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## SCHOOL OF CHOICE GUIDELINES

### I. PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

School catchment areas in the Swan Valley School Division (SVSD) are established to assist with planning and administration. The Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing these areas, and students are generally expected to attend their designated school. Variations to these assignments are permitted at the discretion of the Superintendent/CEO or designate, provided adequate accommodation is available, and no additional costs are incurred by the Division.

### II. DEFINITIONS

**Capacity:** The maximum total enrollment for a school as set by the Division and reported annually.

**Eligible Pupil:** A pupil 5 years of age or older on December 31 in a given year have the right to attend school from the beginning of the fall term of that calendar year until they receive a graduation diploma, or until the last school day of June in the calendar year in which they become 21 years of age.

**Home School Division:** The division where the parents/legal guardians reside, or where a pupil of majority age occupies a permanent residence.

**Resident Pupil:** A pupil who qualifies as a resident of Swan Valley School Division.

**Non-Resident Pupil:** A pupil eligible to attend school in Manitoba who does not reside within SVSD boundaries.

### III. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

1. **Submission:** Parents wishing to enroll children at a school outside their catchment area must submit the prescribed Provincial School of Choice form to the Division Office.
2. **Timelines:** Applications must be submitted by May 15th for enrollment in the following fall term. Registrations will only be accepted after January 10th for students eligible for school in September of that year.
3. **Multiple Applications:** When applying to more than one school, all schools must be named on the application.
4. **Notification:** The receiving school must advise the parents, the home division office, and the sending school of the decision no later than June 30th.
5. **Late Applications:** The school has no obligation to consider applications submitted after May 15th. If a late non-resident application is accepted, it is only permitted if the home division agrees to pay the transfer fee or the parents agrees to pay an equivalent fee.

6. **Transportation:** Granting a School of Choice request does not change existing bus routes. Parents are responsible for transporting the student to the nearest existing pick-up point.

#### IV. PRIORITY FOR ADMISSION

Applications will be considered in the following order of priority:

1. Resident pupils with siblings who are currently attending the school of choice.
2. Pupils previously approved to attend the school under these procedures.
3. Resident pupils residing outside the catchment area, with consideration given to proximity to the school.
4. Non-resident pupils. *Note: Priority within these categories is based on the date of initial receipt of the application at the Division.*

#### V. CAPACITY AND CLASS SIZE GUIDELINES

The Division reserves the right to refuse admission to out-of-catchment pupils to protect space for potential residents moving into the area based on the following:

1. Admission may be refused if the requested school is at or above 90% capacity with forecasted enrollment.
2. Projected Enrollment:

Kindergarten – Grade 3: 20 students per class.

Grades 4 – 8: 25 students per class.

Grades 9 – 12: 27 pupils per regular classroom.

Vocational: 20 pupils per classroom.

When defining space, principals shall consider enrollment trends between May 15 and September 30 from the previous two years, as well as the needs of high-interest or special needs pupils already in the classroom.

## **VI. CRITERIA FOR REFUSAL**

A School of Choice request may be refused based on the following:

**Lack of Space:** The program or classroom is at capacity.

**Resources:** The school lacks required special equipment or physical facilities.

**Program Suitability:** The program is not suited to the pupil's age, ability, or aptitude, or the pupil lacks prerequisites.

**Safety/Discipline:** Enrollment would be detrimental to order, discipline, the well-being of other pupils, or involve high-risk factors.

**New Programs:** The school would be required to establish a new program or classroom to meet the pupil's needs.

## **VII. CONTINUANCE AND APPEALS**

**Continuance:** Once accepted, a pupil is entitled to continue at that school year after year as if they were a resident pupil of school. Students accepted to a school located in Swan River will be allowed to progress through the natural progression of schools (Taylor-Heyes-E.S.R.S.S.) without further school of choice applications.

**Appeals:** A refusal by a principal may be appealed in writing to the Superintendent/CEO. The final authority for admission decisions rests with the Board of Trustees if the Superintendent's decision is further appealed.

## **VIII. SPECIAL NEEDS**

Requests for special arrangements to accommodate special needs students must be identified in the Student-Specific Plan and initiated by the Student Services Coordinator. The parents/guardians will be active participants in developing the appropriate programming plan.