

6070 School Bus Transportation

Policy 6070

STATUS: **REVIEW**

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION

Board Approved: May 01, 1983

Last Reviewed: September, 2013; September 2017

The Board of Education believes that by offering school bus services to eligible students, it allows those students better access to educational programs

Definitions and Limits:

Bus Fleet:

Bus fleet refers to the fleet owned and operated by SD 59 and any buses contracted by the district for the purpose of transporting students in SD 59.

Eligible Students:

Eligible students are ones who live outside the city limits and are in excess of .8 kilometres (800 metres) from the school in their assigned catchment area. Eligible students are registered in and attend School District # 59 schools.

Eligibility includes students inside the city limits that have been designated, through school closure, to a receiving school that is greater than 800 metres from their original catchment area.

Rural elementary students attending the French Immersion program in Dawson Creek are eligible for transportation services to Ecole Frank Ross.

Eligibility is not intended to mean that students have the “right” to transportation services. Bus service is a privilege, which eligible students are able to use.

Being eligible for transportation services does not guarantee full door-to-door services. Factors such as cost, distance, effect on pick-up and drop-off times, consistency of student ridership, and student behaviors will impact the availability of the transportation services provided.

Non-Public School Bus Students:

Students attending private schools and/or accredited Northern Lights College programs may be permitted to ride on School District # 59 buses.

Walk Limits:

A walk limit is the distance from a student’s driveway to the nearest bus route. If the distance exceeds 800 m, eligible students may be entitled to bus service.

Bus Stop:

In accordance with the Motor Vehicle Act, a bus stop is a designated school bus stopping place that has clear visibility in all directions for a minimum of 60 metres, and is required for the purposes of loading or off-loading students. The primary requirement of a bus stop is that it will assure the safe conveyance of students from the bus to their loading location.

School Bus Transportation – Responsibilities and Oversight:

The SD#59 Transportation System shall be under the immediate direction of the Transportation Manager. General oversight shall be under the direction of the Director of Operations.

Transportation Policy and Regulation:

Transportation policy and regulation adopted by SD#59 shall be in compliance with provincial and federal regulation.

Transportation Assistance Allowance:

Upon application, parents/guardians may be eligible for the Transportation Assistance Allowance. This allowance is available to support students that are eligible for transportation services but have been denied due to circumstances other than student misbehavior. The amount per kilometer is set by the Board of Education, and the application is approved by the Transportation Manager.

Non-District use of District-Owned Buses:

District owned school buses shall be available for non-District use, only for purposes that have been authorized by the Board.

School Bus Insurance:

All buses, carrying SD#59 students shall carry a minimum basic insurance of 10 million dollars. All carriers of SD#59 students will ensure that they meet regulations and safety criteria established by insurance and provincial regulatory agencies.

Curricular and Extra Curricular Transportation:

The Board believes curricular and extra-curricular activities are an integral part of education programs developed for students. Transportation services will be made available for such travel on a fee for service basis to participating SD#59 schools.

Transportation Fees:

The Board of Education believes that their first priority is to support and preserve quality, educational services to the students of the District. With that in mind, the Board will not permit resources to be removed from the classroom in order to sustain transportation services. Therefore, depending on budgetary constraints from year to year, the Board reserves the option to:

1. Charge non-eligible riders (e.g., private school students);
2. Charge riders requesting transportation services to a school, other than the school within their designated catchment area;
3. Reduce transportation services overall to stay within budget.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION - WALK-LIMITS

Board Approved: May 1983

Last Revised: March 24, 2010; June 2017

Description of Limits:

