



Huron-Superior Catholic

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES PREGNANCY AND PARENTAL LEAVES FOR TRUSTEES

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy and procedural guideline:

- Pregnancy leave refers to a period of up to 17 weeks away from duty for a woman that expects to give birth and look after her baby.
- Parental leave refers to a period of time beyond a pregnancy leave for a woman to continue to look after her newborn baby. Alternatively, it also refers to a period of time for either parent or a guardian to care for a new addition to their family (e.g., birth, legal adoption).

BACKGROUND

Section 228 of Ontario's *Education Act* outlines various conditions under which trustees vacate their seats (e.g., conviction of an indictable offence). Under normal circumstances, when trustees are absent without authorization from three consecutive meetings, they are deemed to have vacated their seats.

However, Section 228.2.1 of the *Education Act* also states that this circumstance "does not apply to vacate the office of a member of a board who is absent for 20 consecutive weeks or less if the absence is a result of the member's pregnancy, the birth of the member's child or the adoption of a child by the member."

PROCEDURES

Should any trustee foresee that s/he might need to take a pregnancy and/or parental leave:

1. The trustee will furnish the Chair and Secretary-Treasurer of the Board with written notice as far in advance as possible. The notice will contain the reasons for the leave request (i.e., pregnancy or parental duties), as well as the expected duration of the leave.
2. If the leave is not related to pregnancy and/or parental duties, it will be denied, in accordance with the *Education Act*. In this circumstance, the trustee's seat will be vacated and filled in a manner deemed appropriate by the board (e.g., bi-election, application process, selection process). The incoming trustee will serve for the duration of the outgoing trustee's term.

3. If the requested leave is more than 20 consecutive weeks but is related to pregnancy and/or parental duties, it will also be denied. In this circumstance, the trustee's seat will be vacated and filled in a manner deemed appropriate by the board (e.g., bi-election, application process, selection process). The incoming trustee will serve for the duration of the outgoing trustee's term.
4. If the leave is related to pregnancy and/or parental duties, and it is for 20 consecutive weeks or less, it will automatically be approved. The trustee's seat will not be deemed to be vacant for the duration of the leave, and therefore, no replacement for the seat itself will be sought.
5. No honorarium will be paid for the duration of the trustee's leave.
6. During the leave, the trustee will be excused from all trustee responsibilities and commitments (e.g., board meetings, committee work, conferences, responding to queries / concerns from the general public). The trustee may continue to use and access the board's technology, equipment, and email address during his/her leave, if desired.
7. The board will alert the system and the general public about the expected duration of the trustee's leave of absence (e.g., notice on the board's website, news release, out-of-office message on email account). Unless the trustee specifically requests that the purpose of the leave be announced, such details will not be shared beyond the Board of Trustees and the board's senior administrators. The trustee on pregnancy and/or parental leave will ensure that his/her automated voice message includes appropriate details about the duration of the leave and his/her expected date of return to duty.
8. Where the trustee whose approved pregnancy and/or parental leave is the Chair of the Board, the Vice-Chair will temporarily assume his/her duties. Where the trustee whose approved pregnancy and/or parental leave is the Vice-Chair of the Board, another trustee will temporarily assume his/her position. The regular electoral process for the Vice-Chair position will be followed.
9. Where the trustee whose approved pregnancy and/or parental leave is on one or more board committees, his/her alternate on the committee will be assigned to those duties. Where no committee alternate is available, the Chair of the Board, in consultation with other members of the board, may decide to assign one or more trustees to cover the outgoing trustee's duties on the committee.
10. Once a trustee who has been granted and has exhausted his/her 20 weeks of pregnancy and/or parental leave, s/he will be subject to the regular provisions of Section 228 of the *Education Act*.