

AP 303 – Student Registration and School Choice

Purpose

Normally, a student will register and attend the school whose boundaries include the student’s primary residence, subject to the provisions of the procedures.

Registration timelines and dates for catchment area school registration, out-of-catchment requests to register and out-of-district requests to register will normally be established by December of the year preceding the year for which application is made.

As stated in *AP 302 – School Boundaries and Catchment Areas*, the Board supports the provision of Choice for attending schools other than the catchment-area school and for attending district programs where space and facilities permit.

Student admission in Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools is to be guided by the following principles:

- **Access to neighbourhood school:** The admission process should maximize the number of students able to attend their catchment-area school, in accordance with their wishes.
- **Choice:** The admission process should 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, and continuity:** The admission process should 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 should 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 Board will endeavour to provide programs that meet the interests and needs of district students.

Procedure

1. Definitions

- 1.1 **Catchment-area Child:** a person who is:
 - 1.1.1 of school age, and
 - 1.1.2 a resident in the catchment area of the school

- 1.2 **Continuing Student:** 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. It does not include:
 - 1.2.1 a non-school district child who attended during the previous school year on a discretionary acceptance, unless approved for renewal by the school principal or Superintendent's delegate
 - 1.2.2 a child who withdraws or transfers from the school or educational program before the end of the previous school year
 - 1.2.3 a student who attended during the previous year on a disciplinary transfer.
- 1.3 District Choice Programs/Academies: programs established with a particular educational focus and offered at specific schools for which application to the district must be made in accordance with the school policies and procedures for the specific program. They may have special program entrance criteria and application processes.
- 1.4 **Feeder Schools** and their associated **Receiving Schools** are as described by the Board'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.
- 1.5 **Non-catchment area Child:** a person who is:
 - 1.5.1 of school age
 - 1.5.2 a resident in the school district and
 - 1.5.3 not a resident in the catchment area of the school
- 1.6 **Non-school district Child:** a person who is:
 - 1.6.1 of school age
 - 1.6.2 a resident in British Columbia
 - 1.6.3 not a resident in the school district.
- 1.7 **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.
- 1.8 **Place of Residence:** for purposes of this policy, 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.
- 1.9 **Previous School Year:** the school year previous to the school year for which the person is applying to enrol in an educational program.

- 1.10 **School District Child:** a catchment-area child or a non-catchment-area child.
- 1.11 **Transfer Student:** a school-age student or child applying to attend a school other than the catchment school, by request.
- 1.12 Throughout these guidelines the term *student* may be used interchangeably with *child*. In general, the term *student* will apply to any child who is registered for school in the district, or who has made application to attend school in the district.

2. Determination of Available Space and Facilities

- 2.1 For purposes of Section 74.1(6) and (7) of the *School Act*, space and facilities are available in a school to enrol 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 enrolment projections have been made to allow for:

- 2.1.1 accommodation of continuing students.
 - 2.1.2 district Choice Programs/Academies located in the school, and (if applicable)
 - 2.1.3 a Kindergarten program adequate to accommodate the projected enrolment of catchment-area children.
- 2.2 The Superintendent of Schools/designate will determine whether space and facilities are available in individual schools and for educational programs for purposes of Section 74.1(6) and (7) of the *School Act*, in accordance with paragraphs 2.1 and 2.3.
 - 2.3 Decisions will be made, in consultation with the principal of the effected school, and will be based on program capacity and will include consideration of the following factors:
 - 2.3.1 the operating capacity of the school as defined by the Ministry of Education, and the staff assigned to a school by the district.
 - 2.3.2 the physical space in which instructional programs operate in the school.
 - 2.3.3 the ability of the school to provide appropriate educational programs for the applicant and other students.
 - 2.3.4 the needs of other programs located in the school.
 - 2.4 After enrolment of continuing students, if the requisite space and facilities are determined to be available, applications from new students and transfer applications will be accepted in the following priority, provided application deadlines and other requirements have been met.

