

STUDENTS

S.M.01 – SAFE-ARRIVAL PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

PROCEDURES

Schools/Administrative Sites

A safe-arrival program shall reflect the following characteristics with respect to program delivery and information and communications:

- i) The program is to be delivered in a manner that complements other schools and community safety programs and initiatives;
- ii) The roles and responsibilities of parents, students, the school, **the** Catholic school council and volunteers are to be clearly identified and documented, and broadly communicated to all those who have an interest in safe-arrival programs;
- iii) The roles and responsibilities of parents, **caregivers and/or** guardians, at a minimum, are to be defined and communicated as involving the following:
 - parents and guardians are responsible for their children’s safety. Safe-arrival programs are a mechanism that parents and schools are to use to account for any student’s unexplained failure to arrive at school;
 - parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for communicating planned student absences or lateness to the school on a timely basis. Their reports are to be reconciled with information obtained through classroom attendance-taking procedures to identify any unexplained absences that require prompt follow-up contacts; and
 - parents, guardians and caregivers are responsible for providing the school with complete and current emergency information to enable the school to make any necessary follow-up contacts.

A safe-arrival program shall:

- take into account both normal, recurring circumstances and unusual events and conditions. For example, regular procedures could be modified on days when students are likely to arrive late because of inclement weather or bus cancellations;
- take into account that a language other than the language of instruction may be used in the absent student’s home;
- specify the steps that are to be taken when a follow-up contact cannot be reasonably made;

- ensure that individuals involved in delivering the safe-arrival program receive appropriate training and supervision;
- encourage **parents/guardians/caregivers** and volunteers to contribute to the delivery of the various components of the safe-arrivals program;
- ensure confidentiality, especially as such pertains to involvement of volunteers;
- ensure that a process for students deemed missing is established; and
- be reviewed periodically to confirm its effectiveness.

Information and Communications

- Information about the scope and features of the schools' safe-arrival program, and about the roles and responsibilities of all interested parties, are to be communicated clearly and effectively by the principal to school staff, parents, guardians, caregivers, students, **Catholic** school council, volunteers and others in the community who have an interest in the matter.
- A reliable method is to be developed for parents, guardians and caregivers to communicate planned student 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.
- Documentation of key student information is to 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 student 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; and
 - A log of actions taken by school staff in accordance with the provisions of the safe-arrival program.

Parent/Guardian/Caregiver

It is a primary function of parents, guardians and/or designated caregivers to provide for the safety of their children. It is their responsibility to work cooperatively with the school in all situations wherein the safety and well-being of their children is addressed. Thus, from the perspective of ensuring that a Safe Arrivals Program is consistent with its intent, it shall be the responsibility of the parent, guardian and/or caregiver to:

- provide the school with current home and work telephone numbers upon registration of their child and/or upon change(s) of address or other;
- provide the school with the name and telephone number of at least one emergency contact (i.e., extended family, friend, neighbour) with whom the school can confer should the parent, guardian, caregiver be unavailable, and ensure emergency contact numbers are updated regularly;
- alert the school to any changes in custody/guardianship/access and provide the school with the necessary current documentation regarding same;
- ensure the prompt and regular attendance of their child at school;
- accompany their Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten children to and from school and/or to and from designated transportation departure/arrival areas and remain with their child at such designated areas while boarding/disembarkation occurs; and
- contact the school in an expedient fashion (preferably prior to the commencement of the school day) to explain anticipated/actual absences and/or delays; continue to contact the school each day of their child's absence (unless a specified return date has been indicated); and
alert the school/Board immediately upon awareness that a child has not returned home at the expected time.

School

It is a responsibility of school officials to promote the safety of students within its jurisdiction. Each elementary school within the Board's jurisdiction will ensure that the following responsibilities are exercised:

- that a reliable method of communication be provided with a view to accommodating special needs and circumstances (i.e., voice-messaging system, telephone device for deaf);
- that teachers conduct an attendance audit immediately upon commencement of class in both the morning and afternoon and record same in their daily attendance books;

- that daily attendance books then be collected by school administration and indicated student absences be reconciled against the list of explained student absences received for that day;
- that attempts to contact the parents/guardians/caregivers of those students for whom an explained absence has not been provided be undertaken by the school administration utilizing telephone numbers provided and that these attempts continue until such time as a satisfactory explanation has been provided. Unexplained absences shall be documented and placed on file at the school;
- that attempts, where deemed necessary, be made to communicate with the home in the native language of the parent;
- that in situations involving heightened concern and/or unsatisfactory explanation, the school administration proceed as per the Elementary Attendance Protocol (Safe Schools Manual - Section 9);
- that information regarding the school's Safe Arrival Program be made available to parents/guardians/caregivers;
- that school staff be in-serviced regarding the school Safe Arrival Program;
- that the school staff alert the parents, transportation department, senior administration and police, as appropriate, when a child is identified as not having arrived home within a reasonable or the expected time;
- that the principal [or designate] remain at the school for at least 15 minutes past the dismissal time for schools that have no bussing, or for 15-20 minutes after the last drop-off time for bussed students. This will ensure that a staff member is available to investigate any incident(s) where a child has not arrived at home at the expected time;
- that an emergency communication system be utilized to contact parents/guardians/caregivers in the event of special circumstances (i.e., inclement
- that the Safe Arrival Program be reviewed annually to ensure a continued compliance with Ministry of Education standards and guidelines and to provide for on-going input from stakeholders in the inclusive school community.

Students

- Students not requiring adult accompaniment shall be responsible for ensuring their prompt and regular attendance at school;
- Students shall be responsible for ensuring that alternate arrangements for after-school activities are pre-**authorized** with the **parents/guardians/caregivers** and that the school is notified, if necessary.

Agents (School Bus Drivers)

- That upon debarkation of passengers at school and upon completion of designated return home routes, the vehicle's operator shall conduct a thorough inspection of the vehicle to ensure that all passengers have disembarked the vehicle;
- That a vehicle's operator, upon determining the inexplicable presence of a passenger, shall notify the respective school's principal/designate and/or designated emergency telephone number immediately.