

POLICY 20

TRANSPORTATION

The Board shall provide transportation to eligible Northern Lights School Division No. 69 students to and from school in a safe, economical and efficient manner.

Eligibility for Transportation - Rural

The Northern Lights School Division No. 69 shall provide school bus transportation for all resident rural students in accordance with Section 59 of the Education Act and the policies and regulations as outlined therein.

1. Transportation shall be provided for all rural resident students if the student resides at a distance greater than 2.4 kilometres from the site of the school that the Board has directed the student to attend.
2. Transportation may be provided to rural resident students who reside at a distance less than 2.4 kilometres from the school site to which the Board has directed the student to attend at the discretion of the Director of Transportation. There may be a transportation fee applied to the parent for this service.
3. The Director of Transportation may, enter into contractual agreements, to provide transportation services to non-resident students of the school jurisdiction or may engage other authorities to transport resident students. The Director of Transportation will provide an annual report to the Board on this matter.
4. Children attending Kindergarten programs will be considered resident students for the purpose of this policy.

Eligibility for Transportation – In-town

The Transportation Department may provide school bus transportation for resident in-town students in excess of 2.4 kilometers from their designated school in accordance with section 59 of the School Act and the policies and regulations as outlined herein.

1. In-town transportation is defined as transportation provided to students resident in the City of Cold Lake, the Town of Bonnyville and the Hamlet of Lac La Biche.
2. A transportation fee shall be established and approved annually by the Board of Trustees and shall apply to all ineligible students, less than 2.4 kilometers, utilizing the in-town service.
3. Children attending Kindergarten programs will be considered resident students for the purpose of this policy.

4. Annual school bus passes will be made available, and are to be carried by all students utilizing this service.

School Bus Route Planning

1. All school bus routes will be designed by the Director of Transportation.
2. The routes shall be digitally designed in such a manner as to ensure cost and time effectiveness, as well as the safety of all students transported.
3. Under normal circumstances, a school bus will not enter private property. In those situations where it is necessary for a school bus to enter private property, good road conditions and a proper turn around area must exist as minimum requirements. A Private Property Waiver must be completed by the Landowner before bus service is allowed.

Subject to the above, the following situations are eligible for yard pick-up:

- 3.1 A student presenting a medical certificate will be provided with yard pick-up when, in the opinion of the Director of Transportation, the nature of the illness or disability prohibits the student from meeting the school bus at a normal pick-up point. Application must be made through the office of the Director of Transportation.
- 3.2 All other considerations are at the sole discretion of the Director of Transportation.
4. The Board recognizes that in extenuating circumstances (blizzard conditions, etc.), school bus drivers may enter onto private property, make additional stops and/or extend bus routes to ensure that students are delivered safely. Administrative Procedure 131 details specific procedures to which stakeholders must adhere to.
5. In situations where it is not practical or possible to provide transportation on regular school bus routes, the Director of Transportation may provide alternate transportation arrangements.
6. Any alteration to an established bus route, whether to reflect increases or decreases in bus sizes or distances traveled, or the routing sequence itself, shall be reported on the appropriate form – “Changes to Existing Route” Form – and submitted by the School Bus Contractor at the end of the month that the change takes effect. Failure to provide such notification may breach the School Bus Operator Agreement.
7. The Director of Transportation may retain up to four (4) vacant student places on each school bus to ensure there are sufficient seats available for new students transferring into the school system during the school year.

Operation of School Buses

1. School buses will not operate in the event of the following conditions:
 - 1.1 the Wind Chill exceeds –45 degrees Celsius, or
 - 1.2 the outside air temperature as measured at 4 Wing Cold Lake or at Lac La Biche Airport is at or exceeds –40 degrees Celsius.
 - 1.3 The decision to cancel routes based on air temperature or wind chill will be based on the temperature readings at 6:00 A.M. on the day of school.
 - 1.4 Bus routes assigned as special needs routes with wheelchair capabilities will not operate with a wind chill that exceeds -35 degrees Celsius or an outside air temperature that equals or exceeds -35 degrees Celsius.

