

2025-26 Student Handbook

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Mission and vision

Our mission and vision outline what we do and what we want to achieve, and provide direction for the board's strategic plan. For more information, visit scdsb.on.ca and select 'About'.

Mission statement

We inspire and empower learning for life.

Vision statement

A community of learners achieving full potential.

Strategic priorities

The SCDSB Strategic Priorities 2022-2027 provides a framework to direct our programs, initiatives and daily operations to achieve our overall goal of student success.

The SCDSB is committed to creating a culture of belonging, engagement, and success for all through deliberate actions in four key areas that form the Strategic Priorities: Well-being, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Community, and Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

Rooted in the Strategic Plan are ten universal themes that reflect the voices and values of the SCDSB. These ten themes will be woven throughout our operational plans and will provide guidance and intentionality to the learning and work we do as a system: Accountability, Identity, Safety, Collaboration, Innovation, Respect, Support, Trust, Transparency, and Celebration. We are committed to ensuring that every student has the opportunity to reach their full potential and we are dedicated to lifelong learning. For more information, visit scdsb.on.ca and select 'About' followed by 'Goals & Reporting' and 'Strategic Priorities'.

Land acknowledgement

In October 2017, the SCDSB approved the practice of a land acknowledgement for board meetings and significant board and school events, as well as a less formal land acknowledgement for daily use in all schools. The following acknowledgement is recited each day as part of the morning announcements.

'Simcoe County District School Board acknowledges that we are situated on the traditional land of the Anishnaabeg people. We acknowledge the enduring presence of First Nation, Métis and Inuit people on this land and are committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and respect.'

The approval of a land acknowledgement follows recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. A land acknowledgement is an act of reconciliation and respect with, and for, the First Nations people of Simcoe County, on whose land we stand. We are proud to share that the SCDSB land acknowledgements were developed in consultation with members of the local Indigenous community.

Connect with the SCDSB

Website: scdsb.on.ca

Facebook: facebook.com/SCDSB

X (Twitter): twitter.com/SCDSB_Schools

Instagram: instagram.com/SCDSB

YouTube: youtube.com/SimcoeCountyDSB

Receive board and school news

To subscribe to SCDSB news releases, visit scdsb.on.ca and click 'Subscribe' at the top of the homepage.

All schools have websites where they share updates about school events and activities. Ask for details at your school to learn more.

Addressing your concerns as a parent/guardian

If you have a concern, please follow these steps in order:

1. Gather as much information as possible, then call the school to arrange a meeting with the teacher. Most concerns can be resolved at this point through dialogue and cooperation among those involved.
2. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your meeting, call the school to arrange a meeting with the principal. With open communication and collaboration among those involved, your concern should be resolved at this point.
3. If your concern has not been resolved at this point, contact the superintendent of education for your school. The superintendent of education will assist you by acting as a facilitator in attempting to resolve your concern. You may wish to put your concerns in writing at this time.
4. If you feel strongly that the situation requires further consideration, you may contact the Associate Director. At that time, your concern will be reviewed and may be directed to another staff member for action.
5. If you feel strongly that the situation requires further consideration after following steps one to four of the process, you may contact the Director of Education. At that time, your concern will be reviewed to ensure the appropriate process for resolution has been followed.

Additionally, please don't hesitate to communicate appreciation or your positive feedback to teachers, school staff, school administration, your superintendent and your trustee!

SCDSB Human Rights and Equity Office

The SCDSB Human Rights and Equity Office (HREO) is a safe and confidential space to identify matters related to violations of human rights code grounds and associated discrimination and harassment. The HREO operates at an arms-length from the SCDSB and has a process to help address and resolve concerns presented by student, parent/guardian, staff, or community members) concerns. If you have a concern, please visit scdsb.on.ca and select 'About' then 'Human Rights and Equity Office' to learn more and/or contact the HREO.

Character education

Character development is the intentional modelling, teaching, and practicing of positive character traits.

Board and school initiatives are designed to teach and encourage students to be positive, productive, and kind within our schools and surrounding communities.

The SCDSB Character Education program is a deliberate effort to nurture universal attributes that transcend racial, religious, socio-economic, and cultural lines.

