



2023-2024 Student Handbook

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Policies and Procedures For Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

ATTENDANCE & SAFE ARRIVAL

Regular attendance is necessary if a child is to benefit from the school's educational programs. It is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure that the child attends school on time and on a regular basis.

What happens if I'm going to be late, absent or leaving during the school day?

The Durham District School Board has a Safe Arrival Program. Your child's absence can be reported by calling SchoolMessenger at **1-844-350-2646** or using the mobile app.

The absence/late must be reported **before our morning bell (9:15 a.m)** otherwise the system will automatically generate a call to parents whose children were marked absent unexcused (unreported) when class attendance is taken at 9:15 a.m. The system will continue to call until a parent confirms the absence. If all parents use and support this system, we can eliminate unnecessary calls and more importantly, know immediately if a child does not arrive at school safely!

Any student who normally stays at school for lunch, but wishes to leave school to go out at lunch is required to bring a dated and signed parent note to the office at lunch, before signing out.

When it is necessary to pick up your child during school hours, please follow this procedure:

- send a note of explanation beforehand to the teacher
- report through SchoolMessenger
- come to the office to pick up your child - your child will be waiting at the office or will be called down
- be sure to sign out your child in the record book before leaving
- when a child is absent, it is his/her responsibility to complete any missed work

EMERGENCY CLOSING PROCEDURES

Infrequently schools are faced with emergency situations (such as inclement weather, fire, flood, breakdown of heating system, etc.) which require the school to be closed. The main source of communication for the Durham District School Board is radio:

CFTR 680	Toronto	KX96 95.9	Ajax	CHFI 98.1	Toronto
CKDO 1350	Oshawa	MIX 99	Toronto	EZ ROCK 97.3	Toronto
CFRB 1010	Toronto	CHUM 104.5	Toronto	CKQT/CKGE 94.6	Oshawa

During inclement weather, the Durham District School Board may attempt to keep the schools open. It is up to the parents to decide if conditions are safe for their children to walk to and from school. Once the school day has begun, students will normally stay until the day is over. Parents, of course, may pick up their children at any time during the school day by following the sign-out procedures in the office. **If the buses are cancelled in the morning they will not be running in the afternoon.**

VISITORS

School property is private property. Anyone who is not a registered student or a staff member is asked to report to the office upon arrival at the school.

To drop off lunches or forgotten items to your child, please place lunch/item (labelled with student name and classroom) on the table in the vestibule between the front door and interior door to the school. At 12:00 the students will come to the entrance to retrieve the item.

For the safety of students, we ask that visitors to the school do not wait in the hallways, visit classrooms or use the students' bathrooms. While it may be convenient to drop in for a few minutes at the start of the day or at dismissal to chat with staff, they have a responsibility to supervise all the students in the classroom and has been discouraged by the office to meet with parents during arrival or dismissal time for our students' safety.

As a result of the Safe Welcome Program at Seneca Trail P.S. the doors of the school will be locked. Persons without permission to be on school premises may be charged with trespassing as outlined in the 'Access to School Premises,' in the Education Act.

CROSSING GUARDS

All students are expected to obey the rules of the crossing guard. It is important to stand back from the curb. Students should only cross the road after the whistle has sounded twice and the crossing guard has signaled you to cross.

KISS 'N RIDE

The Kiss 'n Ride is operated by staff whose goal it is to assist in the safe arrival/departure of all students.

A Kiss 'n Ride lane has been marked and designated as the area for dropping off and picking up students. **At no time are cars to be left unattended in the Kiss 'n Ride loop.** If you do need to exit your car to meet your child, you are required to use the visitor or available street parking. We thank you for helping to teach our students to use the sidewalk to access the school yard rather than walking through the parking lot.

The west side of our parking is for buses to drop off and pick up students. If you choose to use the west side, please remain in the que behind the busses. **A reminder that staff are not permitted to open vehicle doors for students.**

SCHOOL CASH ONLINE

Seneca Trail uses an online payment system called **School Cash Online (SCO)**. This system is used by parents to pay for school trips, hot lunches and more. Once registered, you will receive an automated e-mail each time items are available for payment or purchase. The OEN number can be found on your child's report card if you are not a new student in Ontario.

HEALTHY SNACK POLICY

We are committed to setting standards and expectations at Seneca Trail P.S. that produce the best learning environment for our students. There is an abundance of research that proves healthy food improves learning and junk food inhibits success. The newest research also informs us that water can play an important role in helping students learn. We have incorporated these research findings into the following Healthy Snack Policy.

- There will be a formal snack break during class time before morning recess. We believe that teaching students about healthy eating habits is part of the curriculum and it is an important component of our focus on wellness.
- Water will be allowed in the classroom during teaching times so we encourage students to bring a refillable water bottle labelled with their name. We strongly encourage the regular drinking of water to hydrate the brain promoting attentiveness. Soft drinks and sugared box drinks cannot and should not take the place of water.

BIRTHDAY TREATS

Student birthdays will be acknowledged in classrooms. If you wish to send in a "treat" for your son/daughter's class, we ask that you send in **non-food-related items**. (e.g., pencils, erasers, etc). This will help to ensure the safety of all of our students who have food allergies, sensitivities or exclusions.

