

Transportation Policy

Updated December 2020



Why Change?

- Last updated in 2005 – 15 years ago
- New Legislation was passed in 2019 - Education Act replacing the School Act
- Wanted to have our Policy reflect our current practices/expectations
- Wanted to clarify the responsibilities of all the vested parties

What Changed?

Section 1.5 – Transportation Eligibility

- Transportation Eligibility has been expanded.
- Old Policy was as follows:
 - Grades K-3 – 1.2 km
 - Grades 4-12 – 2.4 km
- Revised Policy is as follows:
 - Grades K-6 – 1.2 km
 - Grades 7-12 – 2.4 km
- Basically, the policy has been updated to reflect our practices.



What Changed?

Section 3- School of Choice

- This is a new section but it has always been the Division's practise.
- The section clarifies that transportation to a School of Choice (vs. your Designated School) is the responsibility of the parent.
- However, if there is a bus going from your area to the School of Choice and there is room on the bus your child may access the service at an established stop. (Deemed a "courtesy rider")
- In the event that bus fills up during the year - courtesy riders will be directed to cease riding the bus.

What's New?

Sections 5-14

- Section 5 – Occasional Riders
- Section 6 – Transportation Schedules
- Section 7 – Bus Zones/Bus Stops/Route Design
- Section 8 – School Bus Rules and Discipline
- Section 9 – Prohibited Items on the Bus
- Section 10 – Student Responsibilities
- Section 11 – Parent Responsibilities
- Section 12 – Carrier Responsibilities
- Section 13 – Bus Driver Responsibilities
- Section 14 – Appeals

There is not a lot new in these sections they just spell out things that were not previously documented in the policy, such as:

- *Division's practises in Sections 5 to 9*
- *Responsibilities of each of the vested parties in Sections 10 to 13*

and

- *we spell out the parent appeal process in Section 14*

One new thing is the requirement to pre-register your child for bus service.



Questions or Concerns?

Addendum

(For Information Only)

New Sections

5 through 14



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).

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/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 charge 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 P001 -School Discipline, 632 P003 - 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) 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 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
- (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

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

- (i) Policy 612 - Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments
- (ii) AP 612 P001 - Student Code of Conduct
- (iii) Policy 632 - School Discipline
- (iv) AP 632 P001 - School Discipline
- (v) AP 632 P002 - Student Expulsion Hearings
- (vi) AP 632 P003 - Behaviour of Students While Riding on Buses
- (vii) Policy 634 - Banned Substances
- (viii) AP 634 P001 - Banned Substances Use or Possession

10.2. 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 five 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.

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

10.4. Students that do not abide by the above conduct shall be subject to discipline in accordance with AP 632 P003 – Behaviour of Students While Riding on Buses.

11. Parent Responsibilities

11.1. Parents 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 March 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 if 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 five 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 School 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 is not satisfied with decisions made by the School 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.