Medicine Hat Public School Division
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MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC BOARD OF EDUCATION OPERATES AS MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION,
AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE REFERRED TO AS "MHPSD" AND/OR "DIVISION"

SECTION 800 – Facilities and Transportation

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE: TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS

PROCEDURE CODE:	*804 AP 001*
Policy Reference: 804 – Transportation of Students	

BACKGROUND

The Education Act directs School Boards to provide for the transportation of students subject to regulations made by the Ministry of Education.

Alberta Education provides transportation funding for students. In September 2025, the criteria for distance from their attending school was 1.6 km for grades 1 – 6 and 2.0 for grades 7 – 12.

School Divisions are allowed to charge families a fee for the students who are not eligible for transportation funding by Alberta Education or if the costs of the transportation service exceed the provincial funding.

Our Division believes that the responsibility for providing safe student transportation is a shared responsibility of Division employees, school bus contractors and their employees, parents/guardians and students.

DEFINITIONS

1. Eligible for Transportation

In general, kindergarten (K) to grade 12 students who qualify for transportation are those who meet the following criteria:

1.1. Lives within the School Division boundaries.

1.2. Lives within the attendance area of the school.

1.3. Is an eligible provincially funded student.

1.4. Qualifies for Provincial Transportation Funding.

1.5. Is enrolled in grades K-6 and living more than 1.6 kilometers (.99 miles) from their designated school and their school of choice; or
Is enrolled in grades 7-12 and living more than 2.0 kilometers [1.24 miles] from their designated school and school of choice; as outlined in the School Attendance policy.

2. Fees for Service

Transportation fees may be implemented for all grade K-12 students being provided with Division transportation services but are ineligible to receive provincial transportation funding.

If it becomes necessary to charge a transportation fee it will first be applied to services running deficits against provincial funding.

3. Funding Structure

3.1. K – Grade 12 Regular Programming
Alberta Education provides urban and rural transportation funding for each eligible student.

3.2. Grade 1 – Grade 12 Special Needs Programming
Special education funding per eligible student with special needs provided by Alberta Education.

3.3. ECS Special Needs Programming
Special education funding per eligible ECS student with special needs is provided by Alberta Education.

PROCEDURES

1. Grade 1 - 12 Regular Transportation (Yellow Bus)

1.1. The Division arranges for transportation of students by providing bus routes to sections of the City that have the major number of students to be transported from their neighbourhood. Parents or guardians are required to annually register their students for a bus pass through the online bus registration form, or by contacting the Division Office when online registration is closed. School bus route information can be found on Division's main website.

1.2. Those students who:

i. Meet the eligibility distance requirements defined above in 1.5 and contract bussing has not been provided
or

ii. are directed to attend a special program at a school other than a school in their own residential area, may make application to the Secretary Treasurer for financial support to use public transportation through the City of Medicine Hat Transit System, or other transportation mode.

1.3. If the student meets the requirements outlined, the Secretary Treasurer has final approval of the mode of transportation, as follows:

i. travel by contracted services (yellow bus)
ii. travel by public transportation (with provision of a monthly bus pass)
iii. travel by parent/guardian (with subsidy from the Division) or
iv. travel by taxi (with subsidy from the Division).

This will be decided on a case-by-case basis with the student's best interest taken into consideration.

1.4. The Secretary Treasurer, or designate, determines the number of eligible students being transported and submits the applicable claim forms to Alberta Education.

2. ECS Students

Parents/Guardians of eligible ECS children with a severe disability can apply for a parent transportation contract to be reimbursed for transportation of their child to and from their school based on daily attendance and in accordance with the funds received from Alberta Education. Parents/Guardians will be reimbursed for the full year on or approximately August 15th.

Where and when possible, ECS students may be transported by a bussing contractor in conjunction with grade 1 - 12 students. Mid-day transportation for half day programs will not be provided by the Division.

3. School of Choice

3.1. Parents/Guardians are responsible for the transportation of those students attending a school of choice.

3.2. In the event there is space available on a school bus that is serving their school of choice, the student may access the school bus, with approval at time of registration for the service, at an established stop.

3.3. In the event there is space available the student will be considered a courtesy rider. If during the year, there is no longer space on the bus the courtesy riders will be directed to cease riding the bus.

4. Students with Unique Transportation Requirements

4.1. Application - Parents/Guardians of a child who has unique transportation requirements should make application to the Transportation Coordinator for a transportation allowance using a form provided by the Division Office entitled "Application for Transportation Allowance".

4.2. Process - The Transportation Coordinator reviews the application, measures the distance from the residence to the school to verify the distance stated by the parent/guardian and approves payment of the allowance, if all requirements are met. The parent/guardian will be paid at the end of the school year in accordance with the number of days the student was in attendance at the school.