LUNCHES

We care about the wellness of the environment. To support our environmental efforts we ask that you pack a lunch using reusable containers and a reusable lunch bag. All garbage generated from home will come back home, so we encourage wise environmental choices.

ALLERGIES

Quite a number of students and staff suffer from allergies but some allergies are potentially life threatening. In order to provide a safe learning environment for all, we ask that parents adhere to the following procedures:

- inform the school about a child with anaphylaxis
- obtain an "Allergy Information Sheet" from the school. Complete the form and return it to the school
- provide the school with any pertinent information that would be important for safeguarding your child
- if medications are to be administered at any time, please obtain a "Request for the Administration of Medication" form and have it completed and signed by your child's doctor.

ALLERGY AWARE SCHOOLS

Seneca Trail P.S. is an "Allergy Aware" environment. We are asking everyone to abide by our school policies and to be aware that there are children and staff with anaphylaxis (severe life threatening allergies), which also extends to contact sensitivity, in which even contact with trace amounts of protein have been known to cause severe reactions. Therefore, your cooperation in reducing these allergens coming into the classrooms and the school will greatly minimize the risk of exposure and help to ensure a safe environment for everyone.

MEDICATION

To best serve the needs of children with specific requirements for medication, such as aspirin, prescription drugs, cough medicine, etc., it is essential that parents and the prescribing physician complete a school permission form (Administration of Oral Medication forms available at the office) to enable us to dispense medications. If your child requires the use of an EpiPen or has any serious condition that may require emergency medical treatment please also provide a current photo and any pertinent medical information to the office.

HEAD LICE (PEDICULOSIS)

Head lice is a condition which from time to time surfaces at most schools. Parents are asked to regularly check their children's hair for lice. If you suspect that your child may have this condition, please contact the school immediately. Students will be excluded from class until the condition has been treated.. All live lice must be removed before a student may return to the classroom.

CUSTODY

If there are any special arrangements concerning your child, make sure that these are clearly communicated in writing and discussed with school administration and the home room teacher. An updated copy of court orders for access or custody, signed by an Ontario court judge must be on file in the school office. The school provides information on a child's progress when requested by a non-custodial parent who has legal access.

USE OF SCHOOL PHONE/ ELECTRONIC DEVICES

School phones are used extensively for business during the school day. Students wishing to make calls will be allowed to do so for emergency situations only. Making social arrangements for after school is not considered an emergency. As well, informing parents about after school extra curricular activities should be done at least one day prior to the designated date. Occasionally, it may be necessary for students to make use of the school phone. Permission must be obtained from a staff member. We request that you discuss after-school plans with your child(ren) before they leave for school. We do realize that emergency situations do arise, but ask for your co-operation in this matter. Use of personal electronic devices is prohibited during school day, unless deemed appropriate for educational purposes by administration and staff. Further, the use of recording devices (audio/video) by students or parents are not permitted unless approved by administration and staff. ***“The taking of photos, filming or recording, or the broadcasting of live audio and/or video, while at school or at a school related activity, is prohibited unless approved by the DDSB (or school), and/or where proper consents have been obtained, as may be appropriate.”***

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

The Durham District School Board and Seneca Trail P.S. follow the Guidelines and *Procedures for the Accommodation of Religious Requirements Practices and Observances*. This document has been produced in compliance with requirements of Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy within the contexts of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. This document assists us in creating and maintaining equitable and inclusive environments within our schools and facilities, and guides the process of providing religious accommodations as the need arises. The document is available for viewing at <http://ddsb.durham.edu.on.ca/DDSBmain.htm> (highlight programs on the left panel, then Equity and Inclusive Education, then Guidelines) or you may ask to review a copy at your child's school.

If you anticipate that you or your family might require religious accommodation at any point during the school year we ask that you inform the administration at your child's school as early as possible, preferably at the start of the school year. Areas that you might consider include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Observation of major religious holy days and celebrations
- Accommodation in, or exemption from, specific areas of the curriculum or other school activities
- Religious attire
- Modesty requirements in physical education
- School opening and closing exercises
- Prayer
- Dietary requirements
- You are also welcome to speak to your school administration about unanticipated religious accommodation needs as they arise.



Important: Bringing personal devices to school is optional for students. Parents are not obligated to purchase a device for their child. Resources will be provided when required for a learning task as planned by the teacher.

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Durham District School Board is pleased to provide parents/guardians with information regarding computing technology available to students at school. Please read this letter and the accompanying Acceptable and Safe Use Procedure with your child.

DDSBS computing technology is made available to students to support their learning, research requirements, and career preparation. Computing technology includes computers and associated peripherals, the communication infrastructure and related equipment including local area networks (LANs) and wide area networks (WANs), facsimile machines, scanners, copiers, telephone, video, and other multimedia devices and forms of software.

