Toronto District School Board

Operational Procedure PR707B

Title: STUDENT ATTENDANCE, SAFE ARRIVAL AND SAFE DEPARTURE (SECONDARY)

Adopted: June 17, 2014
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1. RATIONALE

The Student Attendance, Safe Arrival and Safe Departure (Secondary) Procedure (the "Procedure") supports the implementation of the Student Attendance, Safe Arrival and Safe Departure Policy (P085).

2. OBJECTIVE

- To outline expectations for student attendance, arrival and departure.
- To establish intervention and supportive strategies and best practices to address patterns of absence impacting learning, unexplained absences, prolonged absenteeism, and lateness.
- To implement a system-wide standard for safe arrival and departure at TDSB schools and programs.

3. **DEFINITIONS**

Board refers to the Toronto District School Board, which is also referred to as the "TDSB".

Compulsory School Age, for the purpose of this Procedure, refers to any student who turns six (6) on or before the first day of school in any year. These students are legally required to attend school. Students are legally required to attend school until they reach the age of eighteen (18) unless they have already earned their Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

Homeschool, for the purpose of this Procedure, refers to the school of record, where a student is registered and their Ontario Student Record (OSR) resides.

Parent/Guardian - may include parent(s), guardian(s) or any other caregiver legally recognized as acting in place of the parent.

Patterns of Absence Impacting Learning refers to patterns and/or frequencies of absences that can impede student learning, achievement, and well-being. It may also include absences that occur on certain days or occasions (e.g., tests or exams), or that may be the result of factors such as bullying, racism or hate, emerging mental health issues, or other socio-emotional or physical factors that may arise.

Period refers to the time in which one instructional class is taught. Most secondary schools run four 75-minute classes per day (i.e., four periods per school day).

Prolonged Absence refers to an absence of at least fifteen (15) consecutive school days.

Safe Arrival refers to a system of protocols which are performed together with daily school attendance taking and which are designed to account for any student's unexplained failure to arrive at school or their course-related off-site learning location (e.g., Cooperative education, excursion).

Safe Departure refers to a system of protocols which are performed and designed to account for students' safe dismissal from school or school-related off-site location (e.g., Cooperative education, excursion, inter-school athletics).

TDSB is the Toronto District School Board, which is also referred to as the "Board".

Unexplained Absence refers to situations when a student is absent and no reason has been provided to the school (e.g., parent/guardian has not phoned or provided documentation explaining the reason for the student's absence).

4. RESPONSIBILITY

Associate Director, Student Well-Being and Innovation

5. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This Procedure applies to all TDSB students, parents/guardians, teaching and support staff, administrators and/or designate(s), who support secondary student attendance procedures.

The intervention and supportive strategies and best practices outlined in this Procedure apply to all registered students enrolled in TDSB secondary schools. The obligation of a registered student to attend school applies even if the student is not of compulsory school age (e.g., students over the age of 18).

6. PROCEDURE

6.1. Local Oversight/Principal Responsibilities

- 6.1.1. The Principal is responsible for coordinating internal office processes regarding students' attendance, safe arrival and safe departure.
- 6.1.2. The Principal is expected to communicate with parents/guardians about attendance practices and expectations outlined in this Procedure at the start of each school year, and as needed throughout the year.
- 6.1.3. The Principal is responsible for how communications with parents/guardians are managed by office and teaching staff.
- 6.1.4. The Principal is responsible for establishing processes through which Occasional Teachers have access to materials required for recording and reporting attendance.

6.2. Safe Arrival Program and Reporting

- 6.2.1. Collection of Information
 - (a) At the start of each school year or upon new registration, the Principal will communicate the need for parents/guardians to provide accurate, complete, and current contact information.
 - (b) The Principal will request contact information including telephone numbers (i.e., home, cellular, and/or work), email addresses, and home address for the parents/guardians of the student and an emergency contact such as a relative or neighbour.
 - (c) The parents/guardians must inform the school if their contact information changes during the school year, to update their contact information in the School Information System (SIS).

