1. **Preamble**

1.1. The procedures that follow provide guidelines and expectations regarding the provision of French Immersion instruction to elementary students of the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB). Class formation and consolidation guidelines, program descriptions, staffing, and transportation regulations are also described.

1.2. Admission into the French Immersion program for the WRDSB is overseen by the Business Services division.

1.3. French as a Second Language (FSL) programming, including French Immersion, is overseen by the Learning Support Services division.

2. **Definitions**

2.1. **Home School:** Based on primary home address eligibility and school attendance boundary.

2.2. **Assigned School:** Based on a student’s current out of boundary school assignment. A student may be attending a school other than their Home School because of a program assignment (e.g. Special Education) or because their sibling is enrolled in French Immersion.

2.3. **Out of Boundary Student:** Any student who applies to attend a school that is not their Home School based on their Primary Home Address.
2.4. **Primary Home Address**: The student’s home address as supplied by the parent/caregiver to the school. The Primary Home Address will determine the student’s Home School.

2.5. **Limited Enrolment School**: The key criteria for designating a school as Limited Enrolment includes school overutilization (enrolment versus capacity) and site constraints. Limited Enrolment Schools may not accept any Out of Boundary applicants.

3. **Administration**

3.1. Students anticipating enrolling in Grade 1 French Immersion should attend their Home School for Kindergarten (refer to [Administrative Procedure 1010 - Junior and Senior Kindergarten Registration](#)).

3.2. Students at any grade level with a sibling presently in French Immersion at an Assigned School may also attend the Assigned School ([Administrative Procedure 1040 – Out of Boundary Requests – Elementary](#)).

4. **Applying to French Immersion in Grade 1 (Phase 1)**

4.1. In cases where demand for a Grade 1 French Immersion program exceeds the WRDSB’s capacity to offer the program, a prioritized lottery system is used to determine which students are accepted into the program. To be eligible for the lottery, parents/caregivers (hereinafter referred to as students) must apply for Grade 1 French Immersion during the month of January in the student’s Senior Kindergarten year using the online application system. This is known as Phase 1.

   4.1.1. If a family requires assistance with the online application form (e.g., translation, access to technology, etc.), they may contact their Home School/Assigned School or the Planning Department to access assistance.

   4.1.2. Information about the Phase 1 application process will be sent to all Senior Kindergarten students at minimum through electronic communication before the end of December and posted on the WRDSB’s website.

4.2. Students who submit applications as of January 31 will form the basis of the lottery and will be placed in the following order:

   4.2.1. Home School and Assigned School students with a sibling presently in French Immersion at the school will be placed first. Note, this only applies if the sibling will be attending French Immersion at the Home School/Assigned School when the applicant enters Grade 1.

   4.2.2. Home School students without siblings in a French Immersion program will be placed second.

   4.2.3. Out of Boundary students, including Assigned School students who do not meet the criteria laid out in Section 4.2.1 will be placed third, except at Limited Enrolment schools (refer to Section 7.2).

4.3. Families will be notified by email if their student has secured a spot in the program prior to March Break. Once a student has been accepted into the program, their spot will be guaranteed for two (2) weeks during which time families must click on the link sent to their email to confirm they are accepting the placement.
4.4. All students not placed in a class as a result of the lottery outlined in Section 4.2 will be placed on a waiting list. The order of the waiting list is determined by the position in the lottery. (e.g., If a class is loaded to 20 students and a student from the Home School is 24th in the lottery, they will be placed 4th on the waiting list).

4.4.1. Waiting lists will remain open and applicants will be placed in available spaces up to the 20th instructional day of the school year. A student may remain on up to three (3) waiting lists to increase their chances of acceptance.

4.4.2. If a position becomes available for a waitlisted student, their spot will be guaranteed for five (5) business days during which time families must click on the link sent to their email to confirm they are accepting the placement.

