

## **STUDENT TRANSPORTATION**

### **PREAMBLE**

In accordance with section 59 of the Education Act and the School Transportation Regulation (96/2019), the Northwest Francophone School Authority recognizes the necessity to offer a transportation service to its students.

To facilitate access to educational services provided by the School Board the transportation service is free of charge to eligible students:

- Kindergarten to Grade 6: students living 1,6 km or more from the school.
- Grade 7 to 12: students living 2km or more from the school.
- The service is also offered to preschool children who are 3 years and 8 months old on September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year.

The following framework is established to clarify the obligations and responsibilities of all parties involved to provide an efficient, equitable and safe transportation service.

### **1. PROCEDURES AND POLICIES:**

#### **1.1 DOOR SERVICE**

Door service will be provided only if justified by exceptional circumstances. Administration and members of “Comité des ressources matérielles” will assess these circumstances and their decision will be implemented. The principles to be respected for these decisions are as follows:

- A physical and/or mental condition that makes door service essential,
- Safety concerns that make door service necessary.

#### **1.2 TRANSPORTATION TIME**

All measures shall be taken to minimize the time students spend on the bus. The following may be enacted upon:

- Alternating the pick-up and drop-off sequence – morning/night/day/week/month
- Combining bus stops;
- Avoiding door service.

#### **1.3 PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF LOCATIONS (urban setting)**

Pick-up and drop-off locations in urban settings will comply with the following standards:

- For preschool students, the walking distance will not exceed three hundred (300) metres.
- For kindergarten to grade 2 students, when possible, the walking distance will not exceed three hundred (300) metres. This service will be on either side of the street.
- For grades 3 to 6 students, when possible, the walking distance will generally not exceed five hundred (500) meters.
- For grades 7 to 12 students, when possible, the walking distance will generally not exceed seven hundred (700) metres.

However, if a student has an older sister or brother who travels on the same bus, all siblings will travel from the nearest pick-up location designated by the transportation provider.

#### **1.4 TRIP DURATION**

Special considerations will be taken for longer trips:

- Bus quality
- Comfort
- Number of passengers

#### **1.5 ENVIRONMENT**

All efforts are made to encourage a healthy psychological environment for our students' personal and cultural development.

#### **1.6 TRANSPORTATION COSTS**

The School Board does not receive a transportation subsidy for a student who resides within 2.4 km of the school. A fee of \$105/year per student will be charged if the student lives within 2.4 km of the school. However, the School Board offers transportation for students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 who reside within 1.6 km of the school at a cost of \$105/year.

#### **1.7 PARENTAL AGREEMENT**

There are times when the Board is unable to provide transportation for students who live in a remote area or when, for medical reasons, the student requires special needs and cannot take the bus.

If the School Board is unable to provide transportation, a parental contract is offered to the parent to provide transportation of his/her child(ren) to the school.

When a parent agrees to transport his/her child to school, the School Board will provide the parent with the full amount (100%) of the daily rate it received from the Alberta Education for the transportation of the student. The monthly amount to be reimbursed will be determined by the monthly attendance/absence statement submitted to the central office by the school secretary.

## **1.8 BALANCED BUDGET**

All measures are taken to optimize earnings and limit expenses without compromising the quality of the services offered to students.

## **2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL PARTIES INVOLVED**

The roles and responsibilities of the Board, drivers, students and parents are clearly defined to ensure a safe and harmonious environment for all school bus users.

### **2.1 COMITÉ DE RESSOURCES MATÉRIELLES (The Committee)**

- a) The committee advises the administration regarding student transportation.
- b) It revises administrative procedures regarding student transportation and its implementation.
- c) If required, the members will meet to discuss any questions related to student transportation.
- d) The committee provides student transportation recommendations to the School Board.

### **2.2 STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

- a) It is responsible for planning and managing student transportation operations.
- b) It negotiates contracts with private transportation service providers and transportation companies.
- c) It establishes student transportation tenders and monitors the performance of contracts, ensuring compliance with the financial framework adopted by the Board.
- d) It supervises the daily transportation operations.
- e) It provides the directives and procedures required for proper operation and informs the parties concerned.
- f) It modifies routes or stop locations, as required.
- g) It contacts school administration and transportation service providers regarding any transportation matter.
- h) It provides the list of students transported to schools and carriers. It regularly updates the list based on information provided by the schools.

- i) It validates the admissibility of requests for embarkation or disembarkation other than the regular route.
- j) It promotes safety programs by giving out assistance and safety-related information to drivers and transportation service providers.

## **2.3 TRANSPORTATION SERVICE PROVIDERS**

- a) They are responsible to fulfill their contract (or contracts) with the School Board.
- b) They are responsible for the hiring, training of its divers and to ensure that their daily tasks are executed according to the School Board's policies.
- c) They must notify their drivers of any breach of safety rules and, if necessary, take any relevant action to the satisfaction of the School Board in the case of negligence or serious breach.
- d) They are responsible for the maintenance and proper operation of its vehicles in accordance with provincial requirements and any other competent authority.
- e) They must require drivers to respect the routes and stops decreed by the School Board.