6.2.2. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- (a) Parents/Guardians are expected to notify the school when a student is going to be absent or late for school. If a student is absent or late for any reason, the parent/guardian must contact the school immediately and report the reason for the absence, or use the School Messenger App.
- (b) If the school is not informed about the absence, TDSB's automated system attempts to contact the parent/guardian. The school Principal or designate will make attempts to contact the parent/guardian to determine the reason for the absence.
- 6.2.3. School Information Systems (SIS) Tracking Absences and Lateness

- (a) In order to contribute to students' overall academic and personal profiles as well as address any issues with prolonged absences and/or patterns of absence impacting learning, all absences and late arrivals will be tracked electronically through the SIS.
- (b) The Principal (or designate) is responsible for establishing processes so that the following information is entered into the SIS before the end of each school day:
 - (i) Student attendance;
 - (ii) The names of students who are absent including those reported to the school by parents/guardians;
 - (iii) The reasons for all student absences;
 - (iv) The names of students who arrived late (these names may appear on the Absentee Report); and
 - (v) Any other pertinent information (e.g., messages left for parents/guardians who could not be reached).
- (c) It is important that the information entered into the SIS is accurate and complete. Daily recording is required to identify potential errors or patterns of absence.
- (d) Additional reference materials to support staff are available through Service IT under "PowerSchool SIS - Admin Attendance Resources" and in Appendix A - TDSB Recommended Attendance Reports.

6.2.4. Reporting of Attendance

- (a) For each instructional class, the classroom teacher will promptly report all attendance (presence, absence, and lateness). First phone calls to parents/guardians regarding attendance in the first class begin no later than 75 minutes after the start of the school day. Parents/Guardians may enter a reason for absence through the School Messenger call out, which will be automatically recorded in the SIS.
- (b) The Office Administrator (or designate) will enter in the reasons for absence based on information provided by parents/guardians who have contacted the school, or for students who have arrived late, into the SIS. School Messenger App submissions will be automatically added into the SIS.
- (c) A record of all attendance from all classes during the day will be communicated to parents/guardians in the evening through the automated system.
- (d) If there is a concern about a student's whereabouts or if harm is suspected, attempts should be made to reach all listed contacts and emergency contacts. If unsuccessful, the case is escalated

to the Principal (or designate). If a student's whereabouts are unknown:

- (i) Principal will begin an internal investigation;
- (ii) Principal may consult with Board Attendance Counsellor and/or Social Worker to make contact or a home visit:
- (iii) The Principal may take further action, including calling the police;
- (iv) If the police become involved, the Principal will advise the appropriate Superintendent of Education and the Communications department accordingly.

6.3. Unique Attendance Taking Scenarios

- 6.3.1. Synchronous Virtual Classes
 - (a) Teachers will take attendance at the start of each class. Students logged into the virtual environment will be asked to respond when prompted. Students arriving late will be "signed in" by the classroom teacher through Power Teacher Pro.
 - (b) Students will be instructed to notify the teacher (private message in the chat or as otherwise directed by the teacher) if they need to step away from the computer for a few minutes and they will be expected to let the teacher know when they have returned. Teachers will connect with students that leave the class too frequently or for longer-than-reasonable periods of time to provide support and guidance.
 - (c) Teachers are encouraged to use regular participation/engagement strategies to keep students involved. If a student stops responding to prompts and is not participating in the class, the teacher will connect with the student to check that everything is alright and to reinforce the expectation that students need to stay active and engaged in the class.
 - (d) Should a student be unresponsive/inactive for a significant portion of the class and have missed the essence of the class/lesson, the attendance record will be amended to show that the student was "absent" for the class. The teacher will let the student know that if the unresponsive behaviour continues, that there will be follow up with the parent/guardian and the administration.
 - (e) Absences from virtual classes will be addressed in the same way as absences from in-person classes.

