

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

GOVERNANCE POLICY

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1.0 PRINCIPLES

- 1.1. The South Shore Regional School Board (SSRSB) believes that a safe, efficient, and economically operated transportation system is an essential component of the education system.
- 1.2. SSRSB Transportation is designed to transport students within established school boundaries to and from their established school bus stop and their school. In certain circumstances it may be necessary for school administrators or designate and Transportation Management or designate to make changes to route assignments.
- 1.3. The SSRSB strives to provide a safe, efficient, and cost-effective transportation system for its students. The SSRSB also believes that expecting students to walk reasonable distances will promote healthy physical activity, reduce consumption of fossil fuels, and help control transportation costs.
- 1.4. School Travel Plan Committee – The SSRSB recognizes the value and importance of active and safe means of travel (walking, cycling, etc.) to and from school for the health and wellbeing of students, as well as its benefits to the school, the school board and the community in general. The SSRSB supports in principle, the School Travel Planning initiatives currently underway at SSRSB schools, and recognizes the value of developing working relationships with local municipalities and regional organizations, as well as the school community at large, as a means of achieving greater participation in safe and accessible active routes to school.
 - 1.4.1. The SSRSB encourages the School Travel Planning teams to develop high-quality, low-cost solutions to the promotion of safe and active means of travel for the school community and looks forward to innovative meaningful proposals and developments to that effect. School Travel Planning aims to get more families walking and wheeling to and from school by bringing together community stakeholders to identify barriers to active transportation for each school and develop a written action plan.
- 1.5. School bus drivers shall not permit passengers other than students to be carried on School Board provided transportation to and from school. Teacher Assistants (TAs) and Bus Monitors (BMs) may be required to accompany and provide supervision for children with Special Needs. Travel on the school bus in the provision of this support will be specifically approved by the Transportation Coordinator with recommendation received from the Programs and Student Services team. Teachers, volunteers, or duly authorized persons are authorized to travel on Board-provided transportation in support of extra and co-curricular trips.
- 1.6. The provision of transportation is subject to the requirements of Regulations under the Education Act and the Motor Carrier Act of the Province of Nova Scotia.
- 1.7. The SSRSB establishes safe school bus stops that comply with applicable regulations.

- 1.8. In establishing bus stops, the main considerations shall be:
 - 1.8.1. Student safety
 - 1.8.2. Compliance with URB regulations and the Motor Carrier Act
 - 1.8.3. Maximizing accessibility and service to students
 - 1.8.4. Efficiency
- 1.9. The distance between two bus stops will not be less than 300 meters except in exceptional circumstances as per the administrative procedures for this policy.
- 1.10. The SSRSB believes that when two school bus stops are viable in terms of safety and URB Regulations are not violated, Transportation staff may, if requested, move a stop to accommodate a primary student, provided the student(s) required to walk further are in grade 3 or higher, and provided the primary student has no older sibling or other older student with whom to walk.
- 1.11. The SSRSB believes that students in grades primary through 2 will not be discharged from the school bus unless a parents/guardian is there to meet the student, or has an older sibling to walk with, or written permission is received by the Transportation Department from the parent/guardian.
- 1.12. The SSRSB believes that it is the parent or guardians responsibility to ensure students arrive safely at the bus stop in the morning five (5) minutes prior to scheduled pick-up time and arrive safely home from the bus stop in the afternoon, as per policy.
- 1.13. The SSRSB believes that bus service will be provided on a public by road if a student resides more than 0.8 km from the main road travelled by the bus, the by road is listed and maintained by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal or Municipality, there is an adequate and safe turn around location for the bus near the location of the stop to be maintained by the parent or some other means acceptable to the Transportation Coordinator, and meets other conditions as outlined in the administrative procedures.
- 1.14. The SSRSB believes that families should have the opportunity to have the decision of staff reviewed as per the administrative procedures, and that the decision of the Review Committee is final.

