



## 2023-24 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](http://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](http://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's 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 and partnership with local Indigenous partners.

## **Connect with the SCDSB**

Website: [scdsb.on.ca](http://scdsb.on.ca)

Facebook: [facebook.com/SCDSB](https://facebook.com/SCDSB)

Twitter: [twitter.com/SCDSB\\_Schools](https://twitter.com/SCDSB_Schools)

Instagram: [instagram.com/SCDSB](https://www.instagram.com/SCDSB)

YouTube: [youtube.com/SimcoeCountyDSB](https://www.youtube.com/SimcoeCountyDSB)

## **Receive board and school news**

To subscribe to SCDSB news releases, visit [scdsb.on.ca](https://www.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**

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 co-operation among those involved.
2. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your meeting, contact 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, you may contact the Director of Education. At that time, your concern will be reviewed to ensure that 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 discrimination, harassment and human rights violations. The HREO has established a process to help address and resolve community (student, parent/guardian, staff or community member) concerns as quickly and effectively as possible. If you have a concern, please visit [scdsb.on.ca](https://www.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](http://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.

### Standards of behaviour

#### Respect, civility and responsible citizenship

All members of the school community must:

- respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws
- demonstrate honesty and integrity
- respect differences in people, their ideas and opinions
- treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement
- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age or disability
- respect the rights of others
- show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others
- take appropriate measures to help those in need
- seek assistance from a member of the school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully
- dress in a manner that is consistent with the SCDSB Dress Code
- respect all members of the school community, especially persons in positions of authority
- respect the need of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching, including ensuring that cell phones and other personal mobile devices are only used during instructional time for educational purposes (as directed by an educator), for health and medical purposes and/or to support special education needs
- not swear at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority

- conduct themselves as respectful, positive digital citizens
- discourage students' use of alcohol, illegal and/or restricted drugs, including cannabis (unless the individual has been authorized to use for medical purposes)

## **Safety**

All members of the school community must not:

- be in possession of any weapon, including firearms
- utter a threat or use any object to threaten or intimidate another person
- cause injury to any person with an object
- be in possession of or under the influence of alcohol, illegal and/or restricted drugs, including cannabis (unless the individual has been authorized to use for medical purposes)
- provide others with alcohol, illegal and/or restricted drugs, including cannabis
- be under the influence of a noxious substance, such as glue or gasoline
- be in contravention of the Smoke-free Ontario Act and SCDSB Policy 4471 - Smoke Free Learning and Working Environments
- inflict or encourage others to inflict bodily harm on another person
- engage in bullying (including physical, verbal, electronic, written or other means) or cyberbullying behaviours
- commit sexual assault
- traffic weapons, illegal and/or restricted drugs, including cannabis
- give alcohol, illegal and/or restricted drugs, including cannabis to a minor
- commit robbery or extortion
- engage in hate propaganda and other forms of behaviour motivated by hate or bias
- commit an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property or to property located on the premises of the school
- participate in the non-consensual sharing of intimate images
- breach the SCDSB Information and Computing Technology Appropriate Use Guidelines

## **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](http://scdsb.on.ca), then select 'Elementary' 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](http://scdsb.on.ca) and selecting 'Elementary' then 'Dress Code'.

## **School year calendar**

The SCDSB school year calendar will be provided and posted on our website when available. Visit [scdsb.on.ca](http://scdsb.on.ca) and select 'Elementary' then 'Planning for 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

## **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](http://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](http://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](http://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

## **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](http://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](http://scdsb.on.ca) or by calling 705-734-6363,



ext. 11729. The website also has information about the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process, IEPs, programs and services for exceptional students as well as contact numbers for SEAC members.

## **Mental health and well-being**

The SCDSB recognizes the importance of positive mental health and its connection to well-being, achievement, and positive outcomes for youth. The SCDSB focuses on everyday mental health and well-being practices and mental health literacy for every student and early intervention services for those students who could benefit from additional help in supporting their mental health. School teams, child and youth workers and social workers work with students, parents/guardians, and community services to help students achieve their potential inside and outside of school.

Students are encouraged to reach out to their school social worker, principal, vice-principal or a trusted adult if they are feeling overwhelmed or discouraged. Students and parents/guardians can also reach out to the mental health and well-being department through the student wellness email ([studentwellness@scdsb.on.ca](mailto:studentwellness@scdsb.on.ca)) to find help for themselves or their child(ren). Students requiring additional support due to emerging mental health concerns are able to access group and individual interventions provided by child and youth workers in some elementary schools and by social workers in elementary and secondary schools.

### **Community supports**

**24 hour mental health crisis line** 1-888-893-8333 or 705-728-5044

**Canadian Mental Health Association** 1-800-461-4319

**Kids Help Phone** 1-800-668-6868

**Kinark Child and Family Services** 1-888-454-6275

**Mobile Crisis Line** 1-888-893-8333 or 1-855-310-COPE (2673)

**New Path Youth and Family Services** 705-725-7656

Access the 211 directory by phone (dial 2-1-1) or at [www.211ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca) for information on community resources related to a specific concern.

## **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 the school board social media sites ([www.facebook.com/SCDSB](http://www.facebook.com/SCDSB) and [www.twitter.com/SCDSB\\_Schools](http://www.twitter.com/SCDSB_Schools)), on [scdsb.on.ca](http://scdsb.on.ca) 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](http://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](http://www.oacas.org).