- 2.4.1 catchment-area child who attended the school during the previous school year
 - 2.4.2 other catchment-area child
 - 2.4.3 non-catchment-area child
 - 2.4.4 non-school district child
- 2.5 If space and facilities are inadequate to accommodate all continuing students, continuing students will be re-enrolled in the following descending order of priority. All are subject to any permitted sibling preference.
- 2.5.1 continuing catchment-area student
 - 2.5.2 continuing non-catchment-area student
 - 2.5.3 continuing non-school district student (*Billet: definition – Billets are families who provide lodging for sports players in their homes during a sports season*). Students that are billeted are considered non-school district students.
- 2.6 Wait lists will be established at individual schools for those students not initially accepted, will be maintained until the last school day of September of the school year for which application is made.
- 2.7 Re-evaluation of space availability will take place periodically until June 30th to ensure that the maximum number of requests is met at the earliest time possible.
- 2.8 As per Section 2.1, applicants for enrolment in Kindergarten programs and District Choice Programs/Academies will be separately prioritized and assigned to schools in advance of all other students.

3. Tie-Breaking

- 3.1 When applications that are made within the timeframe have the same priority (after application of any permitted sibling preference), their ultimate priority, as between them, will be determined by time and date of application.

4. Alternate Enrolment Process for Continuing School District Students

- 4.1 Continuing students 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.
- 4.2 Students who attend a school as a result of a disciplinary transfer are deemed as *continuing* in the school they were directed to leave, following the completion of the term of enforced transfer. Such students may apply for out-of-catchment transfer to the school that they were sent. This application would be subject to the regulations outlined in Section 2.4, for new applications for out-of-catchment attendance.

5. Dates for Applications to Enrol and Enrolment

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- 5.1 The Board will normally establish dates for submission of *Application to Enrol* no later than the January prior to the commencement of instruction in a new school or a school undergoing boundary/catchment area revisions.

The Board may establish different dates for different grades, educational programs, schools, or categories of applicant.

- 5.2 Applications received after the dates established will be considered only following that of applicants who applied within the timeframe.

5.2.1 Such applications will be accepted or rejected by the Superintendent/ designate if it is considered that such action is in the best interest of the student concerned and can be accommodated within the space and facility available at the school of application.

5.2.2 All applications received after the last day of school in September are mid-year requests and will be accepted or rejected by the Superintendent/ designate if it is considered that such action is in the best interest of the student concerned and can be accommodated within the space and facility available at the school of application.

6. Guarantee of Educational Program in the District

- 6.1 School 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 school district.

7. Parent/Student Commitment to an Educational Program

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 Students may apply for more than one educational program but may only be enrolled in one. When an applicant is offered and accepts enrolment in an educational program (in or out of the school district), applications for all other programs become invalid.
- 7.3 The Superintendent/designate is authorized to enter into reciprocal agreements with other school districts to review wait lists and enrolment information in order to enforce this policy.

8. Program Requirements

- 8.1 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.

9. Discretionary Acceptance: Suspended or Expelled Non-School District Students

- 9.1 Enrolment applications from non-school district children may be refused if the child:
- 9.1.1 is under suspension from a BC public school or school district, or
 - 9.1.2 has been refused an educational program by a BC public school board under Section 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.
- 9.2 Such applications will be referred to the Superintendent/designate for a decision on admission. Admissions may be made subject to terms and conditions. A student who has been admitted under this Section is not entitled to the status of a continuing student for the following school year unless approved by the school principal or Superintendent/designate.

10. Sibling Preference

- 10.1 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 when the siblings will not be attending concurrently.

11. Communication of Application Periods & Enrolment Dates

- 11.1 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 school district.

12. Parent Responsibility for Transportation

- 12.1 In all cases where a non-catchment area child or a non-district area child has had their application approved, the final responsibility for daily transportation of the student shall rest with the parent(s). However, as a courtesy and/or where it is convenient for the district, the district may provide transportation.

Adopted: April 1, 2004

Amended: October 3, 2018

References: The *School Act*

AP 302 – School Boundaries and Catchment Areas