

SCHOOL BUS OPERATIONS

Background

The primary concern of student transportation services is the safe and efficient transportation of students in a manner which is supportive of and contributes to their educational development.

Procedures

1. Bus Driver Responsibilities

- 1.1 A bus driver is expected to be familiar with and abide by Board policies, Division administrative procedures and government regulations regarding the operation of school buses.
- 1.2 All bus drivers must have a Class I or II license with an "S" endorsement when transporting passengers and are required to take a Driver Training Program and standard first aid course.
- 1.3 Subject to approval the Division may pay tuition expenses for courses or programs required in clause 1.2.
- 1.4 The Division will reimburse all regular and spare drivers of Division owned buses, the medical expenses incurred in obtaining or renewing, as per Alberta Transportation legislation, a Class II Alberta Drivers license.
- 1.5 In the morning, buses that arrive before 8:30 a.m. may not unload students until 8:30 a.m. when school supervision begins
- 1.6 If a driver is early at a pick-up, without prior notice, the driver shall wait until the regular pick-up time.
 - 1.6.1 Drivers must use their discretion when determining how long to wait for tardy passengers. If a passenger is in sight the driver is to wait.
 - 1.6.2 Students who are frequently tardy are to be reported to the Principal who shall warn the passenger. If tardiness continues the passenger can be expected to be suspended from riding the school bus.

2. Bus Rider Rules

- 2.1 Passenger conduct shall be in accordance with Administrative Procedure 351 – Bus Rider Rules.
- 2.2 Students who are school bus passengers and their parents shall be made aware of the contents and requirements of Administrative Procedure 351 – School Bus Rider Conduct at the beginning of each school year by advertisement.
- 2.3 It shall be the duty of the bus driver to annually distribute the Bus Rider Rules as established in Administrative Procedure 351 and to ensure that students are instructed

in these rules before September 30.

3. Smoking/Vaping, Alcohol and Drugs on School Buses

3.1 Smoking/vaping is prohibited in school buses.

3.2 There shall be no consumption or transportation of alcohol or illicit drugs on a school bus at any time.

3.2.1 Students perceived to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs shall not be permitted to board a bus and shall be subject to immediate suspension in accordance with Administrative Procedure 356 – Alcohol, Restricted and Illicit Drug Use by Students.

3.2.2 If a driver arrives at a morning pick up and perceives a student to be under the influence, the student will not be permitted to board the bus. The driver will contact the Transportation Services Manager, who will notify the appropriate authority.

3.2.3 If a driver arrives at an afternoon school pick up and perceives a student to be under the influence, the student will not be permitted to board the bus. The driver will contact the outside supervisor, who will address the situation.

4. Disciplinary Process

4.1 The driver shall be responsible for maintaining satisfactory discipline on the bus.

4.2 The driver shall promptly report any discipline problems on the bus to the Transportation Supervisor who shall take appropriate action.

4.3 The driver shall not put a student off the bus between home and school for disciplinary reasons.

4.4 Where a student is suspended from riding a school bus, the Principal shall, verbally notify the parents and the driver immediately or transportation office of the suspension and follow up with a written communication.

4.5 Bus drivers shall be available if requested by the Principal to attend discussions regarding misbehaviour or suspension of a passenger.

5. Truancy by Bus Passengers

5.1 Students who travel on the bus but fail to attend school or who leave the school grounds during the school day for unauthorized purposes may have their bus riding privileges suspended; commencing on the day following their truancy.

6. Loading and Unloading at Schools

6.1 Principals are expected to make adequate provision for supervision during the time that students are getting on or off school buses at their school.

6.2 Principals are responsible for approving minor daily transportation changes for their students (e.g. students riding on a different bus; not riding the bus in the afternoon; etc.) and shall ensure that the driver concerned is advised accordingly.

6.2.1 The normal procedure shall be a note (TF-304 Transportation Bus Note) of

approval from the parent, endorsed by the Principal or designate for presentation to the driver.

6.2.1.1 The authorized Transportation Bus Note (TF-304) must be provided by the School to the Transportation Department a minimum of one day prior to the transportation change of the service to be provided

6.3 Notwithstanding 6.2.1.1, If a student wishes to invite a student(s) to ride on the bus they must have the permission of the driver prior to application of the bus note

6.4 Emergency Transportation services without the one day prior approval note (TF-304) will only be provided with the approval of the Transportation Manager or designate.

7. Inclement Weather, Unsafe Road Conditions and Emergency School Closure

7.1 Parents or guardians shall ensure that their children are appropriately dressed for existing weather conditions.

7.1.1 If a student is not appropriately dressed, the bus driver shall after the first occurrence notify the Transportation Services Manager.

7.1.2 The Transportation Services Manager shall notify the parents, warning them of the consequences should the bus experience mechanical difficulty and not be able to complete its route, and indicate to them that any injury received as a result of the inadequate dress will be the sole responsibility of the parents.

7.2 Bus drivers and school personnel shall encourage students to dress appropriately for existing weather conditions.

7.3 During inclement weather in winter, parents of students who must walk a considerable distance to meet the bus are expected to use their discretion and may keep their children home if they think it advisable.

7.4 During inclement weather or road conditions, a driver may discontinue the operation of the school bus on all or part of the route if continued operation is unsafe. The driver shall make every effort to contact the parents of any students affected by the non-operation of the bus and contact the Transportation Services Manager.

7.5 When an emergency situation forces schools to close during school hours, bus drivers shall undertake to carry out the following procedures:

7.5.1 Ensure that when passengers under twelve (12) years, who have no older siblings, are dropped off, that parents or some other responsible person is at the residence. (This may mean that the driver may have to drive right up to the residence.)

7.5.2 If no one is home, take passenger to an alternate residence approved by the parent where the passenger can be supervised until picked up by the parent. The transportation office must be notified if this occurs.

7.5.3 Where possible, a note is to be left at the home of the parent informing them where their child can be picked up.

8. Passengers Other Than Students

8.1 No unauthorized persons will be allowed to ride on school buses.

9. Reporting of Bus Accidents

- 9.1 All accidents involving a school bus, however minor, must be immediately reported to the Transportation Services Manager.

10. Teachers as School Bus Drivers

- 10.1 Teachers may be approved as drivers for special activities but not as a spare driver on a regular bus route, unless circumstances have arisen where absolutely no other alternative existed except temporary suspension of bus operation.

11. Professional Development

- 11.1 All regular drivers and spare drivers are mandated to attend professional development, first aid courses and any other driver improvement courses which have been approved by the Division for presentation to the bus drivers.

12. Use of Communication Equipment

- 12.1.1 A bus driver may use a two-way radio while the school bus is in motion.

13. Minimum Age of Bus Drivers

- 13.1 An individual wishing to become employed as a school bus driver must be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
- 13.2 A hiring rubric shall be used in determine eligibility as a bus driver for the Division.
- 13.3 Division students are ineligible to become a school bus driver for the Division.

Adopted/Revised/Reviewed: JUN 2016/JUN2019/NOV 2019/JUL 2023

Reference: Section 4, 11, 33, 36, 37, 52, 53, 59, 59.1, 68, 197, 222, 225 Education Act
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Traffic Safety Act
Commercial Vehicle Safety Regulation 121/2009
Student Transportation Regulation 250/98 (Amended A.R. 125/2005)
Use of Highway and Rules of the Road Regulation 304/2002
Vehicle Equipment Regulation 122/2009