5. Ongoing Grade 1 French Immersion Applications (Phase 2)

5.1. Students who apply after January 31 will be considered for placement in a Grade 1 French Immersion class on a first-come, first-served basis after the Phase 1 process (refer to Section 4) is completed.

5.1.1. If a student applies after January 31 and there is space in the French Immersion program at the school (refer to Section 7), the student will be placed in the class.

5.1.2. If a student applies after January 31 and the French Immersion program at the school is full, the student will be placed on the waiting list in sequential order (first come, first served) behind students outlined in Section 4, with the exception of Limited Enrolment Schools. Alternatively, the student may be offered a placement in a French Immersion class at a school with no waiting list.

6. Internal Transfers and New Registrants (after Phase 2 and Grades 2-8)

6.1. For students who transfer into the WRDSB from another school district or geographical area within the WRDSB after Grade 1, or within their Grade 1 school year, the following procedures apply:

6.1.1. A student is eligible to attend a WRDSB school for French Immersion if they are enrolled in French Immersion or have French Language experience.

6.1.1.1. Proof of previous French Immersion or equivalent French Language experience is required. Registration in Grade 2 to Grade 8 programs requires prior knowledge equivalent to the mandated hours of learning prescribed by the Ministry of Education.

6.1.1.2. Admission into the French Immersion program may require an assessment. Prior knowledge can be assessed informally at the school site by the classroom teacher. Learning Support Services staff may be invited to assist.

6.1.1.3. The school may request a six-week trial period before admission is finalized.

6.1.2. If the Home School offers the French Immersion program at the student’s current grade level, then the student will be placed in that grade level class of French Immersion at that school.
6.1.2.1. If the student registers prior to the first day of school, and the student is in Grade 1, then the application process in Sections 4 or 5 applies.

6.1.3. If the student's Home School does not offer the French Immersion program at the student's current grade level, the student will be offered a placement in that grade level at a school that has an opening.

6.1.4. The following process is followed to place students in Out of Boundary schools:

6.1.4.1. Families must provide their Home School with the names of 2-3 schools offering French Immersion at the student’s grade level where they wish to attend and can supply their own transportation to. The list of French Immersion schools is available on the WRDSB website. For internal transfers, one of the choices may be the student’s current Home School.

6.1.4.2. The Home School will contact the French Immersion school(s) on the family’s list to indicate they may be arriving to register. A school may not refuse an Out of Boundary student for French Immersion without the Family of Schools’ Superintendent, Student Achievement and Well-Being approval. Reasons for refusal may include staffing pressures (e.g., adding students may result in the need for more French-qualified staff at the school, or a reorganization) or site/facility constraints (e.g., school is over capacity and accepting additional students presents an accommodation challenge). Limited Enrolment schools shall not accept Out of Boundary students at any grade level without consultation with the Planning Department.

6.1.4.3. An Out of Boundary request form or Student Transfer Form must be completed for the student (and any of their siblings) to finalize the transfer/registration of the student(s).

6.2. Administrative Procedure 1020 - Admission of Underage Pupils, for enrolling under-age children, applies to the French Immersion program.

7. Class Formation/Consolidation

7.1. Grade 1 French Immersion classes will be formed prior to the school count date for staffing purposes (typically March 31).

7.1.1. By January 31, a school must have at least eighteen (18) Senior Kindergarten students apply for French Immersion (Home School, Assigned School and Out of Boundary) before it can be considered for offering a Grade 1 French Immersion class.

7.1.2. When a class reaches a total of twenty-three (23) applicants, a waiting list of additional students who wish to enroll in the program is established.

7.1.3. With the approval of Coordinating Council, a school may add additional Grade 1 French Immersion classes using the following criteria:

- Home School waiting list applicants total eighteen or more students (if combined grade classes are possible, fewer Home School waitlist students are required, refer to 7.4.1);
● additional French Immersion classes will leave a minimum of eighteen (18) students in the Regular Track (Core French) program;
● the WRDSB has enough French-qualified teaching staff to deliver the program; and
● space is available in the school (to be assessed by the Planning Department).

