

SCHOOL CHOICE

Background

Student admission in the District is to be guided by the following principles:

- Access to neighbourhood school: The admission process is to maximize the number of students able to attend their catchment area school in accordance with their wishes
- Choice: The admission process is to maximize the student's and parent's ability to choose the school and educational program which best meets the student's educational needs
- Certainty, stability, continuity: The admission process is to support certainty, stability and continuity for students and families. Siblings will be admitted to the same school wherever possible, subject to the provisions of the School Act and the wishes of the family.
- Efficient resource allocation: The admission process is to enable school and District staff to plan the allocation of space and instructional resources to best accommodate demand and minimize adjustments required at the beginning of the school year.

The District will endeavour to provide programs that meet the interests and needs of District students.

Definitions

Catchment area child means a person:

- of school age, and
- resident in the catchment area of the school

Continuing student means a school age student in attendance at the school or a designated feeder school during the previous school year who is expected to continue in the educational program for the succeeding year, but does not include:

- A non-District child who attended during the previous school year on a discretionary acceptance, unless approved for renewal by the Principal or Superintendent's delegate;
- A child who withdraws or transfers from the school or educational program before the end of the previous school year, or
- A student who attended during the previous year on a disciplinary transfer.

District child means a catchment area child or a non-catchment area child resident in the District.

District choice programs are programs established with a particular educational focus, offered at specific schools, for which application to the District must be made. They may have special program entrance criteria and special catchment areas.

Feeder schools and their associated “receiving schools” are as described by the District’s catchment areas, where the class from the highest grade offered by the feeder school would be enrolled the next year in a designated receiving school unless an application for enrolment elsewhere is accepted, under the District’s enrolment process for continuing students.

Non-catchment area child means a person:

- Of school age,
- Resident in the District, and
- Not resident in the catchment area of the school.

Non-District child means a person:

- Of school age,
- Resident in British Columbia, and
- Not resident in the District.

Parent includes a guardian of the person appointed by court order or under the will of a deceased parent, and does not include a non-custodial parent.

Place of residence: For purposes of this Administrative Procedure, a student’s place of residence is deemed to be that of the student’s parent, unless satisfactory evidence is produced that the student’s ordinary place of residence during the school year is elsewhere.

Previous school year means the school year previous to the school year for which the person is applying to enroll in an educational program.

Transfer student is a school-age student or child applying to attend a school other than the catchment school, by request.

Procedures

1. Determination of Available Space and Facilities

Section 74.1 of the *School Act* establishes priorities for enrolment to apply if the District determines that space and facilities are available in a school.

- 1.1. For purposes of section 74.1(6) and (7) of the *School Act*, space and facilities are available in a school to enroll an applicant if there is capacity to provide the applicant with an educational program appropriate to the applicant’s needs, taking into account both physical and educational resources, after reasonable enrollment projections have been made to allow for accommodation of continuing students, District programs located in the school, and (if applicable) a kindergarten program adequate to accommodate the projected enrolment of catchment area children.
- 1.2. The District shall decide whether space and facilities are available in individual schools and educational programs for purposes of section 74.1(6) and (7) of the *School Act*, in accordance with clauses 1.1 and 1.3.