The SCDSB Character Education program focuses on the following character attributes:

Bravery	Helpfulness	Listening	Responsibility
Caring	Honesty	Love	Trustworthiness
Compassion	Humility	Loyalty	Truth
Cooperation	Inclusiveness	Optimism	Sharing
Courage	Integrity	Perseverance	Wisdom
Empathy	Kindness	Respect	

To learn more about character education in the SCDSB visit scdsb.on.ca and select 'About' then 'Character Education'.

Code of Conduct

The SCDSB recognizes that all members of the school community have the right to be safe and to feel safe in their school community. With this right comes the responsibility to contribute to a positive school climate. The SCDSB Code of Conduct supports and enhances the Provincial Code of Conduct by setting clear standards of behaviour. These standards apply on school property, on school buses and at all school-related activities. To read the SCDSB Code of Conduct, visit scdsb.on.ca and select 'Elementary' or 'Secondary' then 'Safe Schools'.

Regular and ongoing screening and early intervention

Regular and ongoing screening and early intervention strategies help students achieve their potential and support a positive school learning and working environment. School programs and activities focus on building healthy relationships, character development and civic responsibility, and encourage positive participation of the school community in the life of the school.

Progressive discipline

Progressive discipline is a non-punitive, whole-school approach that uses a continuum of interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate behaviour and to build upon strategies that promote positive behaviour. Consequences include learning opportunities for reinforcing positive behaviour and assisting students to make good choices.

For more information, visit scdsb.on.ca, then select 'Elementary' or 'Secondary' then 'Safe Schools'.

Dress code

Our board's dress code is one way that we embed the principles set out in the SCDSB and Ministry of Education documents, Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario and Equity and Inclusive Education, to ensure safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environments for all of our students. In SCDSB schools, we believe that students should be able to learn in a safe and caring space that is free of bias and discrimination. When making choices about what to wear to school, we respect your individuality. To ensure that our learning environments are safe and respectful spaces, our board has consulted with students and staff to develop a set of shared standards for student dress.

Learn more about the SCDSB Dress Code by visiting scdsb.on.ca and selecting 'Elementary' or 'Secondary' then 'Dress Code'.

School year calendar

The SCDSB school year calendar is posted on our website. Visit scdsb.on.ca and select 'Elementary' then 'Planning for School' then 'School Year Calendar', or 'Secondary' then 'Guide to High School' then 'School Year Calendar'.

Religious accommodation

We acknowledge each individual's right to follow or not follow religious beliefs and practices, free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour. We are committed to taking all reasonable steps to provide religious accommodation to students and staff. Students and families may speak to their teacher or provide a note from their parent(s)/guardian(s) specifying their accommodation needs relating to religious observances, including holy days on which they will be absent from school. School administrators are also available to meet with families to discuss and implement needed accommodations.

Student learning

Assessment, evaluation, and reporting

The main purpose of assessment, evaluation, and reporting is to improve student learning. Staff use their professional judgment to support students in meeting curriculum expectations and developing learning skills. Assessment information can be gathered over time in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to:

- observing students complete tasks and interact with others
- conversations with students about their learning
- projects and/or assignments
- presentations, performance tasks, portfolios, tests

Reporting to parents/guardians through report cards provides information about:

- student achievement of curriculum expectations
- student demonstration of specific learning skills and work habits
- student attendance including times late and days absent, if applicable

Learn more about assessment and evaluation on the SCDSB website by visiting scdsb.on.ca and selecting 'Elementary' then 'Parent' then 'Resources for Families', or 'Secondary' then 'Parent' then 'Resources for Families'.

Reporting periods

Elementary school progress reports are sent home in November. The focus is on learning skills and work habits. Report cards are sent home in February and June. Student/teacher/parent/guardian conferences are held in the fall.

Secondary school mid-term reports are sent home in November and April/May. Secondary final reports are sent home in February and July.

Homework

All SCDSB schools follow the board's homework policy, which can be viewed online at scdsb.on.ca by searching for 'Policy 4106 Homework'. Homework is a range of activities completed outside of school that support learning.

For more information, read the homework policy on our website at scdsb.on.ca under 'About' then 'Policies and Procedures'.

Provincial assessments

Provincial assessments are developed and scored by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). Each student who completes a provincial assessment receives an Individual Student Report (ISR), which outlines the student's overall achievement. School and board achievement data is used to support student learning at each school and throughout the system. School-by-school results are available at www.eqao.com.

