



## Island Public / Natural Science School

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

On reviewing our safe schools practices, the school has consulted with the Safe Schools Committee, teaching staff, School Council and the Board's legal department to clarify supervision responsibilities of students as they travel to and from the Island Public School. The Island School is unique in the sense that many of our students cross a body of water to attend school. Legislative provisions (*Education Act, Child and Family Services Act* and *Criminal Code*) address the supervision of children and these have been used in guiding a review of our current practices. Based on our review, we decided it was appropriate to clearly outline the extent of the Board's supervision responsibilities as well as some changes in our current practices which we believe are necessary to ensure the safety of students to and from our school. Accordingly, please be advised of the following practices which are effective immediately:

### **1. Supervision on the ferry**

The school provides supervision for students on the ferry two times each day, by boat escort on the 8:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. ferry trips. The school does not provide supervision on the ferry at any other time during the school day. Therefore, students who are not on the 8:30 a.m. or 4:15 p.m. ferry trips are not riding under the supervision of any board/school staff.

The School has revised its practice with respect to permitting young students to leave the school's supervision during the school day for ferry travel back to the city. Please be advised that students must now be 10 years of age (Grade 5) and older to travel unaccompanied from the school back to the city during the day for appointments, lessons etc. As a result, students under the age of 10 will not be released by the school to travel back to the city unaccompanied. Up until now, the age for unaccompanied travel has been 9 years of age (Grade 4) and up. We ask parents to make arrangements with the school when it is necessary for their children to return to the city unexpectedly or for appointments. This will mean a parent/guardian will have to come over to the Island to meet the school bus and take their child back to the city.

### **2. Supervision when walking/biking/rollerblading to and from the island ferry docks and school**

The School/Board does not provide any supervision for students who walk, bike or rollerblade to and from the school and the ferry docks while they are on the island. A school bus is available to transport students to and from the island ferry docks and school. Parents/guardians who give their children permission to walk, bike or rollerblade to and from the island ferry docks and the school are fully responsible for the supervision and safety of their children during these times. We will continue our practice of requiring parents/guardians to sign a permission and acknowledgment form which advises the school that they have given their child permission to walk, bike or rollerblade to and from the island ferry docks and which acknowledges that there is no School or Board supervision for their child during these times. I recommend students be Grade 3 to cycle and Grade 4 to walk.

**3. Supervision of students and the end of school day:**

All parents/guardians must make arrangements for the supervision and care of their children at the end of the school day.

(a) For students who reside on the island, parents are responsible for receiving their children when the bus driver drops them off and must make whatever arrangements they deem appropriate.

(b) For students who reside in the city, our boat/bus escort staff provide supervision for students on the city side docks until 4:45 p.m. Parents are responsible for receiving their children after 4:45 p.m. and must make whatever arrangements they deem appropriate. Students are always reminded that they are to stay close to the supervisors until their parents arrive at the ferry docks. As you know, it is a very busy spot at the end of the day.

It is essential that your child be met by a parent or caregiver/ responsible adult designated by the parent. We would like to remind all parents/guardians that they are responsible for making decisions regarding the appropriateness of having their child walk home from the school, bus or ferry after school since they are fully responsible for the supervision and safety of their children after the end of the school day

As you are aware, traveling on/near water presents many challenges and potential dangers. Without adult supervision, it presents even greater dangers. I hope you will understand that these practices have been adopted to ensure the safety of all our children at the Island School. As noted, these new practices will begin immediately.

Yours truly,

Lorraine Methven  
Principal