1. To/From Bus Stops: 800 metres (1/2 mile)
 - a) Walking distances shall be calculated as distances walked on publicly maintained roads and shall not include distances walked on private property.
2. To/From Schools:
 - a) Students living within municipal limits are not eligible to receive school bus service, regardless of walking distances to the school in their catchment area. Exceptions to this regulation are as follows:
 - b) The Board of Education has amalgamated the catchment areas of 2 or more schools, and their planning includes transportation services for students to attend the identified receiving school.
 - c) Students with special needs may be supplied with transportation service from their residence to school and return.
 - d) For compelling reasons, and through the Appeal provision in law, the Board of Education may permit the transportation of a student living within city/town limits. Such student passengers may be permitted to ride on a space available basis only, where no extra stops or distances shall be incurred.
3. Walk Limits may be temporarily waived in cases where:
 - a) Students with identified special needs.
 - b) An emergency medical situation occurs for a student.
 - c) When extreme weather conditions prevail.
4. Transportation services may not be provided in cases where:
 - a) In the opinion of the Transportation Manager the roads involved are not (consistently) suitable for bus travel.
 - b) A maintained and/or suitable turnaround is not available.
 - c) A bus route extension directly affects the pick-up and/or the length of the ride time for other students.
 - d) A bus route extension directly affects operational cost to the district.
 - e) A bus route extension or deviation is requested to accommodate transportation to a school outside the catchment area identified for the student(s).

5. Subject to the above limits, route extensions may be granted for:
 - a) 1 Student - up to 3.2 km (2 miles)
 - b) 2 Students - up to 4.8 km (3 miles)
 - c) 3 Students - up to 6.4 km (4 miles)
 - d) 4 Students - up to 8.0 km (5 miles), etc.

6. Should transportation service be denied to eligible students due to the above conditions, Transportation Assistance shall be made available in accordance with existing regulations.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION - AUTHORIZED NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL BUS PASSENGERS

Board Approved: February 11, 1985

Last Revised: June 19, 2013; June 2017

Description:

1. The following district employees are authorized to ride school buses:
 - a) Teachers, support staff and designated school volunteers while performing their duties.
 - b) School district officials (with the permission of the Transportation Manager).
 - c) Providers of contract services to the District (with the permission of the Transportation Manager).
2. A School District employee during an emergency situation.
 - a) For the purpose of this regulation, an emergency situation is defined as a situation where an employee cannot reach his or her place of employment for one of the following reasons:
 - i) Mechanical breakdown of their usual transportation.
 - ii) Extreme weather and/or road conditions.

Note: The above reasons are not intended to provide sustained or repeated riding privileges.

3. The following non-public school students are permitted to ride school buses provided deviation from the normal route is not required:
 - a) Private school K-12 students.
 - b) Volunteers that are providing services to students may be permitted rider status on a space-available basis, provided that insurance and licensing of district buses is not affected, and that buses will not deviate from their normal route.
 - i) Each request will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis with a statement from the school principal providing explanation for the volunteer service and the period of time for which transportation services are requested.
 - ii) Providing rider status to a volunteer is not intended to provide sustained or repeated riding privileges
 - c) Northern Lights College students.
 - d) Adults with Special Needs

- i) Transportation may be provided to adults with special needs to attend approved educational facilities subject to the following conditions:
- (a) That the destination facility be approved by the District as being an educational or training centre.
 - (b) That transportation only be provided on a space available basis, and that no additional costs be incurred.
 - (c) That permission is granted based on a District assessment of each individual's suitability to travel in a school bus environment.
 - (d) That appropriate measures be taken to properly introduce each individual and the circumstances to the driver, the children, and the parents on the route involved.
 - (e) That the District may limit the number of adults with special needs that may be allowed on one bus.

NOTE: The above is dependent on the following:

- *there is space available on the bus(es) required to carry the student/adult;*
- *no additional bus stops will be permitted for pick up or drop off;*
- *adult students submit a clear criminal record check for working with children and vulnerable adults prior to permission being granted;*
- *compliance with the code of conduct regarding behavior on the school bus;*
- *they maintain a good standing in their account if a fee for service structure is in effect.*

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION - RESPONSIBILITIES & DUTIES

Board Approved: May 1983

Last Revised: June 19, 2013; June 2017

Description:

1. Director of Operations:

- a) Generally, oversees the efficiency of school bus operations;
- b) Recommend policy or regulation changes for review by the Policy Committee.