Supporting learning at home

There are many ways families can support and encourage their children's learning. For example, families can:

- lead by example - be a lifelong learner yourself
- remind your child that they are capable of learning
- look for ways to 'bring the lesson home' by connecting school lessons to everyday experiences
- encourage your child to keep trying and to seek help when they don't understand something – effort and determination are important!
- share suggestions and input with your school council, school principal, and child's teachers
- talk to your school principal or vice-principal to find out about more ways to be involved

The SCDSB has created an online resource to support math learning at home. Visit scdsb.on.ca/MathAtHome to access this resource.

Voluntary self-identification of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Students

First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students are invited to participate in our voluntary, confidential self-identification process. The SCDSB collects First Nation, Métis, and Inuit self-identification data to support student success, reduce gaps in student achievement and support a sense of belonging. Information that is collected is used to inform program planning and services that are relevant for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit learners. Disclosing First Nation, Métis, and Inuit ancestry is completely voluntary and confidential. No proof of ancestry is required. Please contact the school office if you wish for your child to self-identify.

Student success

Student success teams work together to ensure smooth transitions for students between grades, from elementary to secondary school, and after graduation. As students progress, they are encouraged to become the architects of their own learning.

In elementary school, students in Kindergarten to Grade 6 will explore the four inquiry questions related to Creating Pathways to Success (CPS): Who am I? What are my opportunities? Who do I want to become? What is my plan for achieving my goals? Using the experiential learning model of Participate, Reflect and Apply, students will develop a better understanding of their strengths, interests, and aspirations as they set goals for the future.

The development of an Individual Pathway Plan in Grades 7 to 12 encourages students to set goals, discover and identify skills and abilities related to future interests, and plan for both secondary and post-secondary education and life. Using the myBlueprint planning tool, students can chart their future by creating and revising their Individual Pathway Plan.

Secondary school programs such as Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM) are designed to prepare students for sector-specific career destinations. Job-related activities and experiential learning opportunities are explored in Grades 7 to 12, and opportunities for more in-depth exploration through the Cooperative Education Program (co-op) are available in Grades 11 and 12. The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) allows students in trade-related co-op placements to begin working towards apprenticeship requirements. Many students also benefit from taking Dual Credit courses which enable them to gain a secondary school credit while completing a college course and earning a college credit.

Elementary and secondary student success teachers ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed, despite any potential obstacles that can otherwise affect learning. These teachers work with students in one-on-one, small group, and classroom settings to provide the supports necessary for successful transitions in school and life. Student success teachers work in collaboration with classroom teachers, guidance, special education teachers, administration, and community partners to create a wide circle of support for students who need extra attention or who struggle to remain engaged and motivated.

More information about student success initiatives is available at scdsb.on.ca.

Special education

Students learn in many different ways. Students may need different supports and programs beyond the accommodations regularly provided in the classroom to reach their full potential.

These may include any or all of the following:

- additional support provided by specialized and qualified staff and may include a special education resource teacher (SERT) and/or an educational assistant, as required
- an Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- assistive technology
- a special education class placement

Information about the SCDSB's special education programs and services, as well as the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), is available at scdsb.on.ca or by calling 705-734-6363, ext. 11729.

Visit scdsb.on.ca then 'Elementary' then 'Special Education' to access the SCDSB Parent's Guide to Special Education. The website also has information about the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process, IEPs, and programs and services for exceptional students as well as contact numbers for SEAC members.

Mental health and well-being

Caring for our mental health is as important as caring for our physical health. The SCDSB aims to support the mental health of every student by modeling and teaching healthy habits and teaching students about and how to care for their mental health. School teams, which include social workers, child and youth workers, and attendance counsellors, work with students, schools, and families in managing challenges that are/have been negatively affecting a student's ability to participate in school.

Social workers

The SCDSB's social workers work with students and school staff to help students who are experiencing a mental health challenge (anxiety, negative thoughts, stress, etc.) that is impacting students while at school. Social work services are available by referral. To request support from a SCDSB social worker, students and/or parents/guardians should speak with their principal, vice-principal, or other trusted school staff member, or send an email to studentwellness@scdsb.on.ca.