### **Parent/guardian involvement**

Parents/guardians play a key role in their children's education. Your attitude about learning can influence and shape how your child views education, as well as their own ability to learn. There are many ways you can participate in your 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 slightly 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, so parents/guardians can 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](http://scdsb.on.ca) under 'Elementary' then 'Parent' then 'Parent Involvement Committee'.

## **Technology**

### **Technology in the classroom**

Today's students have grown up with technology - it's a regular part of their daily lives. The SCDSB believes that technology and technological devices play an important role in learning and teaching, and are an important component of modern learning environments.

The proper use of technology is expected of all students and staff. As part of a technology-enabled learning environment, the SCDSB has created guidelines regarding technology use in schools and SCDSB facilities. These guidelines allow our staff to support technology-enabled learning environments while protecting student privacy and personal information. The Appropriate Use Guidelines can be found online at [scdsb.on.ca](http://scdsb.on.ca).

## **Digital citizenship**

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.

Social media extends learning to spaces beyond the classroom, supports real-world problem solving and provides an authentic audience for learning. 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.

The classroom teacher will provide information on how social media is being used in the classroom. If there are concerns, express these to the teacher and principal. If a parent/guardian does not want their child to participate in social media-based lessons, a suitable educational alternative will be found.

## **Appropriate use of technology**

Student use of technology is subject to the SCDSB Appropriate Use Guidelines. 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.

While teachers do supervise the use of devices, students are expected to access sites in a responsible way. 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.

## **Student BYOD wireless network access**

All students and staff may connect their personal devices to our Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) network. Devices, including cellphones, may only be used during instructional time under the following circumstances:

- for educational purposes, as directed by the classroom teacher, designated early childhood educator or educational assistant
- for health and medical purposes
- to support students with special education needs

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 (devices should be easily identifiable, clearly labelled and, where possible, registered with the manufacturer).

Student access to the BYOD network is not limited to instructional time. Parents/guardians should discuss appropriate guidelines for personal use of the internet with their children and determine if their child can responsibly manage their device at school. If a parent/guardian does not wish for their child to access the internet, please contact the child's 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's G Suite and Office365**

The SCDSB provides all students and teachers with Office365 for Education, Google's G Suite (including Docs, Sheets and Slides) 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, G Suite and Google Drive. To use Google services, students and staff must have a password with a minimum of 8 characters and they must be complex (include capitals, 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. Such equipment includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, smartphones, iPods, iPads, computers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), MP3 players, tape recorders, video-recorders or digital audio recorders. 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 36,000 students - over 24,000 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](http://scdsb.on.ca) under 'Elementary' then 'Planning for School' then 'Transportation'. For SCSTC policies and procedures related to student transportation eligibility, stop locations, bus cancellations and more, please visit [www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca](http://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'.

Pick up/drop off location change requests can only be made through your school. The school principal will contact the SCSTC regarding change requests.

## **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. During pre-dawn hours, 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](http://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 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 your child 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](http://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**

Sicknesses can spread quickly at school. If your child is sick, please keep them home. To help stop the spread of illnesses, staff and students are advised to cough or sneeze into their arm or a tissue and wash their hands before eating and after using the washroom and coughing or sneezing. Notify the school when your child is absent due to a communicable disease. Some of these illnesses must be reported to the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. Fact sheets and brochures are available at [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org). For ongoing information and updates related to COVID-19, please visit the SCDSB website at [scdsb.on.ca](http://scdsb.on.ca).

#### **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
- use alcohol-based hand rubs when access to running water is limited

### **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**

Tobacco products are not permitted on school grounds by anyone, anywhere, anytime. Schools and school boards are required by law to ensure that school property is 100% 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](http://scdsb.on.ca) by searching 'smoke free'.



## **Immunization**

Vaccines are a safe and effective way to prevent many life-threatening diseases. It is important to get all vaccines in the recommended schedule to provide the best possible protection. When registering for school, parents/guardians are required to provide the health unit 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 contact the health unit each time your child receives immunization(s) from your health care provider so their record at the health unit can be updated. Students who do not have up-to-date immunization records, or a valid exemption on file at the health unit, may be suspended from school.

Update your child's record using the secure online form at [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/immsonline](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/immsonline), or call the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.

## **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**

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit offers the Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) program. HSO offers a full range of dental services, including checkups, cleaning, fillings and more. To find out more about the programs, eligibility requirements and how to make an appointment, call the health unit at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.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 [sdcbsb.on.ca](http://sdcbsb.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 (Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit) at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.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 Reliable Life Insurance Company. The minimum plan, Silver, offers 365 days of 24-hour coverage.
- 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 Platinum travel plan through Reliable Life Insurance Company would meet this requirement.

The SCDSB recommends StudyInsured and Insure my Kids. These programs offer a variety of plans at reasonable annual prices and can be purchased at:

StudyInsured  
[www.studyinsuredstudentaccident.com](http://www.studyinsuredstudentaccident.com)  
1-833-560-0527

Insure my Kids  
[www.insuremykids.com](http://www.insuremykids.com)  
1-800-463-5437

## **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](http://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 purpose of this notice is to make you aware of how the SCDSB and your school use the personal information you provide to us, 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 the Children's Aid Society 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](http://scdsb.on.ca), then select 'About' then 'Policies and Procedures' then 'Access and Privacy'.