2. The Director of Transportation may cancel routes either individually or collectively when weather conditions are so inclement as to constitute a safety hazard to the students being transported.
 - 2.1 In the absence of a decision by the Director of Transportation, the Board recognizes that individual bus drivers may cancel or alter his/her route to ensure the safety of students being transported.
 - 2.2 Individual bus drivers canceling or altering their routes are responsible for notifying students on that route of such cancellation individually.
 - 2.3 Individual bus drivers canceling or altering their routes are responsible for notifying the Director of Transportation of such cancellation or alteration at the earliest possible opportunity.
 - 2.4 Notification to cancel or delay any or all bus operations will be provided to the public through advisories to local media outlets, the Divisions NLSD-2-Go app, the Transportation section of the Division's website (www.nlsd.ab.ca), and applicable social media.

Contractor Driver Qualifications

The Contractor is responsible for the actions of his/her drivers and is required to ensure that the policy sections outlining Driver Qualifications, Driver Regulations, Driver Accidents, Driver Suspensions and Student Responsibilities are available on each and every school bus whether the school bus is used as a spare bus or on a regular route. Emergency telephone numbers must also be available. In order for established routes to operate, the Contractor must meet the following criteria:

1. Every school bus driver, whether employed or volunteer, whether regular or substitute, must meet the following criteria:
 - 1.1 Be in possession of a valid Class I or Class II Alberta Operator's License if operating a school bus over 24 passengers.
 - 1.2 As a minimum, be in possession of a valid Class IV Alberta Operator's License if operating a school bus 24 passengers or less.
 - 1.3 Annual approval from the Director of Transportation must be obtained prior to operating a school bus on a regular basis.
2. In order to receive the approval of the Director of Transportation, a potential and existing school bus driver must:
 - 2.1 Complete a Statement of Intent to obtain a current abstract of his/her driving record from the Alberta Motor Vehicles Division, which must be submitted annually to the Director of Transportation prior to driving any NLSD school bus.
 - 2.2 Provide a vulnerable sectors check document upon commencement of employment and before the transporting of students.
 - 2.3 Satisfactorily complete an S-Endorsement program within one year from the commencement of employment.
 - 2.4 Complete a road test if requested by the Director of Transportation.

Contractor Driver Regulations

The Contractor is required to ensure each and every driver is aware of their responsibilities under the Alberta Traffic Safety Act, the Motor Transport Act and the Education Act and is responsible for how the bus is operated and how the driver follows regulations.

1. Drivers are expected to be knowledgeable with the statutes and regulations of the aforementioned publications as well as this Policy 20 and Administrative Procedure 131.
2. The Board of Trustees require that the Contractor ensure that the driver meets the following transportation requirements:
 - 2.1 Transport only those passengers approved by the Director of Transportation.
 - 2.2 Maintain a current list of passengers, along with emergency contact phone numbers and a passenger seating plan. These shall be kept on board the bus at all times.
 - 2.3 The “Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Students” shall be posted in plain view on the bus.
 - 2.4 Keep the school bus in a clean and sanitary condition.
 - 2.5 Ensure that all lights and markings identifying the school bus, in particular the rear of the bus, are clear of all dirt, mud or snow at the commencement of each trip.
 - 2.6 Drivers shall ensure the daily “pre-trip inspection” is completed as required by the Commercial Vehicle Safety Regulation. Failure to do so constitutes a violation of the Operating Authority Certificate as issued by Alberta Transportation.
 - 2.7 “No Smoking” signs must be posted inside and outside the bus as per requirements of the Tobacco Reduction Act in Alberta.
 - 2.8 Not be under the influence of prescribed medications or non-prescribed substances or alcohol which may impair driving or driver judgement in any way.
 - 2.9 Refrain from the use of profane language while on duty.
 - 2.10 Have the school bus at the school boarding zone warmed and prepared for loading five (5) minutes prior to school dismissal time.
 - 2.11 Adhere to the Alberta Distracted Driving Laws, using cell phone communication only while stopped in a safe area. The use of cell phone communication should be with parents and/or the Director of Transportation. Personal calls are restricted.
 - 2.12 All NLSD buses and all buses contracted to NLSD must have installed and working a Child Check Mate safety devices or a similar device offering the same safety feature. In addition, all NLSD drivers shall walk through the aisle to the back of the bus after the final students disembark and check each seat to ensure no students are on board.