## **2.4 BUS DRIVERS**

- a) Bus drivers must ensure that the bus in their charge is safe and secure without neglecting the cleanliness essential to the comfort and well-being of passengers.
- b) They must follow bus routes as approved by the School Board.
- c) They are responsible for the safety and well-being of all students being transported.
- d) They are responsible for maintaining order and must ensure that instructions given are followed.
- e) In general, they have the same responsibilities and authority towards students as a teacher in his or her classroom. Since they have a responsibility towards all passengers, it is therefore acceptable that the driver acts with authority if a student displays any behaviour that compromises the safety and well-being of the others.
- f) They must show respect and dignity, both in action and in word, towards their clientele.
- g) They must notify the transportation service providers, or the student transportation services in the event of a major problem (according to the pre-established procedures).

- h) They must fully comply with the traffic code. Any breach of the traffic code, road regulations, rules of good conduct, endangering the safety of students will lead to immediate withdrawal of the driver.

## **2.5 SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

- a) The school principal communicates any useful information regarding the students to the student transportation services.
- b) He/she ensures a continuous update of all changes to addresses and notifies the student transportation services when any changes are made.
- c) He/she ensures that there is appropriate supervision at the students' arrival and departure from the school.
- d) He/she regularly reminds students of all transportation procedures and safety instructions.
- e) He/she communicates with the student transportation services all concerns that could compromise the safety and quality of student transportation.
- f) He/she cooperates with the student transportation services when dealing with any violation that could lead to student transportation suspension.
- g) He/she prohibits students who do not take the bus to circulate in the parking lot reserved for the buses.
- h) He/she has the responsibility to ensure that all paths, boarding areas and parking lots are well maintained.

## **2.6 PARENTS**

- a) Parents must sign [Form 560\(B\)](#) "School Transportation Use Agreement" annually, which aims to promote understanding and compliance with the established rules, and return it to the school or no later than September 30 of each school year.
- b) Parents must know the rules and procedures related to student transportation.
- c) They must inform their child or children of the rules of conduct and safety measures to be observed.
- d) They must ensure that their child or children are dressed appropriately for the temperature.
- e) They are responsible for their child or children before they get on the bus and as soon as they leave the bus on their way back.
- f) They are responsible for all damages to private or public property done by their child.
- g) They must make sure that their child arrives at the bus stop at least four minutes in advance of the indicated time for pick-up.

- h) They must encourage their child to be extra careful, because sometimes it happens that careless drivers do not stop when the flashing lights of a school bus are on.
- i) They must contact the school principal, or the student transportation services with any complaint related to student transportation.
- j) They must participate in the solution of any dispute that may arise.
- k) They must transport their child to school when the child has lost their privileges to ride the bus.
- l) They must obtain permission for all alternate pick-up or drop-off location at least one day prior to the change. The change must be authorized with a signed written note.
- m) If the child needs a car seat on the bus, the parent is responsible for purchasing the seat that complies with the regulations.
  - a. The Board will reimburse the parent upon proof of purchase and is responsible for installing the seat on the bus.
  - b. The parent is responsible for securing the child into the seat when the child takes the bus and unfastening the child when he or she arrives home. The school is responsible for unfastening and securing the child at the school.

## **2.7 STUDENTS**

All students must follow the rules and instructions related to student transportation to ensure their own safety and that of others.

- a) Appropriate behaviour prior to pick-up  
The student must:
  - Be dressed according to the weather,
  - Be at the bus stop location at least four minutes before pick-up,
  - Wait at the designated pick-up location,
  - Stay away from the street or road,
  - Not push or jostle,
  - Approach the bus only when it is completely stopped,
  - Get in the bus at a reasonable pace and head directly to his/her seat,
  - Go back home if the bus is more than 20 minutes late and inform the student transportation services.
- b) Appropriate behaviour during the trip  
The student must:
  - Respect the driver's authority,
  - Be seated in the designated seat,

- Stay seated,
  - Act as a good citizen and be responsible for all his/her actions,
  - Follow the rules and instructions as established,
  - Keep his/her head and hands inside the bus,
  - Do not disturb other passengers,
  - Refrain from throwing any objects,
  - Refrain from throwing away anything outside the bus,
  - Pick up after himself/herself (papers, garbage, etc.),
  - Keep absolute silence at railroad crossings,
  - Follow the driver's instructions in case of an emergency,
  - Never smoke or take any alcohol or drugs,
  - Eat only if allowed by the driver.
- c) Appropriate behaviour at drop-off  
The student must:
- Stay seated until the doors are fully open,
  - At the school, get off by alternating from left to right and from the front to the back of the bus,
  - Keep a 10-foot distance from the bus and ensure that cars have stopped before crossing the street.