Other mental health supports

SCDSB students may access mental health and health professionals for personal issues, including a mental health and addictions nurse. To request a referral to a SCDSB staff member or community partner, students and/or parents/guardians should speak with their principal or vice-principal.

Safety

School safety practices

We will always take whatever precautions are necessary to keep our schools and students safe. Our safety practices include:

First aid equipment and training

Each school has a minimum of one staff member who is trained in first aid. Additionally, all schools are equipped with Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs).

Sign in at the office upon arrival

All visitors are required to sign in at school offices and wear visitor identification. Even regular visitors, such as school volunteers, must sign in. Elementary school doors are locked during the school day; therefore visitors must use the intercom system to gain entry to the building.

Safe Arrival program

All parents/guardians are asked to notify the school when their child will be absent. To notify the school of an absence, call 1-888-885-8065.

All SCDSB elementary schools participate in the Safe Arrival program to monitor and manage student absences. When a student who is enrolled in the Safe Arrival program is absent, and schools do not hear from a parent/guardian, the school will call home to find out the reason for the absence.

On days when buses are cancelled due to inclement weather, the safe arrival program continues. On these days, if your child rides a bus and you receive a safe arrival call from the school and you believe that your child should be in attendance, you are asked to please call the school. Otherwise, the school will assume that you are aware of your child's absence. Families of walking students should call the school if their children are not attending on an inclement weather day.

Criminal record checks

All staff and volunteers are required to complete a Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening before working with students.

Police partnerships

The SCDSB has positive relationships with our various local police forces. We work in partnership with the four police services in Simcoe County (Barrie Police, Ontario Provincial Police, Rama Police, and South Simcoe Police) to help keep our school communities safe using our Police/School Board Protocol.

Safe Schools Reporting Tool

The SCDSB has an online safe schools reporting tool. It is available on school websites and at the bottom of the SCDSB website under 'Helpful Links'.

Students and parents/guardians can use this tool to submit a report online if they witness a student engaged in inappropriate behaviour such as bullying, drug use, or vandalism. Students are still encouraged to speak to a trusted adult at school or home if they have any concerns. This form isn't a substitute for having a discussion with your teacher or principal but provides another avenue to start that conversation.

Emergency procedures help keep students safe

Fire drills and evacuation plans

All schools have evacuation plans, which include a designated evacuation site. Schools practice their evacuation plan throughout the year during regular drills.

Shelter in place

Shelter in place is used when there is an environmental or weather-related situation, such as a chemical spill outside the building or a major storm. During a shelter in place, activities will continue inside the school, but students and staff will not be allowed to leave the building.

Hold and secure

A hold and secure is used when there is a situation taking place in the community that is not related to the school, such as a bank robbery nearby. A hold and secure is usually initiated by police. During a hold and secure, activities continue inside the building, but all exterior doors are locked and no one is allowed to enter or exit the school.

Lockdown

A lockdown is used when there is a major incident or a threat of violence related to the school. A lockdown can be initiated by police or by school staff. During a lockdown, students and staff will go to secure areas, away from doors and windows. Interior doors are locked, lights are shut off and blinds are drawn. Students and staff remain quiet.

Schools practice lockdown drills at least twice per year. In the unlikely event of an actual lockdown, police ask that parents/guardians do not go to the school. Information will be communicated through email, the SCDSB website, and through local police and media.

If you have any questions about safety procedures, as always, please contact the school office.

Bullying prevention and intervention

Bullying is typically a form of repeated, persistent, aggressive behaviour that is directed at one or more people. Bullying is intended to cause - or should be known to cause - fear, distress, and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance.

In contrast to bullying, conflict is generally a disagreement or difference in opinion between peers who typically have equal power in their relationships. It is usually an inevitable part of a group dynamic and both parties have power to influence the situation.

Bullying is not accepted on school property, at school-related activities, on school buses, or in any other circumstances that could impact the moral tone of the school, including online and via other forms of technology. Staff, students, and parents/guardians work together to implement bullying prevention and intervention plans in their schools. Schools use a progressive discipline approach and may use a range of interventions, supports and consequences when bullying behaviour happens, with a focus on improving behaviour.

Bullying is on the list of infractions for which suspension must be considered. More information can be found at scdsb.on.ca by searching for 'bullying'.