Driver of Pre-School Children on the Bus

It is recognized that a bus driver may require having their own pre-school children on a bus. As such, the following must be adhered to:

1. The Driver must provide in writing to their bus Contractor or the Transportation Department a request to allow their pre-school child(ren) to accompany them on the school bus.
2. No more than two pre-school children of the Driver will be allowed on a bus at one time.
3. The Bus Driver must provide for and install a child safety seat and restraint for their child(ren).
4. The pre-school child must be included on the student roster that accompanies the bus as an additional passenger.
5. The pre-school child must not take the seat place of regular students transported.

Driver Operational Directives

NLSD insists that transportation services to students provide safe, caring and inclusive environments that minimize distractions for drivers and students. The following operational directives provide fair notice to drivers to ensure the best transport experiences for both drivers and students.

1. Only authorized passengers are permitted on the bus for travel.
2. Drivers should prepare the bus for travel by being at designated loading sites at least 5 minutes before travel with warm, clean busses.
3. Drivers will not leave the school until five (5) minutes after the students have been dismissed.
4. Drivers greet students and ensure that no unauthorized riders access the bus.
5. Drivers ensure that students adhere to the established seating plan and check seats for damage after each run. Any damage must be documented and reported to the school the student attends on the day of the incident.
6. Drivers are not to make any unscheduled stops, except in the case of an emergency.
7. The time of pick-up and drop-off shall remain as consistent as possible on each day service is provided according to the route established by the Director of Transportation.
8. Drivers shall report all discipline problems encountered, utilizing the "School Bus Misconduct Report" form, to the Principal of the school which the student attends. The form must clearly identify the behavior to be addressed in order for the Principal to take action. The driver may be required to meet with the Principal to discuss the concern.
9. Under no circumstances may the driver refuse to transport a student to school from his/her designated pick up point unless the student is serving a suspension.
10. Under no circumstances may the driver refuse to transport a student back to his/her designated drop-off point unless the student is serving a suspension or if specifically directed by the Director of Transportation.
11. Drivers are required to operate with headlights and all running lights on when transporting NLSD passenger's morning and evening.
12. Drivers are required to activate the strobe light, where municipal bylaws allow, while driving in inclement weather. Drivers may activate the strobe light at their discretion when local conditions warrant.
13. Drivers shall walk through the aisle to the back of the bus after the final students disembark and check each seat to ensure no students are on board.
14. All NLSD buses and all buses contracted to NLSD must have installed and working a Child Check Mate safety device or a similar device offering the same safety feature.
15. Drivers are required to report to the Director of Transportation, on the appropriate forms, all accidents, moving violations, or any other traffic violations which have occurred while they were operating a motor vehicle (whether school bus or not). Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.
16. Conform to all traffic bylaws duly passed by incorporated authorities within the Divisional boundaries.

Contractor/Driver Accident Best Practice and Procedures

When a school bus is involved in an accident or when an emergency situation arises and the possibility of an accident exists, the Contractor will ensure his/her driver takes the following course of action, if physically possible:

1. Assess the Scene

In the event the bus can be moved and the possibility of a collision exists; move the bus off the roadway to a safe location and keep all the passengers seated and as comfortable as possible.

If a fire has started on the bus or there is a possibility of a fire starting due to fuel leakage, etc. **OR** the bus is located in an unsafe position and cannot be moved; immediately evacuate the students to a safe location 35 metres (115 feet) or more from the bus.

Question all passengers as to injuries sustained. Treat the most seriously injured first within the scope of expertise.