### **3. EMERGENCY SITUATION**

In case of an emergency, the following procedures apply:

- a) The school bus driver makes the decision about the need to evacuate a bus and quickly regroup students on a site outside the bus in a safe location.
- b) The school bus driver gives students clear and precise instructions that are likely to avoid the dangers.
- c) Students must stay calm and follow the driver's instructions.

### **4. DISAGREEMENT RESOLUTION AND APPEALS**

Any dispute between school bus drivers, students or parents will be submitted to the school principal. The school principal should attempt to resolve the disputes, according to the student transportation policies.

### **5. RESOLUTION PROCEDURES**

Dispute resolution between a school bus driver and a student will follow these steps:

- a) The school bus driver and the student meet to clarify the reasons for the dispute and the avenues of possible solutions. In general, the bus driver has the same responsibilities and authority as a teacher.
- b) If the situation does not improve following this meeting, the school bus driver will contact the parents and as a last resort, the school principal, before any consequence is given out by the school bus driver.

- c) Once the case is submitted to the school principal, the school bus driver, the student, and the principal must initiate the actions appropriate to each case. Sanctions, if any, must be known to all participants, including parents, before being applied).
- d) The decision to submit the case to the student transportation services is made after the principal and the school bus driver have made every effort to resolve the differences.
- e) The student transportation department must come up with a solution or refer the case to the Superintendent of Schools.

## **6. APPEALS**

The parties may appeal to the superintendent, who will make a decision or submit it to the School Board, and the latter decision will be final.

## **7. MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS**

The School Board is aware that any bus damage or breakdowns may affect the student transportation schedule. To ensure that the schedule is disrupted as little as possible, the School Board has put in place procedures to provide bus replacement.

The School Board authorizes modification of the student transportation service when a breakdown or bus damages occur and encourages the following procedures in such circumstances:

- (a) The bus driver notifies the student transportation services, the parents and the students of the expected delay in the delivery of the transportation service.
- (b) The bus driver immediately communicates with the person responsible for transportation to obtain a temporary substitute bus.
- (c) The student transportation services send alerts to parents through the Ride360 app.
- (d) If complications arise during the breakdown service, the morning transport service is cancelled after 11.00 a.m., only for trips of 50 km or more. However, the return trip will remain unchanged.

## **8. MODIFICATION OR CANCELLATION OF STUDENT TRANSPORTATION**

As described in the administrative procedures 133 and 136, certain situations may cause changes or cancellation of the regular student transportation service. In the event of poor weather conditions, the following procedures will apply.

### **8.1 Student transportation schedule modification**

- a) When a heavy fog affects visibility or other temporary conditions affect student safety, the departure of bus routes will be delayed. If the fog persists, the transportation services will be cancelled only after the time indicated below:



- For 50-km long (or more) routes, transportation will be cancelled after 11 :00 a.m.
  - For 35-km to 49-km long routes, transportation will be cancelled after 11:45 a.m.
  - For 35-km long routes (or less), transportation will be cancelled after 12:15 p.m.
- b) The school bus driver notifies the student transportation services of the situation.
  - c) The school bus driver notifies the parents of any schedule modification.
  - d) The student transportation services notify the school principal of the schedule modifications.

## **8.2 Student transportation cancellation**

- a. The school transportation service is cancelled when:
  - The official temperature is -35° C (without wind factor); or
  - Hazardous road conditions make student transportation impossible.

\*The verified temperature is that of the community where the school is located.

- b. On days of extreme cold or inclement weather (see item a.), it will be at the discretion of the transportation service manager, with the advice of the school principal, to make the decision to cancel transportation for the morning, afternoon, or the entire day.
- b. When poor road conditions make transportation impractical, the driver shall notify the school transportation services as soon as possible. If, in the opinion of the transportation department, road conditions are too hazardous for buses to operate, the transportation service shall immediately notify the superintendent, principal and local radio stations of the cancellation of transportation.
- c. The student transportation manager will communicate the decision to cancel transportation by starting the bus driver telephone chain procedure.
- d. The student transportation manager will contact the local radio stations for bus cancellation announcement and on the Ride360 application.
- e. The bus drivers will contact the parents.

## **9. RAILROAD CROSSING:**

The School Board recognizes the need to follow provincial laws and established standards regarding school bus stops at railroad crossings whether they are controlled or uncontrolled.

- a. To avoid any confusion with general traffic, school buses make a mandatory stop at uncontrolled railway crossings **only**.

- b. School buses do not stop at controlled railroad crossings unless the warning lights of an upcoming train are indicating an approaching train or when the lights are faulty.
- c. When approaching uncontrolled railway crossings, school bus drivers must follow the provincial law procedures.
- d. At controlled railway crossings, when lights are activated, school bus drivers must follow the same provincial law procedures as when approaching uncontrolled railway crossings.

**References:**

Section 59, Education Act (2019)

[School Transportation Regulation 96/2019](#)

Traffic Safety Act: <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/T06.pdf>