2. Transportation Manager:

- a) Responsible for overall safety and operation of the transportation department;
- b) Establish routes, schedules and stops to serve designated school catchment areas;
- c) Oversee driver training, maintenance schedules and repairs to the bus fleet;
- d) Establish communication protocols between schools, drivers and parents to ensure student safety;
- e) Provide overall supervision of riding privileges based on student behaviors on the bus;
- f) Work in consultation with school Principals to establish consequences for inappropriate student behavior on the bus.

3. Superintendent of Schools or Designate:

- a) Recommend Policy/Regulation changes to the Board;
- b) Authorize field trips longer than 1 day;
- c) Regulate school start and dismissal times;
- d) Establish a District calendar describing days that school will be in session.

4. Principals:

- a) In conjunction with the Transportation Manager and bus driver, principals will work together to establish consequences for students whose conduct aboard a school bus is deemed unsafe or inappropriate;
- b) Principals are responsible for the safety of students in the loading zone of a school, and will assign appropriate supervision;
- c) Will authorize field trips and book school bus services as needed.

5. Bus Operators:

- a) Bus Operators are responsible for the safe operation of the bus;
- b) Bus Operators bear primary authority over students while they are aboard the bus;
- c) In circumstances where a teacher is riding the bus with the students, the teacher will assume primary responsibility for student behavior.;

- d) Bus Operators shall follow assigned routes, adhering strictly to designated pickup and drop off stops, and meeting assigned schedules;
- e) Bus Operators may not extend or vary a route, or deviate from their assigned route, except in the event of road closure or emergency circumstances, without the expressed permission of the Transportation Manager.

6. Parents/Students will:

- a) Abide by the posted passenger regulations;
- b) Arrive at pick-up points on time;
- c) Ensure that the student's clothing is appropriate for weather conditions;
- d) Assume responsibility for students until they board the bus, and after they leave the bus;
- e) Not board any bus without the consent from the driver.
- f) Communicate to the school and/or bus garage if a child will not be riding the bus.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION - SCHOOL BUS PASSENGERS

Last Revised: June 19, 2013; June 2017

Description:

1. Students shall:

- a) conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner;
- b) follow instructions given by the bus driver;
- c) remain seated until they reach their destination;
- d) follow safe bus rules (as posted in bus);
- e) follow safe bus procedures (available in schools).

2. Parents shall ensure that their child:

- a) is at the correct pick-up spot approximately five minutes early;
- b) waits for, and boards, the bus in a safe manner;
- c) returns home safely, from the designated bus stop, at the end of the school day;
- d) recognizes that, under these regulations, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken for any unsafe or inappropriate behavior on the school bus.

3. Bus Operators shall:

- a) implement written bus procedures which apply fairly and consistently to students;
- b) ensure that bus procedures and expectations are communicated to parents and students;
- c) report rule infractions;
- d) use their best judgment, ~~drivers will~~ and follow a progressive discipline model.

4. Progressive discipline procedure:

- a) Verbal Warning - Normally, a verbal warning will be given by the Bus Operator to correct student misbehavior while aboard the bus.
- b) Written Warning - Should the verbal warnings be ignored and student conduct continues to be unacceptable, the Bus Operator will issue a written warning. A written warning may also be given when misconduct is serious enough to warrant parents (or guardians) being notified of the student's behavior.
- c) Suspension:
 - i) Should the written warnings not be heeded or extreme behaviour occurs, the Bus Operator will request a suspension of riding privileges. The Bus Operator will not determine the length of the suspension, but will provide input to the Transportation Manager.
 - ii) Once a request for suspension is received, the Transportation Manager and the Principal of the student concerned will discuss the student's behaviors. A suitable suspension of bus riding privileges may occur, with notification given as required.

- iii) First Occasion - normally a one (1) to five (5) day suspension of bus riding privileges
- iv) Second Occasion - normally a two (2) to ten (10) day suspension of bus riding privileges.
- v) Third Occasion - Should circumstances warrant suspension of bus riding privileges in excess of 10 days, the incident shall be discussed with the Superintendent of Schools or designate, who may authorize an indefinite suspension of bus riding privileges. Indefinite suspensions shall be reviewed periodically and bus riding privileges may be reinstated. The board shall be advised of all indefinite suspensions and subsequent reinstatements.
- vi) Misbehavior on a school bus may result in further consequences, to be determined by the school principal.