2. Securing and Protecting the Collision Scene

When the bus has been located in the safest location (contingent on "1" above), stop the bus completely, turn off the engine and remove the keys. Activate the 4-way hazard flashers. Set the parking brake. Set out flares, reflectors or warning devices in accordance with prescribed procedures.

3. Organize Bystanders/Passengers to Render Assistance

Contingent on the nature of the accident/collision, utilization of bystanders and/or passengers may prove beneficial for the following purposes:

- ◆ rendering first aid assistance
- ◆ directing traffic
- ◆ notifying medical, police and school authorities, etc.

If physically able, the driver is in charge of the scene, and must take charge until proper authorities arrive and relieve him/her of this responsibility. Being calm, organized and confident will increase the chances that directives are followed.

4. Notification of Authorities

The order of notifying proper authorities for assistance is as follows:

- ◆ medical
- ◆ police
- ◆ school and/or Director of Transportation and/or Superintendent of Schools

A listing of the pertinent phone numbers for the above noted should be available in each school bus for easy reference and provided to the individual sent for assistance.

The report given to the aforementioned authorities should include:

- ◆ time and location of accident
- ◆ severity of crash
- ◆ number of persons injured

Items 1 through 4 are extracts from the School Bus Driver Improvement Program - Emergency and Collision Procedures and are listed here for purposes of reinforcement.

5. Accident Reporting and Insurance Requirements

- ◆ Gather all pertinent information pertaining to the accident.
- ◆ Locate and identify witnesses and obtain their addresses. Obtain any remarks, admissions of fault, defective condition of other vehicle(s), extent of bodily injuries and property damage incurred.
- ◆ Never attempt to settle any claims, nor sign any statements admitting to fault for the accident.
- ◆ Remain at the scene until dismissed by the attending police officer.
- ◆ Do not attempt to complete route if you are physically injured or under mental stress whereby your ability to continue operation of the school bus is in question.
- ◆ Complete all necessary documentation and submit same to the bus contractor; a copy of the accident report (RCMP) should also be filed with the bus contractor. Copies of these documents are to be submitted to the Director of Transportation promptly.

Should a parked vehicle be hit, try and locate the owner of the vehicle. If unsuccessful, leave a note on the damaged vehicle, giving your name, where you can be contacted and a brief description of what happened. A police officer, preferably, or a bystander should be asked to check the damage and his/her name and address should be recorded.

NOTE: The above noted listing of procedures to follow may vary from the order listed contingent on the type of accident incurred.
REMEMBER STUDENT SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT; COMMON SENSE SHALL PREVAIL.

