

The School Day (Daily Sessions) – Elementary & Secondary	
Adopted: October 23, 1973	Last Reviewed/Revised: November 19, 2024
Next Scheduled Review: 2027-2028	
Associated Policies & Procedures: VI-39 Inclement Weather Safety VI-47 Inclement Weather - Transportation Cancellations and Emergency School Closures	

Purpose

It shall be the policy of the Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB) to establish the school day to be consistent with the *Education Act*, in compliance with the Regulations of the Province of Ontario.

Application and Scope

This policy applies to all schools under the jurisdiction of the HCDSB.

References

[Education Act](#)

[O. Reg. 298](#)

Principles

- HCDSB values excellence in learning and providing opportunities that meet the needs and aspirations of all learners in a supportive, creative and innovative learning environment.
- HCDSB prioritizes the safety and well-being of students and staff and is committed cultivating school and workplaces that are safe, inclusive and welcoming.

Requirements

Elementary and Secondary:

- The school office shall be accessible to the students and parents/guardians thirty minutes before the commencement of instruction for the day and ending fifteen minutes after classes end for the day.
- Teachers shall be present in the classroom or teaching area and ensure that the classroom or teaching area is ready for the reception of students at least fifteen minutes before the commencement of classes in the school in the morning and, where applicable, five minutes before the commencement of classes in the school in the afternoon.
- The length of the instructional program of each school day for students of compulsory school age and students in full day junior kindergarten or kindergarten shall be not less than five hours a day excluding recesses or scheduled intervals between classes.
- The instructional program on a school day shall begin not earlier than 8 a.m. and end not later than 5 p.m. except with the approval of the Minister.
- A board may reduce the length of the instructional program on each school day to less than five hours a day for an exceptional student in a special education program.
- Each student and each teacher shall have a scheduled interval for a lunch break.
- A student's interval for a lunch break shall be not less than forty consecutive minutes and need not coincide with the scheduled interval for the lunch break of any other student or any teacher.
- A teacher's interval for a lunch break shall be not less than forty consecutive minutes and need not coincide with the scheduled interval for the lunch break of any other teacher or any student.
- In the intermediate and the senior divisions, a Principal may, subject to the approval of the board, provide for recesses or intervals for students between periods.
- The buildings and the playgrounds shall be open to students during the period beginning fifteen minutes before classes begin for the day and ending fifteen minutes after classes end for the day.
- In elementary schools, there shall be a morning recess and an afternoon recess, each of which shall be not less than ten minutes and not more than fifteen minutes in length, for students in the primary and junior divisions.
- The school shall be opened to the students during inclement weather (e.g. rain).
- When inclement weather results in bus cancellation, schools and the school office will remain open.
- When inclement weather results in school closure, schools and the school office will remain closed.

Secondary Schools Only:

In the event of significant change to the school day organization, the Principal will develop a proposal for the subsequent school year in accordance with the established guideline procedures. It is understood that the Principal will have consulted staff members, Catholic School Council, and with their Family of Schools Superintendent. The proposal shall also include a response to the following criteria:

- The safety of the students and staff.
- The efficiency and quality of the educational programs to be provided.
- The co-curricular activities of the school.
- The needs of the school community.
- The maximum and efficient utilization of available instructional space.
- System bus scheduling requirements.
- Each secondary school Principal will meet and review with their Family of Schools Superintendent the school day organization proposal for the subsequent school year for their school.
- Each secondary school day organizational proposal is subject to the review and approval of the Director of Education prior to its implementation. Such review and approval will be given by April 30.
- The Director will advise the Board accordingly, of any changes that have been incorporated relative to the secondary school day, for each secondary school for the subsequent school year.

APPROVED: Regular Meeting of the Board

AUTHORIZED BY: _____

Chair of the Board