7.2. Limited Enrolment Schools will be identified and reviewed on an annual basis by the Planning Department, identified on the Grade 1 French Immersion application form, and an explanation of enrolment limitations will be provided in the body of the application form. A minimum of twenty (20) Home School applicants will be required to open additional Grade 1 classes at Limited Enrolment Schools.

7.2.1. The Planning Department reserves the right to maintain vacancies within a Grade 1 French Immersion class at Limited Enrolment Schools after Phase 1 to be held for Home School applicants during Phase 2.

7.3. Should a non-Immersion site generate a minimum of thirty-six (36) Home School applicants for Grade 1 French Immersion by January 31, the school may be considered for opening a French Immersion program. In consultation with the Planning Department, Learning Support Services, Human Resource Services, the Family of Schools Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being and school Principal, the following criteria will be used to assess program viability:

● the WRDSB has enough French-qualified teaching staff to expand the program;
● adding French Immersion classes will leave a minimum of eighteen (18) students in the Regular Track (English/Core French) program;
● the school is geographically isolated from other French Immersion sites; and
● space is currently and projected to be available in the school (to be assessed by the Planning Department).

7.3.1. Recommendations for adding new French Immersion sites will be brought forward to the Board of Trustees for approval.

7.4. Collapsing Existing Classes and Programs

7.4.1. When enrolment at any grade level falls below eighteen (18), the Principal, in consultation with the Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being, may form a combined class.

7.4.2. Subject to the approval of the Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being, if, by February 15, a class falls below an enrolment of eighteen (18), and a combined class is not formed, the Principal will consult the Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being, to develop a course of action which may include:

● transferring to a Regular Track (English/Core French) program in the Home School;
● continuing French Immersion at another school where space permits and where parents/caregivers are willing to transport their student(s).

8. Staffing

8.1. Staffing of French Immersion programs is done in accordance with established WRDSB staffing procedures.

9. Withdrawal from French Immersion
9.1. Students may withdraw from French Immersion and transfer to the Regular Track (English/Core French) program upon consultation with the school Principal.

9.2. Students who are experiencing challenges in the French Immersion program, in either the English or French half of the day, are entitled to support through a referral to School Based Team. The primary support will be through the classroom teacher and could also include a Special Education Resource Teacher, resource withdrawal, and/or an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The language of instruction for Special Education support outside the French Immersion classroom can be French or English. In-class support for French Immersion subjects must be in the French language.

9.3. Withdrawal of a student from the French Immersion program will require an administrator to consult with the parent(s)/guardian(s). This consultation will include a review of the student’s work, teacher and parent input, and an examination of supports in place. Principals must inform their Superintendent, Student Achievement and Well-Being of students withdrawing from the French Immersion program.

9.4. Assigned School or Out of Boundary students who withdraw from French Immersion may be redirected to their Home School and are subject to an annual Out of Boundary request process (Administrative Procedure 1040 - Out of Boundary Requests - Elementary).

10. Program

10.1. The subjects taught in Grades 1 to 6, as per the language of instruction, are as follows:

10.1.1. English (50%):
   - English Language
   - Science and Technology
   - The Arts: Music and Drama and Dance
   - Physical Education & Health

10.1.2. French (50%):
   - French Language
   - Social Studies
   - The Arts: Visual Arts
   - Mathematics

10.2. The subjects taught in Grades 7 and 8, as per the language of instruction, are as follows:

10.2.1. English (50%):
   - English Language
   - Mathematics
   - Science and Technology
   - Music
   - Physical Education

10.2.2. French (50%):
   - French Language
   - History
   - Geography
   - The Arts: Visual Arts
Schools have flexibility to offer the following subjects in French or English depending upon timetabling needs: Drama, Media, Health.

11. **Transportation**

11.1. Student transportation is governed by [Board Policy 4009 - Student Transportation](#) and [Administrative Procedure 4260 - Student Transportation](#).