

Toronto District School Board

Policy P.013 SCH:

Optional Attendance

Statement

Each student who is otherwise eligible to attend school will have the right to attend a designated school based on the parents'/guardians'¹ residential address. The Toronto District School Board values parental and student choice within the education system. Students should have the right to access programs and schools that best meet their needs, interests and aptitudes. Students will be provided with opportunities to access schools and programs when space is available, outside the designated attendance area in which they reside.²

1.0 Regular Schools and Programs

Students who are residents of the City of Toronto³ and eligible to attend an elementary, middle, senior, junior high or secondary school are eligible to apply for enrolment in a school within the Toronto District School Board, outside their regular attendance area subject to the guidelines outlined below.

Students enrolled in school-based licensed child care centres 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 local school.

Students withdrawn from the child care centre may be required to return to their local school, as determined by home address, or apply to remain at the current school via the Optional Attendance process.

¹ As defined in the Education Act.

² This policy does not apply to students placed through Identification, Placement and Review Committees or other administrative placements.

³ Students who reside outside the City of Toronto may apply for Optional Attendance to all schools and programs should sufficient space be available when all the needs of students resident in the City of Toronto are met.

If sufficient space as outlined in the procedures and a suitable program are available at the requested school, then:

- 1.1. Parents/guardians, on behalf of their children, or students who are 18 years of age or older may apply to two regular schools for optional attendance.
- 1.2. **If requests exceed the space available**, students will be admitted by a lottery subject to the following admissions priorities:

Priority 1

Students who have siblings already in the requested school and expected to be in the school for the next school year.

Priority 2

Secondary students whose child(ren) is/are enrolled in the child care centre in the catchment areas of the Secondary school.

Priority 3

Students attending licensed child care, including licensed home childcare, in the catchment area of the requested school.

Priority 4

Students receiving child care in the catchment area of the requested school.

Priority 5

Feeder school students who are currently under optional attendance.

Priority 6

Students who are in district to the feeder school, but not in district to the next panel school.

Priority 7

Other students resident in the City of Toronto.

On completion of the lottery, students' names will be placed on a waiting list according to the priorities set out above. If space is still available after all priority areas have been considered, students residing outside the City of Toronto may be accepted.

- 1.3. Students who receive approval to attend a school under the Optional Attendance Policy are expected to continue to attend that school until graduation from that school.
- 1.4. Students who change residence during the school year will be given the option to remain in the current school until the end of the school year.”
- 1.5. Upon graduation from a school, Optional Attendance students will be required to re-apply under the Optional Attendance Policy for admission to the middle, senior, junior high or secondary school into which their current school feeds.
- 1.6. No transportation will be provided.
- 1.7. Decisions relating to Optional Attendance may be appealed through the Superintendent of Education for the requested school.

2.0 Specialized Schools and Programs*

Where schools or sections of schools are Board-authorized to provide specialized programs, access to such schools and/or programs will be open to any students who are residents of the City of Toronto and eligible to attend subject to the guidelines outlined below:

- 2.1. Students will be selected for admission subject to the students meeting the required admission criteria of such schools and programs.
- 2.2. Parents/guardians, on behalf of their children, or students who are 18 years of age or older may apply to a maximum of two specialized schools/programs for optional attendance.
- 2.3. If more students meet the criteria than there are spaces available, students will be admitted based on a lottery.
- 2.4. Where identical programs are offered at several locations standardized criteria will exist to select students.
- 2.5. Admission criteria for specialized programs that are school initiated will be developed by the school and approved by the Superintendent of Education. The TDSB will develop admission criteria for specialized schools or programs initiated by the TDSB.
- 2.6. Offers of admission and acceptance adhere to established timelines and deadlines as specified by the Optional Attendance Policy.
- 2.7. No transportation will be provided.

3.0 Alternative Schools*

All students who are residents of the City of Toronto are eligible to attend any Board-authorized alternative school subject to the guidelines outlined:

3.1. Elementary

- (a) The student and parent meet the required admission criteria for the school developed by that school. .
- (b) If more students meet the criteria than there are spaces available, students will be admitted based on a lottery.
- (c) Where possible, first consideration for attendance is to be given to students within an existing alternative school.
- (d) Offers of admission and acceptance adhere to established timelines and deadlines as specified by the Optional Attendance Policy.
- (e) Transportation will be in accordance with the Board Transportation policy.

3.2. Secondary

- (a) The student meets the required admission criteria for the school developed by that school and has consulted with Board designated guidance staff.
- (b) Where possible, first consideration for attendance is to be given to students within an existing alternative schools pathway.
- (c) Transportation will be in accordance with the Board's transportation policy.

4.0 French Immersion/Extended French Programs*

All Students who are residents of the City of Toronto and eligible to attend a designated elementary, middle, senior, junior or secondary school will have the right to attend a French Immersion/Extended French Program. Right of access is determined by the Protocols and Procedures for Admission to French Immersion/Extended French Programs and the Protocols and Procedures for Late Admission to French Immersion/Extended French Programs.

- 4.1. If a student elects to attend a French Immersion/Extended French Program in other than the school/pathway designated through the Protocols for Admission to French Immersion/Extended French Programs, the Optional Attendance Policy set out for regular schools and programs will apply. No transportation will be provided.

- 4.2. Once admitted to a school, the student will have the right to complete the French Immersion/Extended French Program in the schools through the pathway designated to deliver Optional French Programs in that area for that school. Any change in pathway will be subject to the procedures of the Optional Attendance Policy. This does not change for students who change residence.
- 4.3. Students leaving the French Immersion/Extended French Program **may** be required to return to their local school for the English Program as determined by home address or apply for optional attendance in any English Program school.

* To maintain program viability students who attend specialized schools and programs, alternative schools and French Immersion/Extended French programs will have priority over Optional Attendance students attending under regular schools and programs.