

RATIONALE:

The District operates a student transportation service in order to provide the best and safest access to and from schools. The District takes into consideration student educational needs, student safety, system efficiency, financial accountability, and provincial legislation. However, the BC School Act does not require school districts to provide school bus transportation services and therefore it is also the responsibility of each family to determine the best transportation option to and from school to meet their needs. The first priority for the use of school buses shall be transporting students to and from their catchment schools to attend school in accordance with standard school hours.

PROCEDURE:

Definitions:

"catchment area child" means a person of school age and resident in the catchment area of the school;

"non-catchment area child" means a person of school age, a resident in the school district, and not a resident in the catchment area of the school;

"non-school district child" means a person of school age, resident in British Columbia, and not resident in the school district;

"previous school year" means the school year previous to the school year for which the person is applying to enroll in an educational program;

"eligible, regular rider" means a student who resides outside the walk limits established by the Board of Education and attends their catchment school. Eligibility is not a "right" to transportation services. Bus service is a privilege, which eligible students may use;

"courtesy rider" means a student being transported that is not attending a district school; student living within the established limit; student being transported on a different bus other than their designated bus, or a rider who requests transportation service to a location other than school;

"school of choice rider" means a student who attends an SD27 school that is not their catchment school;

"school district child" means a catchment area child or a non-catchment area child.

1. General Information:

- 1.1 Students living beyond 3.0 km from their catchment school may be eligible for transportation or transportation assistance to and from school.
- 1.2 Parents/caregivers are required to apply annually for transportation.
- 1.3 Students with special needs shall not be subject to 1.1 above but will require the approval of the Manager of Operations - Transportation as per section 4 below.

- 1.4 Bus stops will be set by the Manager of Operations - Transportation with safety and walk limits considered. School bus loading zones at schools must be adequately supervised.
- 1.5 Parents/guardians are responsible for transporting and supervising students to/from the bus stop.
- 1.6 Requests for bus route extensions must be made to the Manager of Operations - Transportation.
- 1.7 The Transportation Department reserves the right to remove students who are holding a seat, but not utilizing the seat on a regular basis. If a student is removed from ridership, they will be required to reapply for the service. If there is a unique circumstance or a medical situation, please advise the Transportation Department so ridership is not cancelled.
- 1.8 School bus drivers are responsible for the safe operation of their vehicles and must follow the "Canadian School Bus Driver Training Manual - British Columbia Version" in the driver's handbook.
- 1.9 Students are responsible for their behavior and must abide by the student code of conduct established by the District.
- 1.10 Students who have been suspended from school may not ride District buses during the period of their suspension.
- 1.11 School Principals / Vice-Principals will notify the Dispatcher of students suspended from school, as well as any students not allowed to ride the school bus.

2. Cold Weather Procedures

Parents must exercise discretion as to whether students should be sent to school when temperatures are low, and conditions are hazardous. Responsibility for such decisions cannot rest with the manager, the bus driver, or the district.

Cancellation of school buses will be determined by the Manager of Operations - Transportation (or designate).

The cancellation will be posted on the School District Website www.sd27.bc.ca and notifications will be sent by email of all cancellations or issues to the Superintendent of Schools, School Principals / Vice-Principals and District Senior Staff.

3. Road Conditions

If road conditions are such that, in the opinion of the school bus driver the school bus cannot operate safely, they must contact their immediate supervisor to report the road situation. The immediate supervisor shall notify the Manager of Operations - Transportation immediately.

4. Transportation of Students with Disabilities and Diverse Abilities

When a student with an identified Ministry of Education and Child Care special education designation is not mobile or does not exhibit a level of self-control high enough to be transported safely on the regular bus run a request to ride the special education bus will be reviewed with the school administration and finalized by the Manager of Operations-Transportation provided that:

- 4.1 Confirmation of the special education designation is provided by the Director of Instruction, Inclusive Education.
- 4.2 Where it is necessary for the student to be secured with a harness, consultation has taken place with the school district Occupational Therapist to ensure the proper fit of equipment.
- 4.3 All safety planning and emergency training has been completed specifically to the child's needs, including, but not limited to, where a student is secured with a harness or locking mechanism (as in the case of a wheelchair).
- 4.4 Clear communication procedures are in place with the school, parent and transportation staff regarding the needs and progress of the student.