- 6.3.2. Cooperative Education (Co-op) and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)
 - (a) For in-class components, where a homeschool teacher is supervising students directly, attendance procedures will be completed in the same manner as all other classes.
 - (b) While students are attending placements or program requirements outside of the homeschool;
 - (i) For students under the age of 18, a parent/guardian is responsible for alerting the homeschool by reporting the absence. The absence must be recorded in SIS by the receiving staff member upon notification.
 - (ii) In addition to (6.3.2.b.i) parent/guardian notification of absence, all students are responsible for alerting the homeschool teacher and placement supervisor if they are going to be late or absent.
 - (iii) The homeschool teacher is responsible for establishing a communication plan between them and the placement supervisor(s) to support timely notification of students' absence from placement. The absence should be recorded in SIS upon notification. If recording of the absence falls after safe arrivals deadlines, the teacher should make a direct call home.
 - (iv) Students that begin their placements before the standard start of the school day (e.g., OYAP Baker students who begin their placement at 6:00am), will alert their homeschool teacher and placement Supervisor if they are going to be late or absent. Students under the age of 18 must have a parent/guardian report their absence to the homeschool.
- 6.3.3. Continuous Intake Co-op (CIC)
 - (a) Students registering in CIC register in a host school for the CIC program.
 - (b) Attendance taking procedures mirror those for Co-operative Education in section 6.3.2.
 - (c) If the Co-op placement starts after the safe arrival call has been made and a student does not arrive at the co-op placement, the CIC teacher will be notified by the placement supervisor. The CIC teacher will contact the parent/guardian directly.
- 6.3.4. Caring and Safe Schools Programs and Alternative Attendance Programs
 - (a) Students attending Caring and Safe Schools Programs and Alternative Attendance programs remain registered at their

- homeschool. The recording of attendance and safe arrival calls are done by staff at the program site.
- (b) Attendance is taken at the start of the day. If the program staff have not been notified by a parent/guardian that a student is going to be absent, a staff member will notify the parent/guardian within 75 minutes of the start of the school day.
- (c) Site staff maintain attendance records outside of the SIS. Late arrivals and absences are included in final reporting alongside with achievement.

6.3.5. School Within a College (SWAC)

- (a) SWAC students have daily attendance recorded immediately upon arrival at their learning location (e.g., college campus) by the SWAC teacher. A student's expected arrival time varies based on the individual timetable created to reflect the learning needs of the student. Timetables will be shared with students, homeschools and parent/guardian(s) at the start of the program to outline expectations for attendance.
 - (i) For students under the age of 18, a parent/guardian is responsible for directly contacting the SWAC Teacher to report a student absence prior to the expected arrival time.
 - (ii) For students 18 or over, the student is responsible for alerting the SWAC Teacher directly if they are going to be late or absent.
 - (iii) The SWAC Teacher is responsible for making a call to the parent/guardian (or student, if 18 or over) if they have not been notified of the absence. The notification to parent/guardian should be done as soon as possible in the morning.
 - (iv) SWAC Teachers will record daily attendance and share attendance information with the homeschool for entry into SIS.
 - (v) Homeschools are responsible for monitoring the shared attendance files and recording information in SIS.
 Homeschools are responsible for shared attendance support, including formal attendance referrals, if required.

6.3.6. Dual Credit and Accelerated OYAP

(a) For students enrolled in a dual credit course, students will be excused from homeschool classes as required to attend their scheduled Dual Credit course.

- (b) For students enrolled in Accelerated OYAP, students are a part of a four-credit co-op program. See section 6.3.2 for attendance taking procedures while in class components and at placement.
- (c) Attendance is taken and recorded in the Dual Credit or Accelerated OYAP course by the Course Instructor, but no safe arrival calls are made. Attendance information is shared with the homeschool for recording in SIS.
- (d) Dual Credit Contact/OYAP teachers will provide support when students have missed one or more classes without reason, and will be in communication with a parent/guardian if a student is under the age of 18.

6.3.7. Excursions

- (a) Teachers are required to take attendance before departing school at the start of excursions, in the same manner as all other classes.
- (b) For excursions starting off site, teachers are required to notify the school of any students not present. School staff will contact home as per section 6.2.4. See the Excursions Policy (P033) and Excursions Procedure (PR511) for additional safety protocols.

6.4. Safe Departure Program

6.4.1. During School Day

- (a) In order to depart the school premises during the school day, students should proceed to the main office to sign out. A teacher may notify the main office that a student is on their way to sign out.
- (b) The Office Staff (or designate), will either call a parent/guardian for permission to excuse the student (based on the contact information in the SIS) or enter the note into the SIS to record the departure.
 - (i) Students 18 years of age and older do not need parent/guardian permission.
- (c) Absences with permission/reason will not yield a call home from the automated system. Classes missed without reason will lead to an automated call at or after 6 pm.
- (d) Students in Grades 9 -12 may leave the school premise during non-instructional time (i.e., lunchtime and spare).