4.3. Parent/Guardians are paid in accordance with the amount approved annually by the Secretary Treasurer for each day the child attends school.

5. Occasional Riders

5.1. The principal may authorize transportation of a student, volunteer, or staff member at the school as an occasional rider.

5.2. The principal must consider the following factors when deciding whether to authorize an occasional rider permit:

i. if, in the opinion of the bus driver, there is room on the school bus
ii. the bus is not required to deviate from its regular route or make additional stops, and
iii. the request is infrequent.

5.3. If the principal authorizes an occasional rider, the principal must provide the school bus driver with a written note authorizing the rider and the date(s) of the ride(s).

5.4. If a student requires a second seat on a bus on a regular basis, this can only be approved by the Transportation Coordinator. The availability of room on a bus may change at any point during the year depending on the number of eligible students. If there is no longer room, the second seat will be cancelled. The following factors will be considered for approval:

i. If there is room on an existing route.
ii. The bus is not required to deviate from its regular route.
iii. Frequency of the required second seat.
iv. Reason for the requested second seat.

6. Transportation Schedules

6.1. Transportation schedules and bell times are established annually by the Transportation Coordinator in consultation with the school principals considering, but not limited to the following:

i. coordination of start and end times for shared routes
ii. late entry or early dismissal
iii. professional development days
iv. parent/guardian/teacher interviews
v. professional learning time and staff meetings
vi. student examinations, student orientations and off-site activities

7. Bus Zones/Bus Stops/Route Design

7.1. School bus zones at the school are established through the Transportation Coordinator in consultation with the principal.

7.2. School bus stops on the routes are established through the Transportation Coordinator in consultation with the transportation carrier and specifically the carrier's Safety Officer.

7.3. Route designs are established by the Transportation Coordinator in consultation with the transportation carrier.

7.4. Items 7.1 through 7.3 will be established using the following principles:
   i. student and pedestrian safety for loading and unloading
   ii. reasonable concerns expressed by the community
   iii. bus schedules, trip duration, school bell times
   iv. overall efficiency.

8. School Bus Rules and Discipline

8.1. Students riding on a school bus are responsible for their conduct to the bus driver and, through the driver, to the principal of the school.

8.2. The bus driver is in full responsibility of the bus and the driver's directions must be obeyed.

8.3. The driver must assign specific seats to students and maintain a seating plan.
   i. Attendance is to be taken at the time of each bus run.

8.4. In accordance with Administrative Procedures 632 AP 001: School Discipline, 632 AP 003: Behaviour of Students While Riding on Buses, school principals will address reports of misconduct made by the driver concerning inappropriate student behaviour or conduct on school buses, accessible ride transportation or public transportation.

8.5. Violation of any of the following rules may lead to the loss of riding privileges or to suspension from school or other disciplinary measures under Division policy:
   i. The driver must be treated with respect.
   ii. While on the bus or at bus stops, students must conduct themselves in a quiet and courteous manner, showing consideration for the comfort and safety of others.
   iii. When leaving the bus, students must observe the instructions of the bus driver, and must not cross the road without having a clear view of both directions.
   iv. Students must not extend arms and hand out of the windows. While the bus is in motion, students must remain seated facing forward, and must not try to get on or off the bus or move about within the bus.
   v. Students must not throw paper or other waste materials on the floor of or out of the window of the bus.
   vi. Roughhousing Scuffling, fighting, smoking, vaping and the use of obscene language on the bus is prohibited.
   vii. Students must not distract the bus driver with excessive noise.
   viii. Students causing willful damage to a bus will be held fully accountable.
   ix. No student or parent/guardian is permitted on the bus unless they have:
      a) a valid bus pass
      b) the authorization of the bus driver or
      c) the authorization of the principal or their designate.

9. Prohibited Items on the Bus

9.1. The following items are not permitted on school buses because the Alberta Motor Transport Act, School Bus Operation Regulation prohibits them from being transported on a school bus:

i. Animals (excluding Service Animals, per 630 AP 001).
ii. Firearms.
iii. Explosives.
iv. Flammable materials or substances.
v. Fuel other than the fuel tank of the school bus.
vi. Anything of a dangerous or objectional nature.
vii. Anything that might endanger the lives or safety of person on the school bus.

9.2. Musical Instruments – If there is enough room on the school bus, musical instruments may be transported, but only if they are in their proper musical cases and they must be kept on the student's lap or stowed as per the driver's instructions.

9.3. Skate and skateboards – are not permitted on school buses, unless they are in a closed duffle bag, and stowed as per the driver's instructions.

