



Electronic Participation in Meetings SBG #100.09

Adopted:	September 23, 2025
Last Reviewed/Revised:	NEW
Responsibility:	Director of Education
Next Scheduled Review:	2029-2030

Policy Statement

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board (BHNCD SB) is committed to fostering effective governance, accountability, and accessibility. The purpose of this Policy is to adopt the requirements of the Education Act and Regulation 463/97 made under the Act, in order to outline Trustee and Officer attendance requirements and the grounds and the process by which a Trustee may request approval to attend meetings by electronic means.

Meetings shall take place at the in the board room at the Catholic Education Centre located at 322 Fairview Drive in Brantford, Ontario unless otherwise determined by resolution of the Board of Trustees

Application and Scope

Trustee attendance requirements apply to the Board of Trustees, as defined by the Education Act, and do not apply to Student Trustees.

Electronic Access and Participation

BHNCD SB shall be responsible for providing Trustees and Student Trustees with the means to participate in meetings electronically, permitting all persons participating in the meeting to communicate with each other simultaneously and instantaneously.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, BHNCD SB may refuse to provide a Trustee with electronic means of participation if the Trustee's participation by such means has not been approved in accordance with this Policy, or if, in the case of the Chair, to allow such form of participation would result in a breach of the physical attendance requirements.

Subject to the provisions of this Policy, a Trustee who participates in a meeting through electronic means is deemed to be present for the purposes of every Act.

Meetings shall be open to the public for in-person and electronic attendance, except where the Board of Trustees determines by resolution that it shall meet in camera, pursuant to one of the exceptions to the requirement to meet in public outlined at Section 207(2)(b) of the Education Act.

Only elected Trustees, the Secretary to the Board, and individuals invited by the Chair or by resolution of the Board, may attend the in-camera portion of a meeting.

The Board shall provide members of the public with the ability to connect electronically to a meeting of the Board and committees of the Board, except where the Board is meeting in camera. Such electronic means shall allow all persons participating in the meeting, including delegates, to communicate with each other simultaneously and instantaneously.



It is incumbent upon each Trustee participating in an in-camera meeting via electronic means to ensure that privacy is maintained, taking into account their location, proximity to others, and the potential for any technological interference that could compromise confidentiality.

A Trustee who is attending an in camera meeting who is required under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act to declare a conflict shall disconnect from electronic participation until the agenda item giving rise to the conflict has been concluded.

Attendance Requirements

Trustees

All Trustees of the Board of Trustees shall physically attend regular meetings of the Board and Committee of the Whole Board, except where written approval for electronic attendance has been given in accordance with this Policy.

A Trustee seeking authorization to participate in a meeting by electronic means shall submit their request in writing and the reason for the request to the Chair of the Board, copying the Director of Education and Secretary to the Board or designate.

Where the Trustee making the request is the Chair of the Board, they shall submit their request in writing and the reason for the request to the Vice Chair of the Board, copying the Director of Education and the Secretary to the Board or designate. If the Board of Trustees has no Vice Chair, the Chair shall submit their request to another Trustee of the Board.

All requests shall be submitted prior to the start of the meeting to which the request applies.

The Chair, Vice Chair, or other Trustee, as the case may be, may approve a request to attend a meeting electronically if they are satisfied that one or more of the following circumstances exist:

- a) The Trustee's primary place of residence within the area of jurisdiction of the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board is located 125 kilometers or more from the meeting location.
- b) Weather conditions do not allow the Trustee to travel to the meeting location safely.
- c) The Trustee cannot be physically present at a meeting due to health-related issues.
- d) The Trustee has a disability that makes it challenging to be physically present at a meeting.
- e) The Trustee cannot be physically present due to family responsibilities in respect of,
 - i. the Trustee's spouse;
 - ii. a parent, stepparent or foster parent of the Trustee or the Trustee's spouse;
 - iii. a child, stepchild, foster child or child who is under legal guardianship of the Trustee or Trustee's spouse;
 - iv. a relative of the Trustee who is dependent on the Trustee for care or assistance; or
 - v. a person who is dependent on the Trustee for care or assistance and who considers the Trustee to be like a family Trustee.

A request shall not be approved if approval would result in fewer than one Trustee of the Board in addition to the Chair of the Board or designate being physically present in the meeting room.



A Trustee requesting attendance by electronic means shall receive a response as soon as reasonably possible, and in any case prior to the start of the meeting. The Director of Education or designate shall be copied on the response.

Where a request to attend a meeting by electronic means is approved, the Director of Education or designate will make the necessary arrangements to facilitate electronic participation. The Director of Education may refuse to provide electronic access to a meeting where attendance by electronic means has not been approved.

Director of Education

The Director of Education, or designate, shall be physically present in the meeting room for each meeting of the Board or Trustees and each meeting of a committee of the Board, including a Committee of the Whole Board.

Committee Chairs

For committees of the Board of Trustees other than the Committee of the Whole Board, the Chair of the committee or their designate shall be physically present in the meeting room at every regular meeting of the committee, except that the Chair of the committee or their designate may participate in a meeting by electronic means if another member of the committee, who is also a Trustee of the Board, is physically present in the meeting room.

Exceptional Circumstances

The requirements for Trustees to be physically present at meetings and to request to attend by electronic means do not apply if all schools of the Board are closed pursuant to an order made by:

- a) the Minister under section 5(1) of the Education Act;
- b) a medical officer of health or the Chief Medical Officer of Health under section 22 or 77.1 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act;
- c) the Lieutenant Governor in Council under paragraph 5 of subsection 7.0.2(4) of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act; or
- d) the Lieutenant Governor in Council under clause 4(1)(a) of the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020.

The exemption period starts on the day the order is made and ends 60 days after the order ceases to apply.

Consequences of Non-Attendance

In accordance with Section 228(1) of the Education Act, a Trustee vacates their seat if they:

- a) Absent themselves without being authorized by resolution entered in the minutes, from three consecutive regular meetings of the Board; or
- b) fail to be physically present at a regular meeting of the Board or Committee of the Whole Board without approval of an exemption allowing attendance by electronic means, granted in accordance with this Policy.

Prolonged Absence

A Trustee requesting Board approval for an absence for three or more regular meetings of the Board may submit a written request to the Chair, stating the reason and the anticipated length of their absence. The matter shall be considered at the next Board meeting. If approved by resolution of the Board, the Trustee's seat shall not be deemed vacated. The Trustee's honoraria shall be suspended for the length of their absence.



Attendance Report

A Trustee attendance report shall be prepared annually and presented to the Board by no later than the December Board meeting. The report shall summarize the attendance of each Trustee at Board meetings, Committee of the Whole meetings, and committee meetings, held during the previous school year.

References

- Education Act, Section 228(1)
- Ontario Regulation 463/97 "Electronic Meetings and Meeting Attendance"

Forms

- N/A

Appendices

- N/A

Definitions

- N/A