years or older or have declared independence:
 - report all absences and lateness to the Main Office,
 - provide complete and current emergency contact information during the first week of September, and throughout the school year if information changes, to the Main Office,
 - ensure the form Consent for Information Sharing- Student of the Age of Majority is submitted to the school, and
 - if their bus is cancelled and the student attends school, report their attendance to the Main Office.

2.6 Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall:

- a) provide the school with complete and current emergency contact information during the first week of September, and throughout the school year if information changes, to the Main Office;
- b) inform the school of all absences, late arrivals and/or changes to departure plans of their child as soon as possible; and
- c) if child is 18 years or older or have declared independence, ensure the form Consent for Information Sharing - Student of the Age of Majority is submitted to the school.

2.7 School Bus Drivers shall:

- a) contact Student Transportation Services if the parent/guardian (or designate) of a vulnerable student or a student with special needs is not present at a bus stop location, and if directed to do so, return the child to the school.

3. Contact

Education and Community Services

4. History

Working Document: June 2022

Revised: April 2023

