Procedure Title	**Safe Arrival**		
Date of Issue	January 18, 2000	Related Policy	BP 6810-D
Revision Dates	October 6, 2004; November 20, 2007; December 12, 2012	Related Forms	
Review Date		Originator	Administrative Council

References

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 123; Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; Child and Family Services Act; AP 2807-D "Inclement Weather". Bluewater District School Board Classification & Retention Schedule; AP 7381-D "Volunteer Screening Procedure (Sensitive Positions)" Review Note: Referenced in "School Office Manual" on BEAM

Procedure:

1.0   RATIONALE

Bluewater District School Board recognizes the need for a safe arrival program for students who attend our schools. The following procedures will provide guidelines for the design and establishment of such a program to suit the needs of the individual circumstances found in each school.

2.0   PROCEDURE

2.1   Guidelines

2.1.1   In designing its safe arrival program a school community should take into account the unique circumstances of the school such as the number of staff available, the size of student body, the geographic conditions in the vicinity of the school, the kind of transportation used by students to travel to school and the number of parents/guardians who commute to work out of the area.

2.1.2   The following should be considered in the design of the program:
a)   A reliable system should be in place for parents/guardians/caregivers to communicate student absences or lateness to the school.
b)   The program shall be developed to work in conjunction with the school's morning and mid-day attendance-taking procedures.

2.1.3   Logs shall be maintained at the school of:
a)   in-coming calls from parents/guardians/caregivers who report absences or lateness;
b)   out-going calls to notify parents/guardians/emergency contacts about unexplained student absences;
c)   actions taken by school staff in accordance with the safe arrival program;
d)   retention time for these logs is the same as that for Student Attendance Registers (Enrolment Registers) (as per Bluewater District School Board Classification & Retention Schedule).

2.1.4   Information relating to the particulars of the program shall be maintained in a secure location at the school. A location that honours confidentiality and security of student information shall be provided for the placement of calls.

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Parents/guardians, students, school staff, school councils and volunteers play distinct roles in the implementation of a Safe Arrival Program. The overall effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the program depend on the way in which each group works cooperatively to fulfill its responsibilities.

2.2.1 **Parent/Guardian** is responsible to:
   a) report the child's absence in advance by calling the school; sending a note with the child the day before the absence when it is known ahead of time; or sending a note with siblings;
   b) contact the school by 8:45 a.m. in the case of unexpected illness;
   c) provide the school office with the following telephone numbers and ensure that they are up dated promptly if they change: a home number, work number (if applicable) and an emergency contact number;
   d) advise an individual that he/she is being designated as an emergency contact;
   e) ensure their children's safety until they arrive at school/are picked up by the school bus and once they have left school/are dropped off from the school bus;
   f) reinforce with their children that it is a family responsibility (not the school's responsibility) for the children to report on time to school or to the school bus stop;
   g) determine whether it is safe for their children to walk or to be driven to school in inclement weather. In determining factors that may be considered to make this decision could include but are not limited to: visibility, wind chill, sidewalk conditions, road ways and if walking the distance from the home to the school.

   Important Notes:
   i. In the event of inclement weather, contact the school if your child does not travel to school on one of the school board cancelled buses, and will not be attending school (Refer to AP 2807-D "Inclement Weather").
   ii. Parents of private bus riders must call the school if their children will be absent.

2.2.2 **Principal** is responsible to:
   a) develop, implement and review annually a safe-arrival program with consultation from school councils, Home and School Associations, band councils, parents/guardians, volunteers and community members;
   b) publish the Safe Arrival Program and include it in the school's handbooks for students and parents, and staff;
   c) conduct the Safe Arrival Program;
   d) ensure unsuccessful contacts are followed up when a child's safety cannot reasonably be confirmed through contact with parent or emergency contact;
   e) provide training and supervision for individuals involved in delivering the safe-arrival program;
   f) report to the Children's Aid Society (CAS) any child under the age of 10 who is absent from school without reasonable supervision and care. For children 10 years of age, but under the age of 16 reporting to the CAS shall be at the discretion of the principal (Child and Family Services Act, Section 79).

2.2.3 **Teacher** is responsible to:
   a) accurately record daily attendance;
   b) alert the principal to any unusual and/or suspicious absence.

2.2.4 **Pupil** is responsible to:
   a) to arrive promptly;
   b) follow school procedures with respect to attendance and in particular reporting promptly to the designated location on arriving late or departing early.