6.4.2. End of School Day

(a) Students in Grades 9-12 are permitted to leave school property upon the final bell of the day.

- (b) Alternative departure practices may be required for some students in Grades 9-12 with Special Education Needs.
- (c) See the Transportation of Students Policy (P020) for additional information regarding the safe and equitable transportation of TDSB students.

6.5. Monitoring Absences and Lateness

- 6.5.1. Strategies for Addressing Patterns of Absence Impacting Learning, Prolonged Absences and Lateness
 - (a) The following process will outline the responsibilities of school staff across three levels of interventions:
 - (i) immediate supportive and culturally responsive strategies for when a student is discovered as late or absent without explanation;
 - (ii) longer-term immediate supportive and culturally responsive strategies for when a student demonstrates patterns of absence impacting learning or prolonged unexplained absences; and
 - (iii) longer-term on-going supportive and culturally responsive strategies for when a student demonstrates patterns of absence impacting learning and prolonged explained absences.
 - (b) To enable more timely interventions, the SIS will flag all absences and late arrivals at the following intervals:
 - (i) 5, 10, and 15 day absences/late arrivals (consecutive and cumulative)
 - (ii) Every 5 out of 10 and 10 out of 30 days absences/late arrivals (cumulative)
 - (iii) Each course set for 5, 10, and 15 missed/late classes in one course (cumulative)
 - (iv) 15 day-intervals up to 60 days (consecutive)
 - (c) Schools are encouraged to regularly run the Daily Attendance Consecutive Days Absent report.
 - (d) Additional reference materials to support staff are available through Service IT under "PowerSchool SIS - Admin Attendance Resources" and in Appendix A - TDSB Recommended Attendance Reports.
- 6.5.2. Guidelines and Best Practices for Identifying Patterns of Absence Impacting Learning, Including the Implementation of Interventions and Strategies

(a) Daily Unexplained Absence

- (i) First phone calls to parents/guardians regarding first period attendance begin no later than 75 minutes after the start of the school day. All attendance notifications for subsequent periods will be communicated to parents/guardians in the evening.
- (ii) The Principal (and designates) will receive a report outlining if parents/guardians have been reached for follow up.

(b) 2 - 4 Classes Missed - Unexplained

- (i) The Principal should establish processes through which classroom teachers reach out to students and their parent/guardian when there is an unexplained absence. Teachers should reinforce the importance of regular attendance, and the expectation that students should attend class every day when possible. When not possible, the parent/guardian should notify the school, ideally prior to the absence. Teachers should document this communication.
- (ii) The Principal should establish processes through which classroom teachers share concerns regarding students missing class without reason with the administration. Clear expectations around the steps that classroom teachers should first take should be outlined.

(c) 5 Days/Classes in 1 Course Missed (cumulative)

- (i) The Principal (or designate) may request an external confirmation for absences (e.g., medical note, travel verification, etc.). If absences are explained, the Principal will review the reasons provided and determine whether further information is required.
- (ii) When first connecting with a student's parents/guardians, the Principal will attempt to determine why regular school attendance is an issue and what can be done to improve the situation.
- (iii) The Principal can refer the student to the In-School Support Team (IST) if absences continue to be unexplained and if the Principal suspects a student's learning, achievement, and well-being is being negatively impacted.
- (iv) Should any information come to the attention of the school staff or be revealed through the IST process that a student may be at risk of or has suffered physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, exposure to family violence or neglect by their caregivers, the employee will report to a Children's Aid Society (CAS) in accordance with Section 72

of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act (2017) and the Abuse and Neglect of Students Procedure (PR560).