Reporting child abuse and neglect

The Ontario Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) provides a range of services for families and children, including children who are, or may be, victims of child abuse or neglect. The CFSA promotes the best interests, protection, and well-being of children. The CFSA states clearly that members of the public, including professionals who work with children, have an obligation to promptly report to a Children's Aid Society if they suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection. For more information, visit the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies online at www.oacas.org.

Parent/guardian involvement

Parents/guardians play a key role in their children's education. Parent/guardian outlook about learning can influence and shape how a child views education, as well as their own ability to learn. There are many ways parents/guardians can participate in their child's education.

Volunteering

The SCDSB encourages parents/guardians to volunteer in schools. Volunteers are asked to complete an information form, provide an original copy of a Criminal Record Check which includes Vulnerable Sector Screening, and go through an orientation program to become familiar with the school and its daily routines. Volunteers work under the direction of the principal and staff. Please contact the school office to ask about volunteering.

School councils

School councils are a vital link between schools and the community. Each school council serves as an advisory group and provides input to school administrators about a variety of school-based topics and issues. Although membership may vary from school to school, school councils

consist of parents/guardians, as well as the school principal or vice-principal, a teacher, a non-teaching school employee, a student (required at the secondary level), and a community representative. New school council members are recruited and elected on an annual basis. All school council meetings are open to the public. Parents/guardians are welcome to attend, even if they are not formal members of school council.

Parent Involvement Committee

The SCDSB's Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) works collaboratively with stakeholders in our school system to develop strategies to engage parents/guardians in support of their children's learning at home and at school. The PIC communicates with and supports school councils in their efforts to enhance parent/guardian engagement and outreach, particularly through workshops, conferences, and inter-school communication.

The mandate of the PIC is to:

- support, encourage and enhance meaningful parent/guardian engagement at the board level in order to improve student achievement and well-being
- provide information and advice on parent/guardian engagement to the board
- communicate with and support school councils
- undertake activities to help parents/guardians support their children's learning at home and at school

Information about the PIC is available at scdsb.on.ca under 'Elementary' or 'Secondary' then 'Parent' then 'Parent Involvement Committee'.

Technology

Technology in the classroom

The SCDSB is committed to ensuring that students are better supported in focusing on their learning and well-being at school. Ministry of Education guidelines require school boards to implement a policy limiting the use of personal mobile devices in schools. The policy regarding mobile devices in school is reflected in the SCDSB Code of Conduct.

Digital literacy

Teachers integrate opportunities to explore digital citizenship into the curriculum to assist students in developing the skills required to navigate the online world. Parents/guardians are vital partners in supporting students to become responsible digital leaders.

It's important that staff and students use proper digital citizenship at all times online, and recognize that the internet is a public forum - what goes online, stays online and may never be fully erased. Students are encouraged to protect their privacy, safety and reputation, and consider ways to enhance their digital legacy through proactive use of these tools.

Appropriate use of technology

Student use of technology is subject to the SCDSB Appropriate Use Guidelines. Students are expected to access sites in a responsible way. Misuse and/or abuse of board and school facilities and resources is subject to consequences as defined and explained in the SCDSB Code of Conduct.

Students in the SCDSB have access to the internet to support their learning goals, to access curriculum-related materials and to research reference materials. The SCDSB uses filtering

software to guide, and in some cases restrict, access by students to the internet; however, no software can be completely effective in blocking unacceptable websites. It is a student responsibility to use information and computing technology appropriately.

BYOD wireless network access

Students and staff may connect their personal devices to our Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) network.

The decision to allow a student to bring a personally owned device to school rests with the parent/guardian and the student. The SCDSB is not responsible for devices that are lost, stolen or damaged in any way (personally owned devices should be easily identifiable, clearly labelled and, where possible, registered with the manufacturer).

Parents/guardians should discuss appropriate guidelines for use of the internet and SCDSB policy regarding the use of personal mobile devices with their children and determine if their child can responsibly manage their device at school.

Students do not have permission to connect to the local area network (LAN) using a cable of any sort. Access to the BYOD network is a privilege. The SCDSB may deny BYOD network access at any time.

