

NUMBER:	<i>to be determined</i>
TOPIC:	Elementary Optional Attendance
EFFECTIVE:	December 2009
CROSS-REFERENCE:	
REVISION DATE:	September 2012
BOARD <u>RECEIVED</u>	
RESPONSIBILITY:	Superintendent of Education (Respective Family of Schools)

INTENT STATEMENT:

Resident Halton students, enrolled in kindergarten through graduation, attending regular or French Immersion programs at schools other than those designated for their place of residence, do so by way of optional attendance.

The Elementary Optional Attendance process allows schools with physical space to accept students. The process allows for open schools to consider students before the Ministry-mandated Primary Class size is applied during staffing, resulting in a greater chance of approval and earlier notification.

For the purpose of this Administrative Procedure, ‘Kindergarten’ means Junior Kindergarten and Senior Kindergarten.

Students granted optional attendance are not eligible for Board transportation.

Optional attendance does not apply to students placed by an IPRC or students attending English as a Second Language collector school programs.

PROCEDURE:

- Parents are not required to reapply each year after approval. However, all optional attendance requests granted are subject to renewal annually.
- In November of each year, Administrative Council will review preliminary enrolment projections, and subsequently identify the status of schools with respect to optional attendance for the following school year. (An Open to Optional Attendance List will be posted on the board website.) Schools will fall into one of two different circumstances depending on the relationship between capacity and enrolment:
 1. Open Schools
The school has space available and may accept new applications for optional attendance.
 2. Closed Schools
The school has run out of space and cannot approve new applications for optional attendance but may renew previously approved applications for one additional year.

Application Process -- Kindergarten to Grade 8:

Criteria for Approval

The approval of applications is dependent on the following:

- School is designated as an Open School;
- Compliance to Primary Class Size* caps is achieved;
- Availability of pupil spaces and class size guidelines;
- No new class would have to be created;
- No need to hire additional staff or increase instructional resources;
- No displacing of students to an alternative class placement;
- No additional costs to the Board;
- Babysitting/daycare (alone) may not be a reason for granting a request.

*** Please note: The Halton District School Board is required to meet parameters set out by the Ministry of Education. The Board is required to ensure 90 percent of our primary classes (Kindergarten half time to Grade 3 inclusive) have a class size of 20:1 or less, with the remaining 10 percent of primary classes having a maximum class size of 23:1. Principals may not consider optional attendance into Primary classes that have reached or are approaching the Primary class size cap.**

Application Management

The Principal of the home school (including closed schools) initiates steps of the application and communication processes:

- Applications are received and date/time stamped at home school (Appendix B);
- Upon receipt of an application, the home school Principal may confer with the parents to clarify the reasons for the application and to reinforce that no decisions are made until such time as enrolments and organizations are clear;
- The home school Principal forwards the application to the receiving school Principal;
- The receiving school Principal, in consultation with the Superintendent, makes a decision;
- The receiving school Principal notifies the parent by sending the completed application form (Appendix B) along with the Procedures and Conditions for Optional Attendance (Appendix C);
- The receiving school Principal sends copies of the completed application to the home school Principal and the receiving school Superintendent if denied.

Timelines and Process:

a) For September Placement

- Applications are received at the home school between the period of December to January
- Any appeals of these decisions must be submitted within 10 days of receipt of the denied notification (Appendix B & C);
- In some instances applications may not be approved based on school specific factors until the third week of September.

b) Mid-Year Applications (Elementary)

- *See **Optional Attendance Administrative Procedure** follow application management process*

c) Late Applications For September

- *See **Optional Attendance Administrative Procedure** follow application management process*
- *Any request received after January 31 may not receive a decision until the end of September (includes Closed Schools)*
- *Receiving school Principal to send **Late Acknowledgment Letter** to parent (Appendix F)*

Appeals

Appeals to reconsider an application are permitted in situations where “extraordinary circumstances” need to be assessed. Appeals are to be submitted by parents, in writing, to the Superintendent(s) of Education of the **requested school**. Copies of the appeal must be sent to the home school and requested school Principal within 10 days of receiving notification of denied application. The Superintendent(s) of Education makes decisions regarding appeals, in consultation with the Principals involved, and communicates decisions in writing to the applicant and the schools. The decision of the Superintendent is final (Appendix D or E).

Regarding Siblings

- **When students are admitted to special programs (i.e. ELL or Special Education) in other schools it is not automatic that siblings will receive optional attendance.** If optional attendance for siblings is desired, the application must be completed and processed appropriately.

Regarding French Immersion

- Kindergarten applications for French Immersion Centres are not automatic and will be subject to the standard application process.