2.2.5 **School Council** is responsible to:
   a) advise the principal about the school's Safe Arrival Program;
   b) provide advice on logistical issues related to the program;
   c) assist in communicating the Safe Arrival Program to the parents and broader community.

2.2.6 **School Office Professional or Designate** is responsible to:
a) attempt to make phone contact with a parent/guardian/authorized contact concerning the non-arrival of a pupil;
b) log all attempted contact with parent/guardian/authorized contact; (refer to section 2.1.3 above)
c) when all reasonable attempts to contact the parent/guardian/emergency contact have been made, the principal or designate shall be notified and the caller's responsibilities under the Safe Arrival Program will have been fulfilled.

2.3 Program Delivery and Procedures

2.3.1 In a timely manner, following the recording of twice daily attendance, an attempt will be made to account for students with unexplained absences.

2.3.2 Contact will be attempted through home phone number, parents' work numbers, known caregivers, emergency contact numbers and, when considered appropriate, siblings.

2.4 Phone Calls

2.4.1 When making a phone contact, a recorded message may be left, but attempted contact with parent/guardian/emergency contact should continue until a "live" contact is made.

2.4.2 When contact is made, the cooperation of the contact/parent in assisting with the safe arrivals procedures should be re-emphasized.

2.4.3 When all reasonable attempts to contact the parent/guardian/emergency contact have been made, the principal or designate shall be notified and the school's responsibilities under the Safe Arrival Program will have been fulfilled.

2.4.4 If a child under the age of 10 years answers a safe arrival call from the school and is home alone, the principal or designate will be informed and appropriate CAS follow-up will occur.

2.4.5 If a child 10 years of age or older answers a safe arrival call from the school, the school will notify the parent.

2.4.6 If a child makes the safe arrival call, the school will contact an adult to confirm student absence.

2.5 Inclement Weather

2.5.1 On a day when the school is closed, the formal steps of the Safe Arrival Program do not take place.

2.5.2 Each school will develop a plan to address safety issues of children who arrive at school when the school is closed.

2.5.3 On a day when buses are not running, Safe Arrival Programs will be used for all walking students only. As part of the inclement weather procedures, parents of elementary students who walk to school should be reminded that, if they decide to keep their child(ren) at home for all or part of the day, they should contact the school in the usual manner.

2.6 When Contact Cannot Be Made

2.6.1 When contact cannot be made, the principal will determine the necessary next steps.

2.6.2 Parents will be reminded of their responsibility to notify the school when their child is going to be away.

2.7   Use of Volunteers

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 123 encourages the use of volunteers "to help reduce demands on the time of school administrative staff". If volunteers are utilized the following should be ensured:

  a) parents will be informed of the program and given the option of opting out of the program;
  b) parental consent is obtained for volunteers to make contact, in accordance with the requirements of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act;*
  c) volunteers are screened in accordance with board procedure AP 7381-D "Volunteer Screening Procedure (Sensitive Positions)" through police checks;
  d) training includes the importance of confidentiality as well as procedures for reporting situations where a child might be considered "at risk;"
  e) a tracking mechanism for noting who made the calls is maintained.

APPENDIX A
Sample Principal's Letter

Date:

[Field name]
[Field address]

Dear [Field name]

This letter is to express concern that you have repeatedly failed to fulfill your responsibilities with regard to our Bluewater District School Board Safe Arrival policy and procedures.

Specifically, you have neglected to:

- Report your child's absence in advance by calling the school, [in some schools--"by calling the Safe Arrival telephone number"], sending a note with the child the day before the absence when it is known ahead of time, or sending a note with a brother or sister.
- Provide the school office with home telephone number, a work number (if applicable), and at least one reliable emergency contact number.
- [in some schools] Respond to calls from the school.

The staff of our school makes every effort to implement the Safe Arrival policy and procedures. Teachers take attendance two times daily and this information is provided to the school office. If any child is absent and the parent has not notified the school of the absence, a telephone call is made to the home. If the parent cannot be reached at home, and if the parent has provided a work number and an emergency number, those numbers will be called as well. The school will make every possible effort to inform you promptly if your child is absent without notice from home.

Your notification to the school of your child's absence is absolutely essential to the safe arrival program. To do this we need to be assured that you have provided us with appropriate contact telephone numbers and that you will notify the school promptly when your child is absent.

Please give immediate attention to this very important issue. By neglecting this parental responsibility, you are putting your child at risk.

Yours truly,

Principal