- 1.3. Decisions will be made in consultation with the Principal of the affected school and will be based on program capacity, including consideration of the following factors:
 - 1.3.1. The operating capacity of the school as defined by the Ministry of Education;
 - 1.3.2. Staff assigned to a school by the District;
 - 1.3.3. The physical space in which instructional programs operate in the school;
 - 1.3.4. The ability of the school to provide appropriate educational programs for the applicant and other students;
 - 1.3.5. The needs of other programs located in the school.
 - 1.4. After enrolment of continuing students, if the requisite space and facilities are determined to be available and application deadlines and other requirements have been met, transfer applications and applications from new students will be accepted in the following priority order, subject to any permitted sibling preference:
 - 1.4.1. Catchment area child who attended the school during the previous school year;
 - 1.4.2. Other catchment area child;
 - 1.4.3. Non-catchment area child;
 - 1.4.4. Non-District child.
 - 1.5. If space and facilities are inadequate to accommodate all continuing students, continuing students will be re-enrolled in the following descending order of priority, subject to any permitted sibling preference:
 - 1.5.1. Continuing catchment area student;
 - 1.5.2. Continuing non-catchment area student;
 - 1.5.3. Continuing non-District student.
 - 1.6. Waitlists will be established for those not accepted, to be maintained until September 15 of the next school year, subject to any permitted sibling preference.
 - 1.7. Re-evaluation of space availability will take place periodically until September 15 of the next school year to ensure that the maximum numbers of requests are met at the earliest time possible.
 - 1.8. Applicants for enrolment in Kindergarten programs and District choice programs will be separately prioritized in accordance with the priorities set out in clause 1.4.
2. Tie-breaking
 - 2.1. When applications made within time have the same priority (after application of any permitted sibling preference), priority as between them will be determined by time and date of application unless a determination is made by the Superintendent to determine priority by lot.
3. Alternate Enrolment Process for Continuing District Students
 - 3.1. Continuing students (except for non-District children) are not required to apply. They will be automatically enrolled in the applicable educational program or school, subject to space availability and to meeting program requirements, unless transferred or withdrawn. (Continuing non-District children are required to submit an application form.)

4. Dates for Applications to Enroll and Enrolment
 - 4.1. Application for transfers must be submitted on or before March 15 of each year, subject to clause 5.2.
 - 4.2. Before February 1 in each school year, the District may establish dates other than March 15 for submission of applications to enroll.
 - 4.2.1. The District may establish different dates for different grades, educational programs, schools, or categories of applicant.
 - 4.3. Applications received after the dates established will be subject to the priority of those applicants who applied within time and will be accepted or rejected by the Superintendent.
5. Guarantee of educational program
 - 5.1. District children who apply for enrolment in an educational program will be provided with an educational program in the District, unless a parent of the student consents to a placement outside the District.
6. Commitment
 - 6.1. The District process shall encourage children (if of appropriate age) and their parents to jointly consider the children's educational needs before requesting an assignment to a school other than the current school or the catchment area school.
 - 6.2. Applicants may apply for more than one educational program but may only be enrolled in one. When the applicant is offered and accepts enrolment in an educational program (in or out of the District), applications for all other programs become invalid.
7. Program Requirements
 - 7.1. Applicants for enrolment must meet all program requirements for the requested educational program and will be subject to any selection process established for that program.
8. Discretionary Acceptance: Suspended or Expelled Non-District Students
 - 8.1. Enrolment applications from non-District children may be refused if the child:
 - 8.1.1. Is under suspension from a BC public school or District, or
 - 8.1.2. Has been refused an educational program by a BC public school board under s. 85(3) of the *School Act* for refusing to comply with the code of conduct and other rules and policies of the Board or has failed to apply himself or herself to his or her studies.
 - 8.2. Such applications will be referred to the Superintendent for a decision on admission. Admissions may be made subject to terms and conditions. A student who has been admitted under this clause is not entitled to the status of a continuing student in the following year unless approved by the Principal or Superintendent.
9. Sibling Preference
 - 9.1. Subject to the *School Act*, when one sibling is enrolled in or admitted to an educational program in a school (other than as a result of a disciplinary transfer), other siblings are given priority within their requested educational programs in the same school. This preference does not apply where the siblings will not be attending concurrently.

10. Communication

- 10.1. Application periods and enrolment dates will be communicated to the school communities and to the community at large and may also be communicated to other communities within and outside the District.

11. Transportation

- 11.1. Students who transfer to a school outside their regular catchment area are not entitled to school bus transportation or transportation allowance.
- 11.2. Notice of this Administrative Procedure shall be provided to parents when they make an application for a cross boundary transfer.

Reference: Sections 1, 2, 3, 3.1, 7, 20, 22, 65, 74, 74.1, 74, 75.1, 85 School Act

Adopted: April 15, 2003

Revised: June 25, 2019, September 2022