5. School of Choice / Courtesy Riders

As made clear in the School of Choice application, parents are advised that they assume responsibility to transport students attending school outside their catchment area. will only be considered, on a case-by-case basis, if there is availability on an existing, regularly scheduled bus route.

For 2024/2025 school year School of Choice Riders who were riders in the 2023/2024 school year will be grandfathered. This will be reviewed on an annual basis until those riders age out through attendance at a local secondary school.

School of Choice/Courtesy Riders Process

- 1) Those seeking seats as SoC or as a Courtesy Rider will need to apply for consideration to be reviewed in September once space, if any, is determined.
 - a) This application is a yearly process and not an entitlement once granted, but solely determined by space as part of the annual transportation optimization review.
- 2) Seats not required for eligible students on existing school bus routes will be made available to Elementary and Middle school students as courtesy riders based on the following criteria on a route-by-route basis:
 - a) Access to SD program
 - b) Existing sibling on bus
- 3) In the case of a student residing with parents or caregivers in more than one home, one address will be accepted for eligibility purposes. However, where possible, consideration will be given to an alternate stop (e.g., Second residence

or Daycare) on the same route or a courtesy seat on another route within the same catchment, if a parent submits an application and provided there are no remaining courtesy applications on that route.

- 4) The Superintendent of Schools has the authority to place a student on a bus route.

6. Students Attending Independent Schools

- 6.1 When students from an Independent School Board disembark from busses at District Schools, the independent school must notify the Transportation department of the names and ages of students who wish to board the bus. The district assumes no responsibility for the supervision of these students. The principal of the District School may require that a supervisor from the non-district school be present to supervise the bus loading zone.
- 6.2 Independent School riders will be charged a fee. An invoice will be submitted to the Independent Schools in October for the months of September through December. A second invoice will be submitted to the Independent Schools in February for the months of January through June inclusive. The monthly fee will be determined by the district by January for the following school year.

7. Homestay Bus Run

Students riding the Homestay Bus must have an updated pass every year stating what school they attend.

8. Routes

- 8.1 School bus routes are established based on safety and efficiency of service for students who meet the eligibility criteria.
- 8.2 Route changes must be approved by the Director of Operations or delegate.
- 8.3 A bus route will only be created if the cost of providing transportation service is viable.
- 8.4 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, and consistency of student ridership will impact the availability of the transportation services and bus routes provided.
- 8.5 As per 1.1.9, service may be removed if student behavior is not in compliance with our code of conduct.

9. Transportation Assistance

Many students in the District travel long distances to school or to the nearest bus stop. Financial assistance may be available to assist parents with transporting students on a case-by-case basis.

- 9.1 The level of financial assistance available to approved claimants will be set by the District and reviewed annually. Application forms are available at each school and will show the current rate of assistance.
- 9.2 Transportation assistance may be granted to parents or guardians who must convey students to their catchment school and where no bus service is provided.
- 9.3 Transportation assistance may be granted to parents or guardians who must convey students' distances which exceed 3.0 km to the nearest bus stop.
- 9.4 The parent or guardian shall be paid only for the actual number of round trips driven by the parent or guardian to the nearest bus stop or school. However, in no case shall the number of paid round trips to the school or bus stop exceed two round trips per day.
- 9.5 Application for transportation assistance must be submitted annually to the School District Office.
- 9.6 Approval for transportation assistance will be granted effective at the beginning of the month in which the claim is made and paid within thirty (30) days of the request.
- 9.7 Claim forms should be submitted monthly and within thirty (30) days of the end of the month being claimed. Claims submitted after thirty days may not be considered.

10. Transportation of Students by Other Means

Where transportation of students is required, school buses will be used wherever feasible. However, the district recognizes that students must sometimes be transported by means other than buses. Approval for such transportation should be given by the school principal/vice-principal and with the utmost concern for the safety of the students.