2.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1. This policy complies with the Education Act and other related provincial acts and policies.
 - 2.1.1. Motor Carrier Act of the Province of Nova Scotia
 - 2.1.2. SSRSB Policy 204: Regional Code of Conduct
 - 2.1.3. CUPE Collective Agreement
 - 2.1.4. Motor Vehicle Act
 - 2.1.5. Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal
 - 2.1.6. Transport Canada
 - 2.1.7. Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board Public Passenger Regulations
 - 2.1.8. EECD Provincial School Code of Conduct Policy

3.0 AUTHORIZATION

The Superintendent is authorized to issue procedures in support of this policy.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

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1.0 REGULATIONS

- 1.1. The Education Act requires school boards to provide transportation to students:
 - 1.1.1. Who live more than 3.6 kilometers from the school which they are being transported;
 - 1.1.2. Who require transportation, irrespective of distance because of special needs; or
 - 1.1.3. If the School Board determines that transportation is necessary.
- 1.2. The Motor Carrier Act section 14.2 requires that the driver of a school bus shall not stop the bus for the purpose of taking on, or discharging, passengers at:
 - 1.2.1. More than three places in 1.6 kilometers (1 mile); or a place that has not been designated as a loading station.

2.0 STUDENT TRAVEL, PICK-UP AND AFTERNOON ARRIVAL TIMES

- 2.1. Where possible:
 - 2.1.1. Students will be delivered to the school no more than twenty (20) minutes before the first bell and will board the bus for transport home no more than twenty (20) minutes after the last bell.
 - 2.1.2. Students will not be picked up at the bus stop prior to 6:30 a.m. and will not be discharged from the bus later than 5:00 p.m.
 - 2.1.3. Student travel time on a bus will be limited to no more than one (1) hour in the morning and one (1) hour in the afternoon.

3.0 SCHOOL BUS STOPS

- 3.1. The distance between two bus stops will not be less than 300 meters (subject to a maximum of three places in 1.6 km). In exceptional circumstances for safety reasons, the Transportation

Coordinator may recommend to the Review Committee a stop closer than 300 meters, as per policy. Where possible, bus stops will be evenly distributed over the 1.6 km distance.

- 3.2. When two school bus stops are viable in terms of safety and Motor Carrier Regulations are not violated, Transportation staff may, if requested, move a stop to accommodate a primary student, provided the student(s) required to walk further are in grade 3 or higher, and provided the primary student has no older sibling or other older student with whom to walk.
- 3.3. All school bus drivers are required to stop at all designated school bus stops in the morning at which there is normally a student present and are listed on their route sheets, and all school bus stops in the afternoon for which there is a student onboard the bus.
- 3.4. Students will be taken onto and discharged from the bus only at designated stops as determined by transportation staff following all regulatory requirements.
- 3.5. Students in grades primary through 2 will not be discharged from the school bus unless a parents/guardian is there to meet the student, or has an older sibling to walk with, or written permission is received by the Transportation Department from the parent/guardian.
- 3.6. It is the parent or guardians responsibility to ensure students arrive safely at the bus stop in the morning five (5) minutes prior to scheduled pick up time and arrive safely home from the bus stop in the afternoon, as per policy. The school bus driver is not obligated to wait for the late arrival of students at the bus stop. The act of running to catch a stopped school bus is a dangerous practice that increases the potential for a serious accident and must be avoided.
- 3.7. Established bus stops shall be moved or changed by the Transportation Department or upon recommendation by the Review Committee.
- 3.8. If a school bus stop is not being used for a 30-day period, parents will receive two weeks written notice of removal.

4.0 WALKING DISTANCE

- 4.1. The walking distance for elementary students is 1.6 km from the school to their residence or daycare/childcare provider and for middle and secondary students it is 3.6 km from the school to their residence.
- 4.2. Student transportation will not normally be provided for students who live or attend a daycare/childcare provider within the above walking distances, where infrastructure, such as sidewalks and crosswalks are in place. Where hazardous conditions prevail, Transportation staff, where and when requested, will review each situation on a one by one basis, and where necessary accommodate with school board provided transportation.

5.0 TRANSPORTATION ON BY-ROADS

- 5.1. A by-road is defined as a deviance in the bus route such as a side road, subdivision road, off-road or diversion which requires the bus to enter and exit the main route.
- 5.2. Bus service will be provided on a by-road if:
 - 5.2.1. A student–resides more than 0.8 km from the main road,
 - 5.2.2. The by-road is listed and maintained by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, and
 - 5.2.3. There is an adequate and safe turn around location for the bus near the location of the stop to be maintained by the parent or some other means acceptable to the Transportation Coordinator.

- 5.3. When bus service is removed from a by-road under this policy, under normal circumstances at least **30** calendar days' notice will be given to parents or guardians as measured from the date of correspondence, including the option to raise their concerns to the Review Committee.
- 5.4. In exceptional circumstances for safety reasons the Transportation Coordinator may recommend to the Review Committee transportation on a by-road where the student resides less than 0.8 kms from the main road.