SCHOOL BUS PASSENGER REGULATIONS

1. The following regulations apply to all passengers carried aboard district-owned, contracted or chartered school buses:

- a) The Bus Operator has immediate authority of the School bus at all times;
- b) The Bus Operator may designate seating for any purpose;
- c) Student behavior and conduct must not create a distraction for the Bus Operator;
- d) For the safety of students, no eating or drinking is permitted on the bus;
- e) Students are responsible for maintaining their area of the bus in a neat and presentable manner;
- f) Students will remain in their seat and will not extend arms or heads out of windows;
- g) When loading or unloading the bus, students must obey directions from the Bus Operator.

2. The following items shall not be taken aboard a school bus under any circumstance:

- a) Skis and poles;
- b) Skateboards and snowboards;
- c) Sleighs, toboggans, or snow shoes;
- d) Any item deemed a hazard;
- e) Furniture or other shop items if they have sharp projections or are too large to hold on the owner's lap;
- f) Pets or animals of any description.

3. It is permissible for students to carry aboard school buses the following items subject to limitations as noted:

- a) Hockey sticks or curling brooms, provided they can be secured between the seat and the wall of the bus;
- b) Ice skates if secured in a heavy canvas bag and carried on the owner's lap, or stowed under a seat;
- c) Small musical instruments carried in the manufacturer's box or a secured carrying case. The instrument must be carried in owner's lap at all times and may not travel on a vacant seat;
- d) Electronic devices may be used while on the bus ONLY with the permission of the driver, and must not interfere with the driver or other passengers;
- e) Field Trip Equipment and Supplies;

- f) Personal clothing is packed in a bag or backpack;
- g) Groceries and supplies that are packed in boxes and stowed under or between seats;
- h) Bags and boxes shall not be stored in the aisles, block emergency exits, or be stacked between seats higher than the seat backs.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION - OPERATING REGULATIONS

Board Approved: May 1983

Last Revised: March 24, 2010; June 2017

Description:

The following regulations are applicable to the operation of the district school transportation system:

1. Bus Garage Operating Hours:
 - a. The bus garage shall be staffed with people who are able to implement support and/or emergency procedures during times when buses are conducting their morning and afternoon runs. Otherwise the bus garage will follow regular business hours from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.
2. Route Design:
 - a. Where practical, the following are guidelines when designing routes:
 - i. Students will be picked up after 6:30 A.M. and, brought home before 5:00 P.M.;
 - ii. Bus stop locations shall be established away from heavily used roadways whenever/wherever possible.
3. Use of Headlights:
 - a. School bus headlights shall be turned on whenever the bus is in operation.
4. Railway Crossing:
 - a. All school buses, operated or contracted by the district, shall stop at all uncontrolled railway crossings.
5. School Catchment Areas - See Policy #4000
6. Maintaining Route Schedules:
 - a. Buses shall not leave designated stops ahead of scheduled times in the morning.
 - b. Buses running behind schedule in excess of 20 minutes shall be announced over the local radio station and on the website. Once announced, the revised schedule shall be maintained for that trip.
7. Responsibility for School Bus Passengers In-Transit in Rural areas only:

- a. Unless requested otherwise by a parent or guardian, a student shall board and disembark only at his/her appointed bus stop(s);
 - b. School departure times shall be posted in a prominent location in each school bus;
 - c. There is no obligation for Bus Operators to wait for secondary students beyond the posted departure times;
 - d. An elementary student riding the bus in the morning must be accounted for or proper authorities notified of missing students prior to the bus departing the school.
8. Transportation of students with Special Needs:
- a. The Principal or a designated staff will take custody of students with special needs upon arrival at school. When returning students to their home the bus Driver will follow prescribed practices established by the school and the Transportation Manager.
9. Seating Arrangements:
- a. Students are permitted to be seated three to a seat where this can be accomplished in comfort.
 - b. Smaller children will normally be seated to the front of the bus where the Operator can oversee them.
 - c. Any student may be moved to any seat on the bus at the Operator's discretion.
 - d. The rated seating capacity of the school bus shall not be exceeded at any time.
10. Bus Operator Training:
- a. Bus Operators will normally spend an appropriate time training on each route before driving the route solo.
11. Bus Operators' Periodic Medicals:
- a. All Bus Operators require medical examinations every two (2) years;
 - b. All Bus Operators over 50 years of age require medical examination annually.
12. Provision of School Bus Communications:
- a. All regular scheduled school buses shall be equipped with a two-way radio, capable of maintaining contact with the Bus Garage throughout the school bus route.
13. Disposition of Used Buses:
- a. Used school buses shall be disposed of as follows:
 - i. District signs, school bus designations, etc. will be blacked out;
 - ii. Red flashing lights will be rendered inoperative;
 - iii. Disposition of buses shall be approved by the board;