- 10.1 Approval for transportation of **students** by means other than a District school bus shall be given only where the approving principal is satisfied that the driver of any vehicle used in the transportation of students has adequate insurance, a valid driver's license, that the vehicle is in an adequate state of repair, vehicle registration is current, that the tires on the vehicle are appropriate for the time of the year and the weather and that the Driver Information form is completed. The Driver Information form will be kept at the school for two years.
The Driver Information form should not be taken as a guarantee of driver suitability. The principal or supervisor should use good judgment in determining the suitability of drivers and vehicles. The principal or supervisor should conduct a visual inspection of the volunteer's vehicle and be in a position to deny the use of a vehicle which has obvious safety deficiencies (bald tires, lack of seat belts, etc.)

and to ensure that the number of persons being carried in a vehicle does not exceed the normal carrying capacity of that vehicle. Small children should not be transported in the front passenger seat equipped with an airbag.

- 10.2 Private vehicles used for student transportation must be rated appropriately and insured with minimum Third-Party Liability insurance of \$1,000,000. A minimum of at least \$10,000,000 is required for buses (i.e., a motor vehicle designed to carry more than ten (10) persons). The minimum limits for primary automobile liability are SPP requirements.
- 10.3 The school district will not accept responsibility for any damage to the volunteer's vehicle in the event of an accident, nor for deductible, loss of insurance discount or loss of use.
- 10.4 Vehicles used will only be driven by an approved driver who must be at least 21 years of age. The driver cannot be a secondary school student and must provide, to the principal or vice-principal, a copy of their current driver's license, current driver's abstract, and proof of vehicle registration and insurance. The vehicle must be properly equipped with sufficient seat belts for each occupant, seat belts must be worn when travelling.
- 10.5 The driver must not, at any time during their performance as an approved driver, imbibe any alcoholic beverage, or use any restricted substance or any medication that may impair their ability to operate a motor vehicle.
- 10.6 For safety and health reasons, approved drivers are not to allow smoking in their vehicles while transporting students. The driver must not operate the vehicle in an unsafe manner or in contravention of any statute or regulation governing the operation of motor vehicles.

11. The Use of Mini-Busses for Extra-Curricular Travel

- 11.1 Minibuses are provided to secondary schools to support extra-curricular student and school-based activities. The busses supplement the transportation provided by volunteers.

Only people over the age of 25 who are approved by the Manager of Operations - Transportation may operate the busses. A (minimum) Unrestricted Class 4 BC Driver's License is required to operate the vehicles.

- 11.2 The use of the vehicles must be arranged through the school Principal and the SD27 Transportation department.
- 11.3 The Principal shall communicate with the Manager of Operations - Transportation, periodically, to coordinate appropriate vehicle maintenance.
- 11.4 Students shall not operate the buses.
- 11.5 An initial/annual orientation shall be provided to all operators which, at a minimum, will include the following:

- i) Safety features of the vehicle
 - ii) Emergency procedures
 - iii) Out-of-district repair procedures
 - iv) Vehicle operating training, including: 1. maximum hours of driving per day
2. assessing road and weather conditions 3. safe handling of the vehicle
- 11.6 The driver must complete a pre-trip and post-trip inspection, which are written, as well as keep a log if travel is beyond 160 km of the home terminal.
- 11.7 No operator shall exceed 13 hours of driving time per day.
- 11.8 A driver must not drive after the driver has accumulated 14 hours of on-duty time in a day.
- 11.9 For all travel (within and without the district), a detailed itinerary and passenger manifest must be provided to the school principal.
- 11.10 For overnight travel, the Principal shall ensure that the operator has access to a functioning cellular telephone and a list of emergency contact names and telephone numbers.

Note: *If the vehicle has the capacity to carry more than ten passengers, including the driver, the driver must have an Unrestricted Class 4 driver's license and the vehicle must carry a **school bus permit**. If the vehicle has the capacity to carry over 25 passengers, including the driver, the driver must have a Class 1 or 2 driver's license and the vehicle must carry a **school bus permit**.*

Link to Form: [APF 770 Volunteer Driver Information Form](#)