Application for Secondary Schools - Grade 8 to 9

- *See **Secondary Optional Attendance Administrative Procedure** (regular process)*

Tracking of Optional Attendance:

Careful tracking of the status of students attending schools under optional attendance is critical. Each school should establish an on-going database or spreadsheet for optional attendance requests that should include the following information: name, home school, date of application, reason, start date, and grade. (Appendix G)

ELEMENTARY OPTIONAL ATTENDANCE TIMELINES

Last Week of November	Elementary Schools designated as Open/Closed Administrative Procedure, parent letter & listing of Open/Closed schools posted on website
December - January	Applications received at home school Applications are date stamped by home school, signed off and forwarded to receiving school Closed School Principals deny requests
January - February	Late Optional Attendance application acknowledgement letter sent to parents (on-going) Open School Principal and Superintendent will review applications and confer with home school Principal
Mid-February	Verify applications with school organizations, staffing and class size compliance
End of February	<u>Parent Notification</u> Approved Applications sent to parents by Requested School Principal Denied Applications sent to parents and Superintendents by Requested School Principal
March	Appeals received and processed by requested school superintendent JK/SK or Late applications <u>may not</u> be approved based on school specific factors until the third week of September after final home school numbers are confirmed

Elementary Optional Attendance Pilot Program
Appendices

<u>Document</u>	<u>Appendix</u>
Summary of Information To Parents Re: Elementary Optional Attendance	A
Application for Elementary Optional Attendance	B
Elementary Optional Attendance Procedures and Conditions.....	C
Elementary Appeal Denied.....	D
Elementary Appeal Granted.....	E
JK/SK & Late – Acknowledge Letter.....	F
Tracking of Optional Attendance	G



Halton District School Board

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION TO PARENTS Re: ELEMENTARY OPTIONAL ATTENDANCE

The Halton District School Board encourages elementary students to attend the school designated for families in their area. The Halton Board, however, provides to students who are residents in the Halton region the opportunity to apply for enrolment in a Halton school outside their regular school attendance area in schools where there are sufficient pupil places to accommodate them. This is referred to as optional attendance.

The Elementary Optional Attendance process allows schools with physical space to accept students. The process allows for open schools to consider students before the Ministry-mandated Primary Class size is applied during staffing, resulting in a greater chance of approval and earlier notification.

For the purpose of this Administrative Procedure, 'Kindergarten' means Junior Kindergarten and Senior Kindergarten.

Students granted optional attendance are not eligible for Board transportation.

Optional attendance does not apply to students placed by an IPRC or students attending English as a Second Language collector school programs.

The optional attendance process in elementary schools is initiated by contacting the Principal of your home school. The Principal will provide an application form and further information. The approval of optional attendance requests is dependent upon:

- School is designated as an Open School;
- Compliance to Primary Class Size* caps is achieved;
- Availability of pupil spaces and class size guidelines;
- No new class would have to be created;
- No need to hire additional staff or increase instructional resources;
- No displacing of students to an alternative class placement;
- No additional costs to the Board;
- Babysitting/daycare (alone) may not be a reason for granting a request.

** Please note: The Halton District School Board is required to meet parameters set out by the Ministry of Education. The Board is required to ensure 90 percent of their primary classes (Kindergarten half time to Grade 3 inclusive) are at a ratio of 20:1 or less, with the remaining 10 percent of primary classes having an average maximum class size of 23:1. Principals may not consider optional attendance into Primary classes that have reached or are approaching the Primary class size cap.*

Appeals

Appeals to reconsider an application are permitted in situations where "extraordinary circumstances" need to be assessed. Appeals are to be submitted by parents, in writing, to the Superintendent(s) of Education of the **requested school**. Copies of the appeal must be sent to the home school and requested school Principal within 10 days of receiving notification of denied application. The Superintendent(s) of Education makes decisions regarding appeals, in consultation with the Principals involved, and communicates decisions in writing to the applicant and the schools. The decision of the Superintendent is final.

Parents are not required to reapply each year after approval. However, all optional attendance requests granted are subject to renewal annually.



Halton District School Board

Application for Elementary Optional Attendance

Procedures and Conditions

1. Application forms are to be obtained from, and returned to, the designated home school.
 - a) Applications will be accepted from December 1 through the end of January of each year (See Schools Open to Elementary Optional Attendance List).
 - b) Late applications will be considered but decisions may not be made or communicated until after the third week in September.
2. Consideration for placement in the requested school is based on:
 - a) Availability of student spaces and resources; b) nature of the request; c) compliance to Ministry class size caps
3. It is understood that:
 - a) Parents are not required to reapply each year after approval. However, all optional attendance requests granted are subject to renewal annually.
 - b) Parents requesting optional attendance will speak with the designated home school principal prior to submitting an Optional Attendance Application form. Upon receipt, the home school will discuss and forward the application to the requested school;
 - c) If the request is granted, the Board will not provide transportation for the student.
4. Mid-Year applications will be considered upon receipt, please follow the Optional Attendance Procedure.
5. The requested school principal will contact the applicant regarding the decision (complete the paperwork and attach Appendix C)