- iv. Buses shall be sold at public auction and/or at the discretion of the Board, buses may be directly donated or sold to private schools or not-for-profit organizations.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION - TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE ALLOWANCE

Board Approved: May 1983

Last Revised: September, 2013; June 2017

Description:

1. Transportation Assistance Allowance, upon application, may be paid to parents/guardians of eligible students who:
 - i) Attend a school in the district and for whom redesigning a route to accommodate pick up and drop off would adversely affect other students;
 - ii) Attend Kindergarten and the provision of transportation for them would be impractical due to the effect on existing routes;
 - iii) Live beyond authorized route extensions;
 - iv) Live on routes not suitable for school bus travel;
 - v) Have disabilities and require special care or conveyance assistance or appliances that are not available;
 - vi) Would normally be entitled to school bus service, but payment of assistance allowances results in significant savings to the Board.
2. The Transportation Manager, in consultation with the Director of Operations and Secretary Treasurer, shall periodically review the Transportation Assistance Allowance rates, and make changes if required.
3. When the Board chooses to make transportation assistance payments for regular home to school travel in lieu of providing school bus service the full responsibility for safe transportation and insurance coverage rests with the vehicle owner.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION - OPERATION DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER

Board Approved: May 1983

Last Revised: March 24, 2010; June 2017

Description:

1. Bus Fleet Cancellation Due to Severe Weather:

- a) The Transportation Manager is authorized, at his discretion, to cancel school buses due to severe weather and/or dangerous road conditions;
- b) The Transportation Manager will monitor weather/road conditions, utilizing reports from various agencies when/where required;
- c) The safety of the students and the drivers will be paramount in consideration of bus fleet operation/cancellation;
- d) Bus cancellations due to severe weather will be announced over local radio stations and posted on the SD#59 website.

2. General Factors When Deciding to Cancel bus Travel:

- a) Cancellation of bus services is based on a review of the weather conditions and combinations of various factors. This includes examining temperature, wind velocity, drifting, visibility, wind chill, road conditions, and the weather forecast for the next 8 hours. The Board authorizes the Transportation Manager to exercise judgment and experience based on the following factors:
 - i) Buses will be cancelled when the ambient temperature is -35° Celsius or colder. Additional factors in deciding to cancel fleet travel will include considering the ambient temperatures in the rural areas served by the fleet;
 - ii) Buses will be cancelled when a combination of falling/blowing/drifting snow and/or cold temperatures present a considerable safety risk for visibility factors or for buses to become stuck on rural roads;
 - iii) Buses may be cancelled when the wind chill, combined with the ambient temperature, is colder than -35° Celsius;
 - iv) Buses may be cancelled when a combination of factors have produced poor road conditions that present a considerable safety risk for buses to lose traction.

