Greater Essex County District School Board

Policy: Board, Lodging and Transportation Once a Week – Pelee Island

Reference No: P-BA-10

In accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, board, lodging and transportation once a week, shall be provided and paid for as approved by the Greater Essex County District School Board, for all secondary school students residing on Pelee Island and attending a designated secondary school.

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Students that reside on Pelee Island and travel to the mainland to attend secondary school are eligible to have their travel and accommodations paid for by the Greater Essex County District School Board (the "Board"). The following regulation has been developed to help students and families understand what costs are covered by the Board.

Lodging

- The Board will pay lodging to the host only for the instructional days during which school is in session and students are required to be in attendance.
- To qualify for lodging and transportation, the legal guardian of the student must register the student with the Board and be approved to attend school. If the student has a legal guardian residing on the mainland, transportation costs and lodging will not be provided.
- The contract stipend of $33.54 per academic day will be provided to cover the costs of lodging and three meals per day (recognizing that lunch is materials to prepare a bag lunch to be eaten at school). The stipend rate will be reviewed annually each September 1 and will be adjusted for the CPI Ontario Rate of the previous year.
- For greater clarification, "CPI Ontario Rate" shall be calculated using the Statistics Canada Consumer Price Index Data Visualization Tool (Annual average % change): "Consumer Price Index, annual average"; "CPI Items – All Items"; "Geographies – Ontario".
- The Statistics Canada Consumer Price Index Data Visualization Tool is available.
- If there is a joint custody arrangement, the payment of the stipend will be based on the living arrangements as outlined in the agreement. If the student is living with the custodial parent, then no stipend will be paid.

Transportation

- The Board will cover one round trip by ferry (or air fare, if the ferry is unavailable during the months of November to April) per week, as well as cab fare to/from the docks on the days of travel to/from Pelee Island. Eligible taxi costs will be covered by the Board and billed directly from the transportation provider to the Windsor-Essex Student Transportation Services ("WESTS"). Ferry tickets should be purchased by the host family and submitted for reimbursement to the Board monthly.
- Students will be permitted to travel home each weekend. When a student is unable to travel home on any weekend during the periods of the year when the student must depend on air travel, or when travel by air or ferry is inoperative due to adverse weather conditions, an additional allowance at the daily stipend rate for board and lodging may be requested.
- The designated school for secondary students from Pelee Island is Kingsville District High School. The designated school for students wishing to attend alternative programs such as, but not limited to, the International Baccalaureate Programme ("IB") will be considered.

- Beginning September 1, 2023, if a student chooses to go to another school, transportation and lodging will not be paid by the Board. This change will not impact existing students that are currently attending an out-of-district high school.

Requesting Reimbursement

- Weekly reports must be submitted by the host family to WESTS outlining the days in which transportation was required and each night that the student lodged with the host. As part of the weekly reporting, billets are to submit all ferry receipts. Please note that all ferry receipts must be booked on either the host, legal guardian or student's account. Receipts shall not be reimbursed if the name on the ticket does not match with WESTS records. Daily stipends and ferry ticket expenses will be reimbursed to the host in the following month.
- Hosts that are claiming the contracted stipend are required to attest that the information is correct to the best of their knowledge. The Board has the right to withhold payment when an amount is in dispute until the dispute is settled.

The link to submit lodging and transportation expenses can be found at: Pelee Island Weekly Form.

Responsibility of Parents

- It is the responsibility of parents to choose a host family to board their children during the school week. The host should live within the school boundary of the secondary school that the student is attending. To ensure safety and provide stability to students, the Board requires that families find one consistent host for the entire school year. Students are not permitted to change their residence throughout the year unless approval is granted by the school principal and the new host's information is communicated to WESTS and the Board's Business department. Failure to obtain approval may result in the host being unable to collect the contracted stipend.
- Parents should discuss all arrangements with the host family. The host family should discuss expectations for behaviour, including curfews.
- Parents should ensure that their child has access to necessities such as a phone for local calls only, reliable internet and laundry facilities.
- Parents are expected to update WESTS of any changes to where their child resides during the school week through completion of the on-line tracking form.

Responsibility of Students

- Students are expected to behave in a respectful manner as they would if they were living at home.
- Students should ensure that they bring enough clothes and toiletries needed for the week.
- Students should check with the host family before inviting over friends.
- Students should abide by the rules agreed upon between the host and the student's parents.