(d) 6 - 9 Days/Classes Missed in 1 Course

- (i) The Principal should establish processes to identify students who are missing classes without reason. Schools are encouraged to regularly run the Daily Attendance -Consecutive Days Absent Report and SIS reports that identify students missing consecutive and cumulative classes. Follow up with teachers should take place if they have not been notifying the administration of a student missing classes.
- (ii) The Principal should support Vice Principals with tracking student attendance, working with parents/guardians as partners in supporting the development of good attendance habits, and the sending of attendance letters when students continue to miss classes/school. Early steps, supports and intervention can assist students with shifting attendance patterns and can help families address concerns that may be preventing a student from regularly attending class before the attendance negatively impacts the student's achievement and success in the class/school.
- (iii) If unsuccessful in establishing contact through other methods, the Principal will send a TDSB letter home requesting an explanation for absences and requests a meeting with the parents/guardians.

(e) 10 Days Missed/10 Classes Missed in 1 Course

- (i) The Principal may request an external validation for absences (e.g., medical note, travel verification, etc.). If absences are explained, the Principal will review the reasons provided and determine whether further information is required.
- (ii) The Principal should request a meeting with parents/guardians, where appropriate.
- (iii) The Principal will consider the available interventions to encourage attendance such as:
 - (A) Involvement of in-school staff;
 - (B) Daily attendance monitoring sheet to support positive reengagement;
 - (C) Timetable or program change;
 - (D) Referral to the TDSB's Professional Support Services or external community counseling agency;

- (E) Credit Rescue and Credit Recovery Programs;
- (F) Dual Credit Programs with colleges;
- (G)New programming that better meets student interest;
- (H) e-Learning;
- (I) Co-operative education and Continuous Intake Co-op;
- (J) School Within A College (SWAC) Programs;
- (K) Continuing education (Summer & Night School); or
- (L) Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP).
- (iv) The Principal can also refer the student to the School Support Team (SST) particularly if absences continue to be unexplained or if the student's achievement or well-being is being negatively impacted.
- (v) Should any information come to the attention of the school staff or be revealed through the SST process that a student may be at risk of or has suffered physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, exposure to family violence or neglect by their caregivers, the employee will report to a CAS in accordance with Section 72 of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act (2017) and the Abuse and Neglect of Students Procedure (PR560).
- (vi) Where appropriate, implementation of interventions will be pursued in consultation with the Superintendent of Education.

(f) 11 Consecutive Absences Without Appropriate Supporting Documentation

- (i) Discussion/Referral to an Attendance Counsellor can begin for students absent 11-15 days. *Day 15 triggers a mandatory referral to Attendance Services*. The Principal will initiate a Professional Support Services Referral Form in SAP CRM (System Analysis Program Customer Relationship Management) on the 16th day of consecutive absence without appropriate supporting documentation and complete the Attendance Checklist and Attendance Profile for the student.
- 6.5.3. Implications of a Referral to the School Support Team and/or Professional Support Services for Problematic Attendance
 - (a) When a recommendation for Attendance Support emerges from the School Support Team (SST) in response to patterns of absence impacting learning, the Principal will refer the student

- to Professional Support Services for an attendance counselor with an Attendance Referral.
- (b) Once accepted, the attendance counsellor will conduct inquiries, identify the cause of the student's absenteeism, and explore options such as mobilizing the resources of the family, school, and community in collaboration with the school staff.
- (c) The attendance counselor will further investigate the reason(s) for the absences and report back to the school to maintain coordinated engagement between student, parents/guardians and school. Should any information come to the attention of the attendance counselor that a student may be at risk of or has suffered physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, exposure to family violence or neglect by their caregivers, the employee will report to a CAS in accordance with Section 72 of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act (2017) and the Abuse and Neglect of Students Procedure (PR560).
- (d) The school staff and the attendance counsellor will collaborate and discuss possible culturally responsive interventions and supports that center student identities and voice, and who will assume responsibility for implementing the plan.

6.6. Guideline for Addressing Prolonged Absences

- 6.6.1. Prolonged Absences
 - (a) If a student is absent for more than 15 consecutive days without appropriate supporting documentation, the absence is considered and addressed as a prolonged absence.
- 6.6.2. After an Additional Unexplained 15 Days (consecutive only)
 - (a) If the student misses an additional 15 consecutive days after a referral has been made to the attendance counselor, the attendance counsellor must immediately provide the school with a completed Prolonged Absence Form. An additional completed Prolonged Absence Form must be sent to the school after each additional 15-day period of consecutive absence.
- 6.6.3. Attendance Services Support to Address Prolonged Absences
 - (a) If the full spectrum of learning options, resources, and school and emotional supports is unable to result in an improvement in the student's attendance, the attendance counselor may arrange for the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), and a school administrator to attend an Attendance Review Committee (ARC) meeting. The attendance counselor will attend all Attendance Review Committee meetings. The Committee may discuss a possible recommendation for the student's return to school or enrolment in an approved alternative program. At the meeting.

