

POLICY 3.40 SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREAS AND SCHOOL CHOICE

The Board of Education believes that, to the extent that school facilities, staffing and planning arrangements will allow, parents should have the option of enrolling their children in the District school of their choice. The Board recognizes First Nations students are entitled to attend a designated school, in accordance with the *School Act*.

Because of the distances between schools in the District, the Board endeavours to ensure that students who move into a school catchment area during the school year can be accommodated; recognizing that placement in a different school can be a hardship.

The *School Act* provides that students can attend the school of their choice if space and facilities are available. Space and facilities are deemed to be available if there is expected, based on reasonable enrolment projections, to be capacity to provide the student with an educational program appropriate to their needs, taking into account physical, human and educational resources.

School catchment areas are determined after due consideration of all relevant factors including: the space available in the schools, the accessibility of schools to students, and the safety of the students in going to and from school. The Board may periodically amend the catchment area of a school to best accommodate students.

Enrolment Priorities

Where space and facilities are not sufficient at a school to accommodate all students who seek to enroll there, space in educational programs shall be allocated in accordance with priorities in the order set out below. For purposes of this policy, a student's residence is considered to be that of their parents or legal guardian.

The Board delegates to the Superintendent, or their designate, decisions whether space and facilities are available in individual schools and educational programs in the District.

GUIDELINES

1. Definitions

- 1.1. "**catchment area child**" means a person of school age, and resident in the catchment area of the school;
- 1.2. "**Feeder schools**" and their related "**receiving schools**" are described by the Board's catchment areas, where the class from the highest grade offered by the feeder school would be automatically enrolled the next year in a designated receiving school unless an application for transfer/enrolment elsewhere is accepted in accordance with this policy.

- 1.3. "**non-catchment area child**" means a person of school age, resident in the school district, and not resident in the catchment area of the school;
- 1.4. "**non-school district child**" means a person of school age, resident in British Columbia, and not resident in the school district;
- 1.5. "**previous school year**" means the school year previous to the school year for which the person is applying to enrol in an educational program;
- 1.6. "**school district child**" means a catchment area child or a non-catchment area child.
- 1.7. "**parent**" is defined within the *School Act* and for greater clarity, does not include a non-custodial parent.
- 1.8. "**continuing student**" means a student in attendance at the school or a designated feeder school during the previous school year who was not transferred or withdrawn from that school during the year.
2. Place of residence is determined as of the date of the application to enrol or transfer.
3. Priorities for student placement
 - 3.1. Priority A: Continuing Catchment Area Students
 - 3.1.1. Catchment area students who attended a designated feeder school in the previous year have the same priority as other continuing catchment area students.
 - 3.2. Priority B: Catchment Area Students
 - 3.2.1. Catchment area students who, in the previous year, were placed by the district in a different school because of insufficient space or facilities at the catchment area school.
 - 3.2.2. Siblings of catchment area students who attended the school in the previous school year and will be attending in the year for which application is made.
 - 3.2.3. Other new catchment area students.
 - 3.3. Priority C: Non-Catchment Area Child
 - 3.3.1. Non-catchment area students who attended the school in the previous school year.
 - 3.3.2. Siblings of non-catchment area students who attended the school in the previous school year and will be attending in the year for which application is made.
 - 3.3.3. Other non-catchment area students.

3.4. Priority D: Non-School District Area Students

4. It is intended that transfers of students be sought and received well prior to school opening in September and voluntary transfers during the course of the school year will occur only under special circumstances.
5. Application to attend a school other than the student's catchment area school is made to the principal of the catchment area school.
6. Parents will be responsible for transportation to and from school if a transfer to a non-catchment school is approved.