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School of Choice

1. ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS

The assignment of pupils eligible to register in schools within Pine Creek S.D. shall be at the discretion of the Board which shall identify for each school the appropriate catchment area and shall designate pupils within those areas to their respective schools. Variations to these assignments shall be permitted only in accordance with the provisions of this statement of administrative procedures and Board policy.

2. DEFINITIONS

Choice - is defined as the ability of a pupil to select, for attendance purposes, a school other than the closest catchment area school with space and suitable program, as that pupil's home school.

Home School Division -is the Division in which a pupil's parents or legal guardian(s) reside, or if the pupil is of the age of majority, the Division in which the pupil occupies a permanent residence.

Eligible Pupil - an eligible pupil is a pupil who qualifies under the regulations of Manitoba Education and Training for provincial support while in attendance at a public school. (Pupils sponsored by any educational authority which receives primary funding from any body other than the Government of Manitoba are not considered to be eligible to exercise the provisions of these school of choice procedures as the provisions for transfer of funds are not available to them.)

Resident Pupil - a pupil who qualifies under Section 1 of the Public Schools Act of Manitoba as a resident of Pine Creek S.D.

Non-Resident Pupil - a pupil who is eligible to attend a public school in the Province of Manitoba but who does not meet the requirements of Section 1 of the Public Schools Act of Manitoba as a resident of Pine Creek S.D.

3. MAKING APPLICATION TO A SCHOOL OF CHOICE

All applications for a change of school must be made on the form authorized by Manitoba Education and Training and must be submitted directly to the school of choice no later than May 15th of the spring term for school assignment effective with the commencement of the next following fall term. **A school shall have no obligation to consider late applications.**

When a school agrees to accept a non-resident pupil who has made late application to a school of choice, it shall do so only when the home division has agreed to send the transfer fee for the pupil, or the parents or legal guardians have agreed to pay an equivalent fee to the Pine Creek S.D. Any school receiving an application for school of choice must advise the parent(s) or legal guardian(s), receiving/home School Division office and sending school no later than June 30th whether or not the pupil has been accepted.

3.1 Pupils wishing to exercise school choice will:

- a) be required to submit a request for admission to the school of choice on or before May 15th for the ensuing school year. This request must be submitted on the Manitoba Education and Training approved form of application.
- b) be considered in the following order of priority:
 - i. **first priority:** resident, catchment area pupils;
 - ii. **second priority:** pupils previously approved to attend the school in accordance with these procedures;
 - iii. **third priority:** resident pupils residing outside the catchment area of the school wishing to attend the school as a school of choice; and
 - iv. **fourth priority:** non-resident pupils wishing to attend the school as a school of choice.
- c) be considered for admission only if:
 - i. space is available in the program of choice and/or the classroom(s) under consideration (see section 5.3);
 - ii. the school has available all special equipment or physical accommodations required by the pupil;
 - iii. the program of choice is suited to the age, ability and aptitude of the pupil, and the pupil has all necessary prerequisites for the program and/or grade level of choice;
 - iv. the principal of the school is satisfied that enrolling the pupil will not be detrimental to the continuity of the pupil's education;
 - v. the principal of the school is satisfied that enrolling the pupil will not be detrimental to order, discipline and the well-being of other pupils in the school; and
 - vi. the school is not required to establish a new program or classroom to meet the educational needs of the pupil.

3.2 For the purpose of defining space availability the principal shall consider the following circumstances:

- a) projected enrolment in the identified program or grade level
- b) the special circumstances of the pupils already approved to the classroom or program. These may include but are not limited to the number and circumstances of special needs pupils, identified behavioral difficulties and anticipated range in academic abilities; and

3.3 Notwithstanding the above, and to protect potential needs for pupils moving into the catchment area prior to the commencement of classes, the Pine Creek S.D. reserves the right to refuse admission of out-of-school-catchment-area pupils to a classroom or program under which the provisions of schools of choice when:

- a) Enrolment projections are
 - i. K-4 grade level, 23-25 pupils or more;
 - ii. 5-8 grade level, 25-27 pupils or more;
 - iii. Sr1-Sr4 level, 27-29 pupils or more;
 - iv. Vocational, industrial arts or home economics classroom level, 14 pupils or more.