- staff may inform the parent(s) guardians(s) and student that possible measures could include an application to the Provincial Offences Court and a charge laid under the Education Act against students under 16 years of age.
- (b) For students 14 to 17 years of age, a referral to Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL), Regulation 374/10 may be considered. The Principal will forward a SAL Application Form, signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student along with a credit summary, to the attendance counselor-SAL (refer to the SAL process document). The SAL process legally excuses the student from regular full-time attendance and gives the student options to attend school or an alternative program on a part-time basis, work, volunteer, and receive counseling or a mix of these components depending on the academic, social, behavioural, and mental health needs and requests.

6.6.4. Implications of Prolonged Absences

- (a) Student attendance is recorded on school registers and sent to the Ministry of Education (Ministry) for funding purposes.
- (b) The TDSB is required to record enrolment and maintain enrolment records according to the format prescribed by the Ministry and according to the enrolment register instructions provided annually by the Ministry (i.e., Enrolment Verification Application (EVA) and Ontario School Information System (OnSIS) procedures).
- (c) There are specific instructions in the Enrolment Register Guidelines related to Prolonged Absences. Schools must follow these guidelines to ensure full compliance as registers are subject to audit from the Ministry at any time. Failure to follow these guidelines can result in significant impact to the TDSB.
- (d) The maximum number of days a secondary school student may remain on the attendance register while being absent is 60 days, as long as the file is active. The Prolonged Absence Form must include the dates the attendance counselor had contact with the student and/or family and a "C" code is entered in the SIS by the OA (or designate).

7. EVALUATION

This Procedure will be reviewed as required, but at a minimum every four (4) years after the effective date.

8. APPENDICES

Appendix A – TDSB Recommended Attendance Reports

9. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Legislation

- Child, Youth and Family Services Act
- Education Act, sections 21-31
- Ontario Regulation 374/10

Policies

- Excursions (P033)
- Student Attendance, Safe Arrival and Safe Departure (P085)
- Transportation of Students (P020)

Procedures

- Abuse and Neglect of Students (PR560)
- Excursions (PR511)
- Student Attendance, Safe Arrival and Safe Departure (Elementary) (PR707A)

Other Documents:

- Policy/Program Memorandum No. 123 Safe Arrivals
- Ministry Enrolment Register Instructions for Elementary and Secondary Schools

TDSB RECOMMENDED ATTENDANCE REPORTS

PowerSchool Report	Breadcrumbs	Trillium Report
Absentee Report	Start Page > Attendance>Reports>Absentee Report	Administration List
N/A	N/A	Daily Absence List
Student Attendance - Daily Historical Summary	Start Page > PSCB Custom Reports > Attendance > Student Attendance - Daily Historical Summary	Attendance Profile
Attendance Profile (PDF)	Start Page > Reports > Reports (System) > Attendance Profile	Attendance Profile
Class Roster (PDF)	Start Page > Reports > Run Reports > Class Rosters (PDF)	Class List
Students - Class Roster	Start Page > PSCB Custom Reports > Scheduling (Current Year) > Students - Class Roster	Class List
Meeting Attendance - Consecutive Days Absent	Start Page > PSCB Custom Reports > Attendance > Daily Attendance - Consecutive Days Absent	Consecutive Days Absent/Late
Meeting Attendance - Selected Date / Date Range	Start Page > PSCB Custom Reports > Attendance > School Attendance Meeting Attendance - Selected Date / Date Range	Administration List
School Attendance - Daily Attendance Summary	Start Page > PSCB Custom Reports > Attendance > School Attendance - Daily Attendance Summary	Office List
Student Attendance - Daily Dates and Count Summary	Start Page > PSCB Custom Reports > Attendance > Student Attendance - Daily Count/Dates Summary	Attendance Tally