3. Early Departure of the Buses Due to Deteriorating Weather:

- a) The Transportation Manager is authorized to dispatch the fleet in the event severe weather conditions emerge through the course of a school day;
- b) Parent/Guardian requests regarding where students are to be dropped off in the event of early departures shall be complied with where possible;
- c) Principals will be notified as soon as the decision is made for early departure of the fleet and will put into motion their plan for parent/student reunification;

- d) All early departures shall be announced over local radio stations and posted on the SD#59 website.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION - NON-DISTRICT USE OF DISTRICT-OWNED SCHOOL BUSES

Board Approved: May 1983

Last Revised: June 9, 2013; June 2017

Description:

- 1) Board owned School Buses shall be available for non-District use, subject to the following:
 - a) A formal request will be made to the board describing the services required and purpose for the travel.
 - b) Subject to School Act Regulations, the Board may enter into an agreement with self-insured, educational or recreational organizations, in order to provide transportation services for school age children to attend educational or recreational programs.
 - c) Only bus drivers employed by the School District shall drive Board-owned school buses.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION - LIABILITY INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

Issued: February 24, 1986

Last Revised: March 24, 2010; June 2017

Description:

1. Vehicles used must have valid school bus permits issued by the Motor Vehicle Department.
2. Current passenger lists shall be maintained and a copy carried on the bus.
3. The minimum coverage for liability insurance to be carried by the School District shall be \$10,000,000 for each bus.
4. The minimum coverage for liability insurance for all other School District owned vehicles shall be 1,000,000. After that limit, the School Protection Plan (SPP) Liability Agreement will apply up to the School Protection Program limit of coverage.
5. When outside bus services are contracted to carry students or staff, the carrier shall have a minimum of \$10,000,000 liability insurance for each bus.
6. The minimum insurance that a private vehicle owner must carry with ICBC is \$200,000. The recommendation of the District is that employees carry \$2,000,000 to \$5,000,000 for their personal protection. When a SD#59 employee or volunteer is transporting students as part of their assignment, ICBC (APV212) policy will bridge liability insurance between \$200,000 and \$1,000,000. After that limit, the SPP Liability Agreement will apply up to the SPP limit of coverage. All conditions apply for coverage from SPP as would apply for ICBC (e.g.; DUI will waive insurance).
7. Where a vehicle is insured under a Personal Use policy with ICBC, that vehicle may be used for 6 trips per calendar month to conduct work activities. It is important to note that a round trip constitutes 2 trips. If an employee is likely to exceed 6 occasions (or 3 round trips) using their personal vehicle, they are advised to upgrade their insurance to a Business Use policy. The school will pay the difference in cost between Personal and Business Use policies. A letter describing the differential cost is available upon request from the insurance agent.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION - CURRICULAR AND EXTRA CURRICULAR TRANSPORTATION

Issued: February 24, 1986

Last Revised: June 19, 2013; June 2017

Description:

1. The Board authorizes curricular and extra curricular transportation using district owned, or contract vehicles.
 - a) A per kilometre fee will be established and reviewed annually by the Transportation Department;
 - b) In addition to the per kilometre fee levied, Schools using District owned school buses shall be responsible for the driver's wages, food and lodging costs resulting from a bus trip;
 - c) If contracted vehicles are used, there shall be a formal written contract for the transportation required;
 - d) The Principal will name a supervisory teacher to exercise the Board's authority, to assume responsibility for the field trip and ensure supervision of travel. Where athletic trips are considered, this supervisory role may also be carried out by an Extraordinary Volunteer Coach (Board Policy 4290);
 - e) The supervisory teacher shall ensure that the transportation of students is in accordance with the *Field Trip Handbook Policy/Regulation/Practice* (Board policy 4220) and Transportation of Students (Best Practice: HS-05);
 - f) Passenger and vehicle loading lists, including names and phone numbers, shall be available in the school and a copy with the supervisory teacher and the Bus Operator.

2. The Board authorizes the use of volunteer motor vehicles (school district employee, parent, or community volunteer) for school activities within 250 km from the campus of origin. For travel beyond the limit, a school bus, or commercial carrier is required.
 - a) Any school authorized activity requiring transportation shall be approved by the Principal and in accordance with School Board Policy and Regulation;
 - b) The supervisory person shall ensure that any field trip and safety requirements connected with the trip are met;
 - c) No more than four (4) passengers (not including the driver) will be carried;
 - d) The supervisory teacher shall ensure that the transportation of students is in accordance with Board policy (see *Field Trip Handbook: Policy/Regulation/Practice*) and the Best Practice: Transportation of Students.