Google Workspace for Education and Office365

The SCDSB provides all students and teachers with Office365 for Education, Google Workspace for Education (including Docs, Sheets, Slides, etc.) and the Ministry of Education's Brightspace program for educational purposes (e.g., blended learning, elearning, etc.). Students and staff are able to download Office365 to home computers and mobile devices. These tools and applications meet the privacy and security requirements of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. It is important for you to know that these accounts differ from publicly available accounts in that the security and privacy settings were negotiated by the Ministry of Education.

All students are provided with @scdsb.on.ca email addresses, which are also the accounts used to access Office365, Google Workspace for Education, Brightspace by D2L, and approved third-party applications. To use any of these applications, students must have a password with a minimum of eight characters and they must be complex (including three or four character sets: uppercase, lowercase, numbers, and symbols). As per the Appropriate Use Guidelines, passwords are not to be shared with others.

Use of recording equipment

The use of recording equipment (audio, video, digital or photography) must be authorized by the teacher or staff member before any recordings are made by a student. Such equipment includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, smartphones, iPods, iPads, computers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), MP3 players, tape recorders, video-recorders, digital audio recorders, or other technological equipment. This measure is to respect the privacy and ensure the safety of all students and staff. If recordings are taken without permission, it may result in confiscation of the equipment and appropriate discipline. Confiscated equipment may be returned to the parent/guardian, or in the event of suspected illegal or inappropriate activity, it may be forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Transportation

The Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium (SCSTC) coordinates the safe and efficient home-to-school transportation for more than 38,000 students - over 26,000 from the SCDSB. The role of the SCSTC includes contracting bus and vehicle operators on behalf of the SCDSB and the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board.

SCDSB transportation policies can be accessed online at scdsb.on.ca under 'Elementary' then 'Planning for School' then 'Transportation', or 'Secondary', then 'Guide to High School', then 'Transportation'. For SCSTC policies and procedures related to student transportation eligibility, stop locations, bus cancellations, and more, please visit www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca.

The SCSTC coordinates home-to-school transportation for students who are eligible for transportation. Students who reside within a designated walking zone for their home school are not eligible for transportation (unless otherwise qualified by policy). Parents/guardians are responsible for their child's safe arrival at the school when they reside within the established walk zone. Transportation eligibility can be confirmed through the SCSTC website <https://scstc.ca> under 'Can I Ride a Bus'.

Rider safety

All students need to be safe while riding school vehicles. The bus driver has full charge of the vehicle and students must follow their instructions. For discipline issues, school vehicles are considered an extension of the classroom. Students are responsible to the school principal, through the driver, for their behaviour on a school vehicle. If students don't follow safety guidelines and/or listen to the driver, they may not be allowed to ride the bus.

In some situations, the board may put video cameras on school buses. These systems are installed in accordance with the SCDSB Surveillance Guidelines to enhance the safety and security of students and staff, to protect property against theft and vandalism and to aid in the identification of individuals who endanger the health, well-being, or safety of school community members. For safety and insurance reasons, students are not permitted to ride on school vehicles other than the vehicle they have been assigned.

Weather-related school vehicle cancellation procedures

Student safety is always the priority. The SCSTC and their contracted school vehicle operators review weather and road conditions throughout Simcoe County to determine if school vehicle cancellations are required. School vehicle cancellations are confirmed and communicated between 6 and 6:30 a.m. School vehicle cancellation information is:

- posted on the SCTSC website, www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca
- communicated to families who subscribe to receive notifications from the SCSTC (you can subscribe on the SCSTC website: <https://scstc.ca/Subscriptions/ChildTransportInfo>)
- announced via the SCSTC X (Twitter) account @SCSTC_SchoolBus

Additionally, local radio stations and other media outlets are notified.

When school vehicle service is cancelled in the morning, the decision remains in effect for the entire school day. Schools remain open for student learning. When school transportation is cancelled, school staff is expected to plan for such emergencies in order to transition students who are unable to attend due to inclement weather to their online platforms (Google Classroom and/or SCDSBhub [Brightspace by D2L]) and continue with academic programming.

Please be aware of your school's weather zone, as well as your child's bus number and bus company name. School vehicle cancellations may:

- be specific to a single weather zone
- include multiple weather zones, or
- apply to all Simcoe County weather zones

On rare occasions, transportation may be cancelled mid-day due to rapidly deteriorating road and weather conditions. In this situation, students will remain supervised at school until it is safe for parents/guardians to pick them up. At all times, the safety and well-being of students is our main priority.

