Greater Essex County District School Board

Policy: Safe Schools

Reference No: P-AD-16

The Greater Essex County District School Board is committed to creating and promoting a safe environment in its schools and Board properties for staff, parents/guardians, visitors, volunteers and the community. Safety of students is a primary concern of the GECDSB. It is important that all students have a safe, caring and accepting school environment in order to maximize their learning potential and to ensure a positive school climate for all members of the school community. All school staff play a critical role in building and sustaining a positive school climate.

Every member of the school community has a responsibility to assist in creating and maintaining safe, secure, and harmonious learning, teaching, and work environments. All members of the school community have a role in leadership and modeling of appropriate behavior. To that end, the GECDSB supports the local Police % School Protocol.

This policy authorized the creation of procedures for implementation, which shall be considered guidelines pursuant to the Education Act.

Corresponding GECDSB Regulations:

- R-AD-28 Code of Conduct
- R-AD-29 Bullying Prevention and Intervention
- R-AD-30 Progressive Discipline
- R-AD-37 Delegation of Authority Regarding Student Discipline
- R-AD-51 Suspension and Expulsion
- R-AD-08 Student Searches

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Regulation: Safe Arrivals Program

Reference No: R-AD-10

1. All elementary schools have a Safe Arrival Program that works in conjunction with daily attendance procedures to make reasonable efforts to ensure the safe arrival of students at school. This is in compliance with Policy/Program Memorandum 123.

2. The *Education Act* outlines compulsory attendance.

3. Duties of the Principal
    - Develop and publish the Safe Arrival Program and include in the school's handbook for students and parents and staff.
    - Ensure that the Safe Arrival Program is followed.
    - When contact is finally made after a student has had an unexcused absence, the cooperation of the contact/parent/guardian in assisting with the Safe Arrival Program should be reemphasized.
    - Follow up on unsuccessful contacts, including contacting the Social Work/Attendance Counsellor, the police and the Superintendent, as appropriate. Other subsequent steps might include a visit to the home.

4. Duties of the Teacher
    - Keep accurate daily and cumulative records of student absences and lateness.
    - Alert administration of any unusual and/or suspicious absence.

5. Duties of the Parent/Guardian
    - Stress the importance of daily and prompt arrival and attendance with their children.
    - Report the child's absence in advance by contacting the school.
    - Provide the child's absence in advance by contacting the school.
    - Provide current and suitable contact information (name, relationship, phone number, email etc.,) to the school and update them promptly if they change.
    - Parents/guardians/caregivers are responsible for providing the school with complete and current emergency information to enable the school to make any necessary follow-up contacts.
    - Check to see if buses are running prior to school if there is inclement weather. If your child is walking and will absent, contact the school.

6. Duties of the School Council
    - Assist in communicating the Safe Arrival Program to parent/guardians and making reminders at meetings.

7. Duties of the Student
    - Be responsible and accountable for prompt arrival.
    - Remind parents/guardians of the need to contact the school prior to an absence.

8. Duties of the school Secretary or Clerk or designate
    - Verify that all attendance records are submitted to the office as soon as possible after school beings in the morning and at a second designated time, as determined by the principal.
    - Check and record all forms of communication from parents/guardians/emergency contacts regarding absences.
    - Compare the list of absent students to excused students.
    - Compile a list of non-excused non-arrivals.
    - Record all attempts and the times of such attempts on non-excused students.
    - Attempt to make phone contact with a parent/guardian/emergency contact concerning the non-arrival in the following suggested order: home, work, emergency contact number(s), and siblings. Every attempt should be made to speak with an adult.
    - When making phone contact, a recorded message should be left saying, “Please contact the school”, and the contacts should continue until a “live” contact is made.
    - When contact is made, acknowledge the cooperation from the parent/guardian/emergency contact in assisting with the safe arrivals procedures.

9. Inclement Weather
    - On a day when schools are closed, Safe Arrival Programs do not operate.
    - On a day when buses are not running, Safe Arrival Programs will be used for all walk-in students only. This may require re0assigning staff and additional available resources such a cell phones to achieve this goal.

    As a part of the Inclement Weather procedures, parents/guardians/emergency contacts of elementary students who walk to school should contact the school in the usual manner if they decide to keep their child(ren) at home for all or part of the day.

10. When all reasonable attempts to contact the parent/guardian/emergency contacts, then the responsibilities under the Safe Arrival Program will have been fulfilled.

11. Consistent with the Child & Family Services Act, report to the Windsor Essex Children’s Aid Society, any child under the age of 10, who is absent from school without reasonable supervision and care. (See Appendix A)

Appendix A- References

Education Act

Compulsory attendance

21 (1) Unless excused under this section,

(a) every person who attains the age of six years on or before the first school day in September in any year shall attend an elementary or secondary school on every school day from the first school day in September in that year until the person attains the age of 18 years; and

(b) every person who attains the age of six years after the first school day in September in any year shall attend an elementary or secondary school on every school day from the first school day in September in the next succeeding year until the last school day in June in the year in which the person attains the age of 18 years. 2006, c. 28, s. 5 (1).

When attendance excused

(2) A person is excused from attendance at school if,

(a) the person is receiving satisfactory instruction at home or elsewhere;

(b) the person is unable to attend school by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause;

(c) transportation is not provided by a board for the person and there is no school that he or she has a right to attend situated,

(i) within 1.6 kilometres from the person's residence measured by the nearest road if he or she has not attained the age of seven years on or before the first school day in September in the year in question, or

(ii) within 3.2 kilometres from the person's residence measured by the nearest road if he or she has attained the age of seven years but not the age of 10 years on or before the first school day in September in the year in question, or

(iii) within 4.8 kilometres from the person's residence measured by the nearest road if he or she has attained the age of 10 years on or before the first school day in September in the year in question;

(d) the person has obtained a secondary school graduation diploma or has completed a course that gives equivalent standing;

(e) the person is absent from school for the purpose of receiving instruction in music and the period of absence does not exceed one-half day in any week;

(f) the person is suspended, expelled or excluded from attendance at school under any Act or under the regulations;

(g) the person is absent on a day regarded as a holy day by the church or religious denomination to which he or she belongs; or

(h) the person is absent or excused as authorized under this Act and the regulations. 2006, c. 28, s. 5 (1).

Child and Family Services Act

Section 79

(4) Where a person is charged with contravening subsection (3) and the child is less than ten years of age, the onus of establishing that the person made provision for the child's supervision and care that was reasonable in the circumstances rests with the person.