Contract Driver Suspension

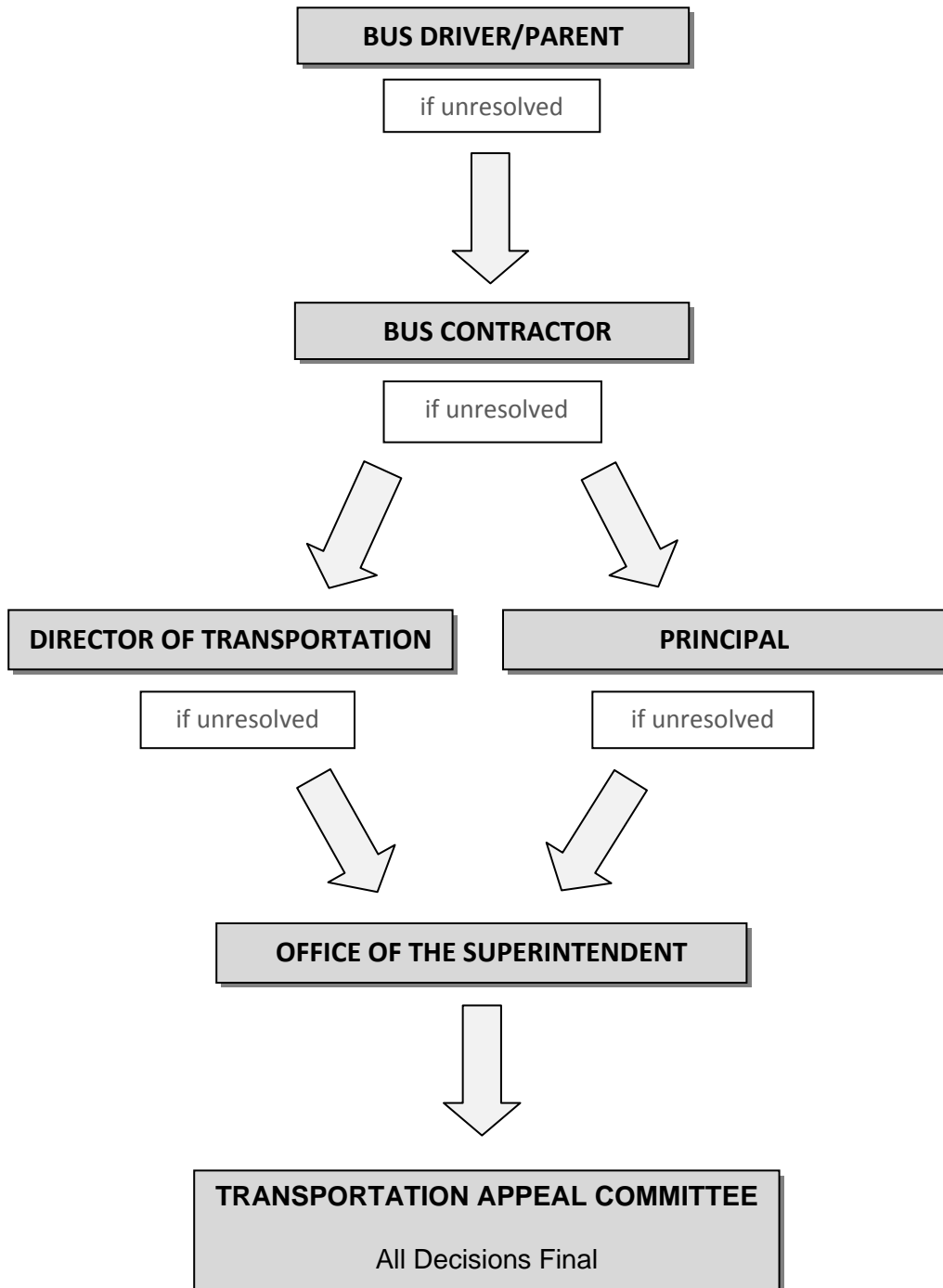
1. The Bus Contractor, in the event of an accident involving a school bus, may subject the school bus driver to a temporary suspension upon completion of the run, whether morning or afternoon.
 - 1.1 The Contractor shall notify the Director of Transportation of all accidents and suspensions.
 - 1.2 The suspension shall remain in effect until such time as the Director of Transportation notifies the Bus Contractor in writing that the suspension has been lifted.
2. The Director of Transportation may require a Bus Contractor to suspend a school bus driver when, in the opinion of the Director of Transportation, it is deemed in the best interests of the Division.
 - 2.1 A Bus Contractor may request an appeal of such bus driver suspension to the Superintendent's Office with five (5) working days.
 - 2.2 Where the appeal is denied or overturned, Contractor may appeal to the Board of Trustees Transportation Appeal Committee. See the "Transportation Appeal Committee"

Student Rules and Regulations

The "Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Students" refers to the conduct required through the School Act, the Traffic Safety Act, and the Motor Transport Act, of students while being transported on a school bus.

1. A copy of the "Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Students" list shall be made available to all students and parents that require transportation. Rules should be posted on the bus as well.
2. Students in violation of these rules and regulations may be suspended from school bus privileges by the Principal of the school they attend.
3. Student behavior, student conduct, and student discipline are governed by various NLSA Administrative Procedures and sections of the Education Act; therefore, drivers must be specific about disciplinary concerns and what actions or interventions to be taken by the driver to stem the unwanted behavior. In order for Principals to take confident disciplinary measures against a student, up to and including the suspension of transportation services or a recommendation for expulsion, there must be a clear pattern of behavior, defiance of a driver's intervention or directive, or student actions which jeopardize the safety or well-being of the driver and/or passengers on the bus.
4. It should be noted that many disciplinary actions and confrontations can be avoided when students and drivers actively develop positive relationships and a mutually respectful climate.

