Toronto District School Board

Policy P013

Title: **Attendance at Schools Outside of Designated Attendance Area (formerly Optional Attendance)**

Adopted: [date of approval of the policy]

Effected: [date when the policy came into effect]

Revised: [date when the policy was amended]

Reviewed: [date when the policy was reviewed]

Authorization: Board of Trustees

# RATIONALE

The **Attendance at Schools Outside of Designated Attendance Area** Policy (P013) (the “Policy”) supports implementation of the legislative requirements as outlined in Section 171(1), par. 7 of the *Education Act*, which authorizes the Toronto District School Board to determine attendance areas for each school and assign students to particular schools based on the address of the parents/guardians.

The Board recognizes that parents and students may wish to choose a school which lies outside of the designated attendance area. As such, the Board is committed to supporting strong neighbourhood schools that are easily accessible and that provide programming to meet the diverse needs of its students.

This Policy aligns with Board policies including the Equity Policy and is consistent with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

# OBJECTIVE

To provide policy direction about access to schools outside a student’s designated attendance area.

# DEFINITIONS

*Address* refers to the principal residence of a parent/guardian/adult student.

*Board* is the Toronto District School Board, which is also referred to as the “TDSB”.

*Child Care* refers to licensed early learning and care programs for children from birth to 3.8 years of age.

*Designated Attendance Area is the geographic area served by a designated school.*

*Designated school* is the school identified by the parent’s/guardian’s residential address.

*Feeder school* is a school from which many or most student’s progress to a designated school at the next division (e.g., secondary school).

*Intensive French Program* refers to French-as-a-Second-Language programs in which French is not only taught as a subject but also serves as the language of instruction in other subjects.

*Intensive Support Program (ISP)* is a program designed to support communities of exceptional (special needs) students who have similar behavioural, communication, intellectual, or physical needs.

*Out-of-Area Applicant* is a student who applies to a school located outside of their designated attendance area.

*Out-of-Area Student* is a student who attends a school located outside of their designated attendance area.

*TDSB* is the Toronto District School Board, which is also referred to as the “Board”.

# RESPONSIBILITY

The Director of Education holds the primary responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Policy. Within the Director’s Office, the responsibility for the day-to-day management and coordination of the Policy is assigned to the Associate Director, School Operations and Service Excellence.

# APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This Policy applies to students, parents/guardians, and staff, including principals, superintendents and school personnel involved in the application and registration processes for students seeking a space in a school that lies outside of their designated attendance area.

This Policy does not apply to placements into Special Education Intensive Support Programs (ISPs). Students may access these programs through the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process. In addition, this Policy does not apply to students whose placements are facilitated by the Caring and Safe Schools department.

# POLICY

## Regular Schools

### Each student who is eligible to attend school will have the right to attend a designated school in accordance with this Policy, based on the residential address of the student’s parents (or either parent) or of the student’s legal guardian. In the case of an adult student, the address where the student resides will determine the appropriate designated school.

### On an annual basis, Board staff will determine which schools may accept applications from students outside the designated attendance area based on school capacity and projected enrolment by grade. The process to apply for attendance at a school other than the student’s designated school will be shared annually with students, parents and guardians.

### When space is available in schools, students will be provided with opportunities to access schools outside their designated area by applying as an Out-of-Area applicant.

### A parent or guardian (or adult student) may apply to one (1) regular school outside of the student’s designated school attendance area.

### Students enrolled in school-based licensed child care centres will have the option of attending the school in which the child care is located where there is no access to, or available space, in licensed child cares feeding into their designated school.

### Children at the preschool age who are enrolled in the school-based licensed child care prior to January 1st of the year they are to begin Junior Kindergarten, have the option of attending the school in which the child care is located, when there is no access to, or available space in the child care at their designated school. No application process is required. Children who are enrolled in the school-based licensed child care after January 1st of the year they are to begin Junior Kindergarten must apply as Out-of-Area students.

### If sufficient space is available at the requested school, spaces will be filled by grade according to the admission priorities below. For each of the admission priorities (in priority order), the school principal will conduct a lottery if the number of applications exceeds available spaces:

Priority 1: Students who are attending another school as an Out-of-Area student at and who wish to return to their designated school by address.

Priority 2: Secondary students whose child/children is/are enrolled in a child care centre in the designated attendance area of the secondary school.

Priority 3: Students who have siblings currently attending the requested school and the siblings are expected to be at the requested school for the next school year.

Priority 4: Students currently attending a feeder school of the requested school.

Priority 5: Children enrolled after January 1 in the school-based child care pre-school program of the requested school (see 6.1.6).

Priority 6: Children attending child care programs in the designated attendance area of the requested school.

Priority 7: Current TDSB students

Priority 8: Other students residing in the City of Toronto.

Priority 9: Students residing outside the City of Toronto.

### The TDSB will not be responsible for providing transportation for Out-of-Area students. Transportation is the responsibility of the applicant.

### Out-of-Area students who wish to return to their designated school by address must apply to the designated school by the date specified in the Operational Procedure (PR545). Admission will be determined based on available space by grade.

### Students withdrawn from the child care centre may be required to return to their designated school, as determined by home address, or apply to remain at the current school via the Out-of-Area process, unless the next school year is a graduation year.

### Students who change residence during the school year will be allowed to remain at the current school until the end of the current school year, unless the next school year is a graduation year.

### During their final year at a school, Out-of-Area students will be required to apply for admission to the school at the next level into which the school feeds.

## Schools with Intensive French Programs

### All students who are resident within the City of Toronto and are eligible to attend a school operated by the Board will have the right to attend an Intensive French program. See the Intensive French (IEF) Programs Operational Procedure (PR597) for access to IEF.

### If a student elects to attend an Intensive French program outside the designated school/pathway, the student must apply as an Out-of-Area student to the requested school. The direction set out in Section 6.1 of this Policy for Regular Schools will apply. No transportation will be provided.

### Once admitted to an Intensive French Program at a school as an Out-of-Area student, the student will have the right to continue the Intensive French Program in the schools of that designated pathway.

1. If the Out-of-Area student wishes to pursue an Intensive French Program in a different school pathway, the direction set out in Section 6.1 of this Policy for Regular Schools applies.
2. Section 6.2.3.(a) does not apply if the student changes residence. In this case, the student has the right to attend the Intensive French Program school according to their new principal address.

### Students who choose to leave an Intensive French Program that they are attending as an Out-of-Area student may be required to return to their designated school by address.

# SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

The Director of Education is authorized to issue operational procedures to implement this Policy.

# EVALUATION

This Policy will be reviewed at a minimum every four (4) years from the effective date.

# APPENDICES

N/A

# REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Legislation

* *Education Act,* R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, s. 171 (1), par. 7.

Policies

* Equity Policy (P037)

Procedures

* Intensive French Programs Procedure (PR597)