- b) A non-resident pupil seeking school of choice is deemed to have disciplinary or behavioral problems which were previously addressed through additional support in the home school division and the home division chooses not to pay for such additional support in Pine Creek S.D.
- c) The pupil was expelled from attendance in the home or previous school division/district.
- d) The request for choice of school involves placement in a special education or specially designed student at risk program. The principal and Coordinator of Student Services shall consult for the purposes of determining the needs of the pupils already approved to the class and shall be satisfied that the inclusion of another pupil will not be detrimental to those pupils. If the inclusion of an additional pupil is believed to be detrimental the application shall be refused. The provisions of Section 5.3(1) shall not be applicable to such classes.

4. APPEAL OF SCHOOL OF CHOICE DECISIONS

Pine Creek S.D. recognizes that within the guidelines provided by these Administrative Procedures, the principal of the school has the responsibility to make decisions with respect to school of choice requests. Notwithstanding the principal's responsibility, refusal by a principal to admit a pupil to a school of choice may be appealed by parent/guardian in writing to the Superintendent of Schools and/or to the Board of Trustees. Final authority in the decision to admit pupils to a school shall rest with the Board of Trustees.

5. WITHDRAWAL FROM A SCHOOL OF CHOICE

A pupil who has been approved to attend a school of choice in the Division may withdraw from that school. However, under such circumstances the Division is not obligated to accept return to the previous school and reserves the right to designate the school to which the pupil shall be assigned. Such assignment shall be subject to all provisions identified in this administrative procedural document.

6. CONTINUANCE IN A SCHOOL OF CHOICE

Once a pupil has been accepted in a school of choice he or she shall be entitled to continue at that school, year after year, as if an approved pupil of that school.

7. STUDENT TRANSPORTATION ELIGIBILITY

Pine Creek S.D. will consider providing transportation to those school-aged students enrolled in the Division. Bus seats will be allocated in the following order of priority on a first-come, first-served basis in each category.

- a) Eligible students living in Pine Creek who are attending their designated school are guaranteed transportation.
- b) Eligible students living in Pine Creek who choose a Pine Creek school other than the designated school will be transported if there is room on the bus and the bus route does not require extension.
- c) Eligible students living in another Division who choose Pine Creek will be transported in accordance with policy "*Bus Transportation of Non-Resident Students*". Rev 16 Dec 97(64)

- d) In town, students who are eligible for a grant (must be at least 1.6 km from school) may be transported if there is room on the bus and a suitable central pickup/ drop-off can be established for the area. Priority over bus seats will be given to the young children.
- e) Ineligible K-S4 students living in Pine Creek who are attending a Pine Creek school of choice will be transported if there is room on the bus and the bus route does not require extension.
- f) Ineligible students living in another division who are attending a school of choice in Pine Creek will be transported in accordance with policy "*Bus Transportation of Non-Resident Students*". Rev 16 Dec 97(64)
- g) Occasional special transportation services will be allowed provided that it is not on a regular basis and there is room on the bus and the bus route does not require extension.
- h) Other transportation services will be reviewed upon application.

8. OTHER PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS

- Eligible students mean students for whom a provincial transportation grant is payable
- A bus will be considered full when it is loaded to capacity based on the following formula: 3 students to a seat for K-3; 2 students to a seat for 4-S4 (Each bus capacity will vary depending on the number of K-3 students and the number of 4-S4 students)
- Ineligible students once provided bus transportation will not have transportation guaranteed beyond the current school year.
- For those students exercising choice it will be the parents' responsibility, at no cost to the Division, to transport the student to the designated bus route pickup/drop-off for that school of choice.
- For those out of Division transported students now attending our Division, and for which the Division is receiving a provincial transportation grant, transportation will be provided until the student leaves the school now attended. This is contingent upon the continuation of provincial transportation grants for these students. (This applies to other family members who are not attending Pine Creek schools at the present time.)
- The Division acknowledges that sometimes modifications to routes which change one's designated school will be made because it makes sense. This may in effect change a school catchment area.