DDSBS technologies allow all schools to offer Internet access to their students. The Internet is a vehicle for accessing a global network of information resources. Students may use the Internet to locate and retrieve information and communicate learning with others. Students are encouraged to report Cyber-bullying to parents/guardians, teachers, and principals. Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. Cyber-bullying can happen through the use of e-mail, cell phone text, multi-media messages, instant messaging, defamatory Web logs (Blogs), personal Web Sites, on-line personal polling sites and social media websites and applications.

Internet resources may contain material that may be questionable, objectionable, or illegal, and may enable contact with persons who may exhibit unacceptable behaviour. Students re-visiting unacceptable sites will be subject to discipline according to the Schools Code of Behaviour.

The DDSB utilizes internet filtering technologies. This technology blocks access to specific unacceptable sites known to contain violence, sexually explicit acts, intolerant, racist and other extreme viewpoints, cults, etc. No software is capable of blocking all unacceptable Internet sites. However, the Internet is a leading technology in the delivery of information in today's society and therefore, an integral part of our students' education.

Teachers and students are instructed on the safe and acceptable use of the Internet and other DDSB computing technology. Teachers will supervise student use of the Internet as they supervise student use of all other school resources.

All students are expected to abide by the DDSB Acceptable and Safe Use Procedure included with this letter. Misuse and/or abuse of the facilities and resources are subject to consequences as defined and explained in their school's Student Code of Behaviour. Use of the Internet is governed by the Regulation 5500, the Student Code of Conduct, which states that "a student may be suspended or expelled from his or her school, expelled from attending any school in Ontario, and/or prohibited from engaging in school related activities if the student commits an infraction of the Code of Conduct while he or she is at school, engaged in a school-related activity, or engaged in conduct that has a relationship to the school, school community, the reputation of the school or Board." In addition, use is governed by all relevant federal (e.g. Copyright Act, Freedom of Information Act, Protection of Privacy Act, the Criminal Code), provincial (e.g. Education Act, Child and Family Services Act, Safe School Act, Human Rights Code), DDSB (e.g. Policies and Procedures, Central File 06/07-28), and local school (eg. School Code of Behaviour) laws and regulations. Use of DDSB computing technology for unacceptable, illegal, political, or private commercial purposes is strictly prohibited. The onus is on the user to know and to comply with these laws and regulations.

We look forward to providing students with the opportunity to use the school's computing technology facilities and resources in a safe and meaningful way.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

We have established SCHOOL-WIDE BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS

Our behavioural expectations include all students and target all forms of behaviour. They are known by all students and adults. These expectations have been put in place to allow for a positive, safe learning environment and are based on a progressive discipline model.

Example: Bias-free Progressive Discipline Chart.

We actively attempt to PREVENT and REDUCE BEHAVIOURS from happening

We want our students to meet with success every day. For some of our students success is only possible when the day is structured and choice is limited. They need an environment that recognizes that not all students are maturing at the same rate and not all of our children are equipped to meet with the many frustrations that are found in the classroom and the playground every day. Our plan to address this is simple. We match the level of supervision to the child's level of functioning in order to prevent and/or reduce academic, social and behavioural failures. Our prevention plans are also designed to prevent and/or reduce childhood frustrations from erupting into attacking behaviours.

Example: Drop In (a structured recess time with adult support, as opposed to the unstructured outdoor recess time)

We emphasize the need to RESTORE RELATIONSHIPS that are damaged by misbehavior.

One of the important features of our positive discipline model is the need for students to repair the relationships that are damaged after an incident occurs. We work directly with the student and come along side them as they prepare to make it right with anyone effected by what has happened. A major focus of discussions is for students to take responsibility for their actions and the impact on others.

Example: Use of restorative questions and practices.

We use SUSPENSION to keep the school safe

There are times when it is necessary to remove a student from the school for safety reasons. Suspensions are a last resort. They occur when we cannot guarantee a safe environment after a number of interventions have been attempted or when a student refuses to comply with adult requests.

Example: See the Durham Boards Progressive Discipline chart.

We seek out the SUPPORT of BOARD SERVICES and OUTSIDE AGENCIES when in-school strategies fail

There are some students who require a larger group of caring adults to assist them with their struggles to be successful at school. We look for these supports when our in-school strategies, interventions and programs fail to meet a student's needs. Parent approval is always required to access these services and agencies.

We embed CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT into our everyday school life

The classroom is the best place for these topics to be addressed, both formally and informally. Recess is another place where incidental training can take place and where recognition for good choices can be celebrated. As well, assemblies, and certificates are examples of school-wide initiatives that celebrate healthy development in these areas. Opportunities for student leadership are varied and include the following: office help, special event helpers, learning buddies, peer helpers.

Our BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLANS are also embedded into our everyday school life – HOW?

Our discipline strategies (see above) are designed to prevent the development of bullying behaviours. Our daily "talk" that reminds our students to Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible reinforces our intentions to keep the school free from bullying. But no school is completely free of bullying. When bullying behaviours are detected we intervene with an individualized plan of action that involves a team approach, regularly including teachers, parents and, if needed, Board support staff, such as our school psychologist, special education facilitator, or social worker. Time is also spent working with students who are the recipient of bullying behaviours. We intervene with a plan for them as well. Teaching about bullying in the classroom (incidental and planned instruction) is ongoing throughout the year.