School closures are rare. This decision is made by the Director of Education in consultation with school and board staff. Any closures are posted online at scdsb.on.ca and school websites, and sent to the local media.

Health and wellness

Food allergies

To ensure a safe environment for all students, please do not send any peanut or nut products to school. Read ingredients carefully and check with teachers before sending treats for any special occasions. Please be aware that there may be different allergies in a classroom which might mean other items may not be brought in. Your classroom teacher will make you aware if this is the case. Many schools implement 'Reduce the Risk' programs to support students with potentially life-threatening food allergies. Your co-operation is essential and greatly appreciated.

Prevention of illness at school

If your child is sick, please keep them home for at least 24 hours. The best ways to prevent illnesses are to wash your hands, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, and stay up-to-date with immunizations. Notify the school when your child is absent due to an infectious disease. Some of these illnesses must be reported to the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU). Fact sheets and brochures are available at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.

Hand hygiene

The single most important thing anyone can do to control infections is to keep their hands clean. Students and staff should:

- wash hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds
- rub all parts of the hands and wrists with soap and water including in between fingers and under the fingernails
- alcohol-based hand rubs (ABHR) can be used as an alternative when your hands look clean. Young children must be supervised when using ABHR as it can be harmful if swallowed

Students with medical conditions

Parents/guardians are required to notify the school of any medical conditions their child may have, and/or the need for support in administering medications. If your child has a medical condition(s) or requires the administration of medication at school, contact the school to complete the required documents. Schools will work with parents/guardians to develop a medical plan for the student based on their individual needs. All medication must be in its

original labeled container and be kept locked in the office (with exception of EpiPen and asthma inhalers).

Smoke-free school grounds

Commercial tobacco and vaping products, including the smoking and vaping of cannabis, are not permitted to be used or sold on school grounds by anyone, anywhere, at any time. It is against the law to sell or supply tobacco or vapour products to a minor. For more information and to report a violation please contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) smoke-free enforcement staff at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.

Schools and school boards are required under Ontario's Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017 to ensure that school property plus 20 metres from the edge of the property is 100 per cent smoke-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The SCDSB has extended this ban to include smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaping devices, smoking alternatives, and all other tobacco industry products. More information is available at scdsb.on.ca by searching 'smoke free' or by visiting NotAnExperiment.ca.

Immunization

Immunizations are a safe and effective way to prevent many life-threatening diseases. It is important to get all immunizations in the recommended schedule to provide the best possible protection. When registering for school, parents/guardians are required to provide the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) with proof of completed immunization against tetanus, diphtheria, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella, or with the appropriate documentation if they choose not to have their child immunized.

It is important to report immunizations to the SMDHU each time your child receives immunization(s) from your health care provider so their record at the SMDHU can be updated. Students who do not have up-to-date immunization records, or a valid exemption on file at the SMDHU, may be at risk of being suspended from school until immunization records are up-to-date based on the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA).

Update your child's record using the secure online form at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/immsonline.

Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety)

In March 2018, Bill 193, Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety), 2018 received Royal Assent in Ontario. The Act imposes various requirements on sport organizations, including school boards, related to concussion awareness, prevention, and removal from/return to sport guidelines. Rowan's Law was enacted in memory of Rowan Stringer, an Ontario student and high school rugby player who died as a result of concussion-related injuries. Ontario is the first province in Canada to enact concussion-related education.

The Act also designates an annual Rowan's Law Day on the last Wednesday of September. As part of the day, concussion education modules will be presented to junior, intermediate, and senior level students in the SCDSB. Concussion safety will be highlighted and recognized at all schools through an educational campaign based on awareness, management, and the prevention of head injuries.

Dental care

Good dental health is an important part of your child's general health. Dental screenings are offered in schools. Dental screenings can identify and inform students/families that they have a dental concern. Staff from the SMDHU can provide information and support access to the Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) program for eligible children/youth and families. The screening program supports all families to ensure children/youth with urgent dental concerns receive the necessary treatment in SMDHU dental clinics or from other community dental providers. Screening is free and available to all children and youth age 17 or younger.

To find out more about the programs, eligibility requirements, and how to make an appointment, call the SMDHU at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit simcoemuskokahealth.org.