<i>Student I.D. #</i> _____		<i>Exceptional (I.P.R.C.): Yes ___ No ___</i>	
<i>E.S.L.: Yes ___ No ___</i>		<i>French Immersion: Yes ___ No ___</i>	
Student's Name: _____		Application Date: _____	
Given Names	Surname	Day	Month Year
Student's Address: _____		Telephone (____) _____	
Street	Town/City	Postal Code	area code
Birth Date: _____		Designated Home Elementary School _____	
Day	Month	Year	
Present School: _____		Requested School: _____	
Open _____	Closed _____	Open _____	Closed _____
Present Grade: _____		Grade Level: _____	
If granted, placement to commence _____			
<i>Date / Time Received:</i> _____		<i>Signature of Home School Principal</i> _____	
Reason for Request			
_____		_____	
Name of Parent or Guardian (please print)		Signature of Parent or Guardian	
To be Completed by the Requested School (Attach Appendix C to Parent's copy of Decision)			
Date Received _____		Approved <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Approved <input type="checkbox"/>
Complete one:			
A. Student has been accepted at _____		in _____	
Name of School		Program/Year/Grade	
Special Conditions: _____			
B. Student has not been accepted because _____			

<i>Requested School Principal's Signature</i>			

When complete forward copies to: Applicant, Home School, and Superintendent- If Denied

Application for Elementary Optional Attendance Procedures and Conditions

Optional Attendance Granted

- If you have not done so already, please contact requested school in order to register.
- Parents are not required to reapply each year after approval. However, all optional attendance requests granted are subject to renewal annually.
- Transportation to and from (school) will be your responsibility as a parent.

Optional Attendance Denied

- Appeals to reconsider an application are permitted in situations where “extraordinary circumstances” need to be assessed. Appeals are to be submitted by parents, in writing, to the Superintendent(s) of Education of the **requested school** with copies to the home school and requested school Principal within 10 days of notification of application denied.
- At that time space availability will be determined. Those who have appealed will be contacted in March. The decision of the Superintendent is final.



Halton District School Board

(HDSB Letterhead –Elementary Appeal Denied & Distributed by Superintendent)

(Date)

(Name
Address)

Dear Parents and/or Guardians:

Re: Optional Attendance (Name of Student)

Thank you for your letter appealing the decision to not grant your child (**Name of student**), optional attendance at (**Name of school**).

I have reviewed your appeal and regret to inform you that I am unable to grant your request based on the following:

- Closed School
- The school's enrolment is too high to accommodate out of area students.
- The school's organization does not allow additional students to be placed in the grade level you have requested.
- Compliance to Ministry mandated Primary Class Size Caps would not be achieved
- The circumstances you have described do not meet the criteria for approval.

Please be aware that the Superintendent has the final authority for this decision and that there is no further avenue of appeal.

Sincerely,

(_____)

(Name), Superintendent

- c (Name), Principal, (Home School)
- (Name), Principal (Requested School)
- file



Halton District School Board

Standard Elementary Appeal Granted – Distributed by Superintendent

(Date)

(Name & Address)

Dear Parents and/or Guardians:

**Re: Elementary Optional Attendance
(Name of Student)**

Thank you for your letter of appeal for reconsideration of your optional attendance request. The Principals and I have had an opportunity to explore your appeal for **(Name of student)** to attend **(Name of school)**. Fortunately, I am able to grant approval for **(Name of student & grade)**. If you have not already done so, please contact **(Name of requested school)** in order to register.

Parents are not required to reapply each year after approval. However, all optional attendance requests granted are subject to renewal annually. Transportation to and from (school) will be your responsibility as a parent.

Sincerely,

(Name)
Superintendent

- c (name) Principal, Home School
(name) Principal, Requested School
file



Halton District School Board

(School Letterhead - JK/SK Applications)
(Elementary Acknowledge & Distributed by Principal)

[Date]

[Name & Address]

Re: JK / SK or Late Optional Attendance Application

Dear [Name]

This letter is to acknowledge receipt of your application for [Student's Name] to attend [Name of School], under optional attendance for September. [We have received your JK/SK application.] or [We have received your application after the January 31 timeline]. However, we will review your application at a later date.

Decisions may not be made nor communicated until after the third week in September. Students are to register and attend their home school pending a decision.

Sincerely,

[Name]
Principal

cc: [Name], Principal, [Name Requested School]
file