9.4. Skies, ski poles and hockey equipment – may only be transported on school buses that are equipped with exterior storage space in accordance with the Alberta Motor Transport Act, School Bus Operation Regulation.

9.5. Education program-related items – may be transported if there is enough room on the school bus, and they can be stored safely. Special arrangements must be made in advance between the principal or their designate and the driver of the bus, to transport program-related items.

9.6. Only certain equipment, identified above in 9.2 to 9.5, is permitted on the school bus. In cases of dispute, the final decision as to what may or may not be transported rests with the bus driver. The aisle of the school bus must be clear at all times.

10. Student Responsibilities

1.1. A student is responsible for their behaviour and conduct as outlined in the following policies and administrative procedures (AP):

i. Policy 612: Safe and Caring Environment that Fosters and Maintains Respectful and Responsible Behaviours, Diversity and a Sense of Belonging
ii. 612 AP 001: Student Code of Conduct.
iii. Policy 632: School Discipline.
iv. 632 AP 001: School Discipline.
v. 632 AP 002: Student Expulsion Hearings.
vi. 632 AP 003: Behaviour of Students While Riding on Buses.
vii. Policy 634: Banned Substances.
viii. 634 AP 001: Banned Substances Use or Possession.

1.2. Students have responsibilities for the following:

i. Carry their ridership card for the yellow school bus or their bus pass for Medicine Hat Transit.

ii. Be at the designated bus stop seven to ten minutes prior to the scheduled departure time.

iii. Assemble in an orderly fashion and respect the property of others.

iv. Dress properly for inclement weather.

v. Have their belongings organized and properly secured before loading and unloading, in order to ensure the safe and orderly loading and unloading of school buses on school property and during school sponsored activities.

vi. To observe School Bus Rules and comply with the restricted items in this administrative procedure.

1.3. The school bus and other vehicle used for student transportation is considered an extension of the school for student discipline purposes.

1.4. Students that do not abide by the above conduct shall be subject to discipline in accordance with 632 AP 003: Behaviour of Students While Riding on Buses.

11. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

11.1. Parents/Guardians have the following responsibilities:

i. Be familiar with and observe the School Bus Rules in this administrative procedure.

ii. Pre-registering their child through the registration process in the spring preceding the start of the school year. Late registrants shall register for transportation services at the earliest time possible.

iii. Ensure their child understands and obeys the School Bus Rules in this Administrative procedure.

iv. Prior to school opening, ensuring that their child knows how to recognize their bus stops and find their way home safely.

v. Attach the name, address and phone numbers of young children on their clothing for the first few weeks of school.

vi. Ensure their child is properly dressed for inclement weather.

vii. Ensure that if their child has health condition(s) that their child carries the appropriate medication and understands what to do it they need to use the medication.

viii. Escort their young child to, at and from the bus stop.

ix. Ensure that their young child is safe to, at and from the bus stop.

x. Ensure their child is punctual and arrives at the designated bus stop seven to ten minutes prior to the scheduled stop time.

xi. Ensure their child is respectful of property owners and does not use private property as a gathering point at their bus stop.

xii. Establish emergency procedures with the child, so that they will know what to do if:
   a) the bus is late or does not arrive.
   b) no one is home when they arrive.
   c) There is an emergency school closure.

xiii. Pay for any willful damage caused by their child.

xiv. Notify transportation of any changes to your child transportation information.

12. Carrier Responsibilities

12.1. The contract school bus carrier is responsible for the following:

i. School bus operations.
ii. Compliance with all relevant legislation.
iii. Meeting the responsibilities in the transportation agreement with the Division.
iv. Promptly notifying the Transportation Coordinator of any concerns.

13. Bus Driver Responsibilities

13.1. The School Bus driver is responsible for the following:

i. Maintaining all procedures on the school bus.
ii. Reporting any misconduct to the principal of the school.
iii. If, in the opinion of the bus driver, the conduct is not adequately addressed by the principal than he/she shall report the issue to the carrier, who will address the issue with the School Division's Transportation Coordinator.

14. Appeals

14.1. If a parent/guardian is not satisfied with decisions made by the Division's Transportation Coordinator, the Principal, the transportation carrier and/or the bus driver they have the option to appeal in the following order:

i. Principal – Verbally address their concerns to the principal (if the concern is not with the Principal).
ii. Secretary Treasurer – Verbally address their concerns to the Secretary Treasurer. The Secretary Treasurer shall give his/her decision on the appeal within five (5) school/working days.
iii. Superintendent – In writing clearly identify their concerns and what is the remediation that they are seeking. The Superintendent shall make a decision on an appeal within ten (10) school/working days.
iv. The decision of the Superintendent is final.

Approved: May 17, 2005
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