6.0 TRANSPORTATION OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

The transportation of students who have been granted permission to attend a school outside of their school boundaries established for their residence shall be the responsibility of the parent or guardian. These students may utilize the transportation system provided there is room on the bus and they reach an existing bus stop within the catchment area for the school they are attending.

7.0 ROAD CONDITIONS

- 7.1. Transportation Management, in consultation with Bus Drivers, will decide if weather conditions are suitable for carrying out all or part of the bus route. This requires continuous assessments of road conditions by management and bus drivers. When the bus route is cancelled or modified, the dispatcher will notify School(s) and the media.
- 7.2. Parents who bring their children to school in the event of a bus cancellation shall also be responsible for arranging transportation home from school in the afternoon.

8.0 COURTESY BUSING

Conveyance may be provided as a courtesy to students where:

- 8.1. The bus passes on the way to the school and bus does not have to be re-routed
- 8.2. There is available space on the bus; and
- 8.3. The additional stop does not alter the existing route or extend the travelling time of the first student picked up or the last student to be taken home by the bus
- 8.4. Infrastructure is not in place - i.e.: no sidewalks, crosswalks or crossing guards
- 8.5. First consideration will be given to the youngest students.
- 8.6. Permission may be withdrawn at any time with parental notice given
- 8.7. Permission is granted for the current school year or less
- 8.8. Transportation staff will review all requests for courtesy bussing to ensure the additional service is cost neutral to the Board
- 8.9. Courtesy busing will be approved after October 1

9.0 ALTERNATE PROGRAM STUDENTS

Transportation by school bus or private conveyance will be provided for students attending the Alternate School and Verge House programs. The Coordinator of Student Services will provide the Transportation Coordinator with a list of eligible students, who will, within a reasonable timeframe, arrange transportation.

10.0 TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- 10.1 The Director of Programs and Student Services (or designate) will provide a recommendation for those students with special needs requiring transportation to the

Transportation Coordinator, including all necessary equipment and suggested school bus stop location.

- 10.2 Transportation staff will adhere to guidelines set forth in the Nova Scotia Handbook for the Transportation of Students with Special Needs.
- 10.3 Transportation may be provided to students having a temporary disability, providing the stop meets all policy requirements. The Director of Programs and Student Services (or designate) will inform the Transportation Coordinator of the length of time that transportation may be required.
- 10.4 The Transportation Coordinator will review all special needs requirements and provide transportation services in the most efficient manner possible.
- 10.5 Special needs transportation arrangements are in place for the current school year.
- 10.6 The Director of Program and Student Services (or designate) will provide the Transportation Coordinator a list of students requiring special needs bussing for the following school year, no later than June 15.

11.0 SHELTERED WORKSHOP

School bus transportation may be provided to Sheltered Workshop clients at existing school bus stops provided there is room on the bus and there is no cost to the Board.

12.0 ALTERNATE BUSING

- 12.1. Busing to an alternate location may be approved by the Transportation Coordinator, provided:
 - 12.1.1. A written request is received from the parent or guardian and the written request is validated by the school for each occurrence; and
 - 12.1.2. The reason for travel requires the student to travel to or from a residence other than the normal residence, or travel to or from a daycare center, or other designated sitting service, other than the normal residence with written parental permission; and
 - 12.1.3. It is cost neutral to the Board provided transportation, space being available on the school bus at a Board approved stop at, or near, the originating point or destination of the student, is in place. Bus drivers shall not initiate stops to accommodate space available students or to accommodate casual students who wish to off load at a location other than Board approved stops.
 - 12.1.4. A verbal request by a student for a change in pick-up and/or drop off location while being transported will not be accommodated. Once enroute, if a student cannot be dropped off at the scheduled stop, the student will be returned to the school and the parent/guardian/caregiver will be notified to arrange for pick up.
 - 12.1.5. Alternate bus stops cannot vary from day to day and must follow an approved schedule or have a written note from school/parent/guardian/caregiver.
 - 12.1.6. Alternate bus stops must not alter the current bus route or affect the schedule of the bus route.
 - 12.1.7. In all cases, priority of travel shall be given to students who legitimately require transportation because their residence, or after school care is located within established school boundaries. All other students travel on a space available basis and may be denied access to transportation when overloading occurs, or a validated written request is not provided.