Head lice management

The SCDSB has a common procedure for all elementary schools to follow in the management of head lice - see APM A7210, Head Lice (Pediculosis) Management on scdsb.on.ca.

Parents/guardians of a student with head lice are required to complete a form to confirm their child has been treated and is free of lice before the child is allowed to return to the classroom. The school will provide this form.

Checking your child's head on a regular basis (weekly is best) or more often during an outbreak will prevent the spread of head lice.

Please notify the school when you identify that your child has head lice. Schools will provide parents/guardians with an information sheet to help with the management of head lice. For more information about identification, treatment, and prevention, contact your family doctor, local pharmacist, or Your Health Connection (SMDHU) at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or simcoemuskokahealth.org.

Student accident insurance

All students must have one of the following before being permitted to participate in extra-curricular activities:

- student accident insurance - this can be purchased through Study Insured (studyinsuredstudentaccident.com, 1-833-560-0527) or Insure my Kids (insuremykids.com, 1800-463-5437)
- extended health and dental plan (i.e., employer group benefits)

All students participating in a field trip outside the province or country must purchase student accident insurance or be covered by an extended health and dental plan.

The SCDSB recommends StudyInsured and Insure my Kids.

Community involvement hours

As part of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma graduation requirements, students must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement activities. The aim of this requirement is to encourage students to develop both civic responsibility and a desire to play a role in strengthening their community. Students may begin to accumulate community involvement hours in the summer before they enter Grade 9. For a list of eligible activities and for the community involvement hours form, please visit scdsb.on.ca, then select 'Secondary' then 'Planning for High School' then 'Community Involvement'.

Student fees

Students are not charged fees to participate in the regular school program. Students enrolled in the SCDSB are provided with basic classroom learning resources required to complete course expectations.

There may be fee-based resources and opportunities offered to students designed to enhance their program (e.g., field trips, visiting artists).

Beyond the cost of field trips, students involved in some extracurricular opportunities (e.g., string instrumental programs or music clubs) will be made aware of any additional cost obligations or participation/equipment rental fees prior to making a commitment to participate.

No exclusion due to inability to pay

No student will be excluded from a field trip or school activity because they are unable to pay. Parents/guardians should contact the school office if support is needed.

Personal information

Notice of routine collection and use of student and parent/guardian personal information

The SCDSB manages and uses personal information in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). The MFIPPA is a law that sets guidelines that schools and district school boards must follow when collecting, using and/or disclosing students' personal information. Under the MFIPPA, personal information refers to recorded information about an identifiable individual.

The Education Act sets out duties and powers of the board and authorizes school boards to collect personal information for the purpose of planning and delivering educational programs and services which best meet students' needs and for reporting to the Minister of Education, as required. In addition, the information may be used to attend to matters of health and safety or discipline which best meet student needs and for reporting to the Minister of Education, as required. The Act requires that the school principal maintain an Ontario Student Record (OSR) for each student attending the school. The OSR is a record of a student's educational progress through school in Ontario, and follows students when they transfer schools. The Ontario Student Record Guideline sets out how OSRs are to be managed and the SCDSB adheres to the OSR Guideline.

Under the MFIPPA, personal information may be used or disclosed by the SCDSB:

- for the purpose for which it was obtained or a consistent purpose (a purpose consistent with the reason collected);
- to board officers or employees who need access to the information in the performance of their duties, if necessary, and proper in the discharge of the board's authorized functions;
- to comply with legislation, a court order or subpoena or to aid in a law enforcement investigation conducted by a law enforcement agency; and,
- to report to Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions regarding child protection matters, in accordance with the law in compelling circumstances affecting health or safety of staff or students.

In accordance with MFIPPA and the Education Act, releasing personal information for any other purpose requires the informed consent of:

- the parent/guardian for children under 16 years of age;
- the parent/guardian and the student where the student is 16 and 17; and,
- the student where the student is over 18 or is 16 or 17 years of age and has withdrawn from parental control.

It is our practice to include a notice statement on forms used to collect personal information to advise you how we will use and disclose the information. To help you understand how we use the information you provide to us, we draw your attention to routine uses and/or disclosures of student personal information so that you may express any concerns you may have.

For further details, go to the SCDSB website at scdsb.on.ca, then select 'About' then 'Policies and Procedures' then 'Access and Privacy'.