13.0 REQUEST FOR BUS STOPS

- 13.1. Requests for new bus stops shall be submitted to the Transportation Analyst in writing on or before August 15 in order to be considered for the coming school year. On or before September 30, transportation staff shall evaluate requests that meet this timeline and communicate the decision to the parents, unless under the direction of the Programming and Student Services team.
- 13.2. Requests shall include the students' names, address, school, grade, and the location of the nearest existing stop. Submissions should explain why a new stop is needed, or give reasons why the existing stop should be re-located.
- 13.3. Requests submitted after August 15 shall only be considered if the applicant can:
 - 13.3.1. Demonstrate a clear and specific safety risk, or
 - 13.3.2. Show that there is no existing stop within 0.5 kilometers, or
 - 13.3.3. Provide medical evidence of a physical or cognitive condition that would pose a challenge and/or barrier to mobility
- 13.4. Transportation staff shall assess each request according to the following criteria:
 - 13.4.1. Stop sight distance: a new stop location shall provide adequate visibility as determined by sight stopping distance procedures prescribed by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.
 - 13.4.2. The establishment of a new stop may not result in more than 3 stops per 1.6 kms.
 - 13.4.3. The new stop may not be closer than 0.3 kms from the next closest stop.
 - 13.4.4. The stop shall comply with any other provincial or federal legislation or regulation established from time to time.

14.0 REVIEW COMMITTEE

- 14.1. Parents or guardians who are not in agreement with the decision of staff with regard to a Request for a Bus Stop may ask for a review by the Transportation Review Committee.
- 14.2. The Transportation Review Committee shall be made up of two School Board Members and the Superintendent, all will have voting rights.
- 14.3. The Superintendent will facilitate Review Committee meetings.
- 14.4. The Review Committee will meet when required.
- 14.5. A School Board Member cannot sit on the Review Committee when a stop/route in his/her District is being reviewed.
- 14.6. The Request for a review must be made to the Director of Operations by the parent or guardian within ten (10) working days of the denial of the bus stop request. The request shall include a copy of the original Request for a Bus Stop and any additional information the parent or guardian provides.
- 14.7. The Transportation Coordinator may bring a school bus stop recommendation to the Review Committee. This can be done via email.
- 14.8. Arrangements for the review will be made by the Executive Assistant to the Director of Operations:
 - 14.8.1. Committee members will be provided with a copy of the Request for a Bus Stop and any additional information provided by the parent or guardian.
 - 14.8.2. The parent or guardian will be informed of the review process.
 - 14.8.3. Parents/guardians may choose to present their case to the Review Committee or make a written submission.

- 14.8.4. Transportation staff will be asked to summarize the case and provide rationale for the decision to deny a bus stop.
- 14.8.5. The committee will review the Request for a bus Stop form and any additional written information from the parent or guardian.
- 14.8.6. The Committee, where necessary, may make a site visit to the requested school bus stop.
- 14.9. The Committee will make a decision considering:
 - 14.9.1. Whether policy has been followed.
 - 14.9.2. Whether there are special circumstances.
 - 14.9.3. The Review Committee cannot violate Provincial Policy, Legislation, or Guidelines.
- 14.10. The decision of the Review Committee will be by consensus, or majority vote, provided in writing and will be final.

15.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent to ensure these administrative procedures are followed.

16.0 DELIVERABLES

Each October, the Transportation Department shall present an annual school bus stop report to the Board for the previous school year, outlining:

- Number of school bus stops requested received
- Number of school bus stops heard by the Review Committee

Request to Create/Move School Bus Stops

Applicant's Name:	Tel:
Civic #:	Street:
Town:	Postal Code:
Student's Name:	Grade:
School:	Bus # (if known):
Stop Location Requested (civic #):	
Civic Address of Nearest Stop:	

Explanation of why a new stop is needed or existing stop should be re-located.
(Please select one and provide a detailed explanation below.)

- Specific Safety Concern:
- Distance to Nearest Stop: Special
- Needs Affecting Mobility:
- Other:

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

This section is to be completed by Transportation Personnel only.			
Transportation Analyst's Comments:			
Action Taken:	Denied:	Approved:	Effective Date:
Driver Notification:			
Parent/Guardian Notification:			
SSD: <input type="checkbox"/> _____ 3 in 1.6 kms <input type="checkbox"/> _____ 300 M <input type="checkbox"/> _____			
Requested Review Committee: <input type="checkbox"/>		Requested and/or recommended by Student Services Team: <input type="checkbox"/>	