Channels of Communication



Board of Trustees - Transportation Appeal Committee

Students and parents/guardians may from time to time disagree with decisions made by the Director of Transportation and/or the Superintendent (or designate) regarding transportation services and/or disciplinary actions taken. Students and/or parents/guardians have the right to appeal a decision made by the Director of Transportation and/or Superintendent (or designate) directly to the Board of Trustees through the Transportation Appeal Committee. The purpose of the Transportation Appeal Committee is to allow Appellants an opportunity to have their concerns heard by an impartial committee of the Northern Lights School Division Board of Trustees and receive a decision. The Transportation Committee is a standing committee of the Board of Trustees with three members.

Process:

1. The request for an appeal must be received in writing.
2. The appeal shall be heard within 30 school days of NLSD receiving the request for an appeal.
3. NLSD will establish the date of the appeal at a mutually agreeable time. The appeal will be heard in the NLSD Board Room in Bonnyville, Alberta.
4. The Appellant will be advised in writing (letter or email) of the time, location and approximate length of the hearing.
5. The Appellant shall be advised that he or she is entitled to bring an advocate of their choosing to assist with the presentation of their appeal if they so wish.
6. The Appellant shall receive a verbal decision by the Appeal Committee within 24 hours after the close of the hearing followed by a written explanation within 10 days of the hearing.
7. A Trustee may request that he or she be excused from an appeal hearing if he or she believes that they may have a pecuniary interest that could be interpreted as bias or self-interest thus jeopardizing the objectivity of the appeal hearing. The Board Chair is an ex-officio member of all committees and therefore may choose to participate in the appeal or appoint another Trustee.
8. The decision of the Transportation Appeal Committee is final.

Northern Lights Student Transportation Services

Your **BUS DRIVER** is required to request students to follow this list of rules and regulations which pertain to the conduct of students while being transported on a school bus through the **EDUCATION ACT**, the **MOTOR TRANSPORT ACT**, the **TRAFFIC SAFETY ACT**, and the **STUDENT TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT** for the comfort and safety of your child(ren). Please read and discuss this list with your child(ren) and then sign and return one copy to your driver. The second copy is to be retained by the parents for future reference.

This document serves as “Fair Notice” of the rules and regulations pertaining to the expectations and behaviors of students registered for transportation services with NLSD. Your signature acknowledges that you agree to these rules and regulations and support the application of these rules and regulations to your student(s).

The BUS DRIVER shall be in full control of the students while loading, en route, and unloading. Student misbehavior and willful damage will be reported to the school Principal and through consultation with the bus driver, the Principal may suspend a student from school bus privileges.

Questions may be directed to your driver or the Director of Transportation’s office at 780-826-6038.

Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Students

1. To reduce bus riding time, students are expected to be at their designated stop prior to the estimated arrival of the bus (5 minutes recommended).
2. Stay off the traveled roadway at all times while waiting for the bus. Watch your step and use the handrail when getting on and off the bus.
3. When it is necessary to cross the road, students must cross fifteen feet in FRONT of the bus under the guidance of the driver.
4. Bullying, violent, or aggressive behavior will not be tolerated and shall be reported to the school Principal.
5. Use of tobacco, e-cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, or vulgar language is not permitted on the bus, at the bus stop or at transfer points.
6. While the bus is in motion students must be seated in a forward position and not stand, kneel or move about within the bus.
7. Students must not throw or hang any object, or part of their body out the bus window.
8. The bus aisle and exits must be kept clear at all times. Animals, sharp or bulky objects MUST be transported by other means.
9. Students are responsible for the seat assigned to them by the driver. Any damages to seating materials, interior finishing or glass shall be paid for by the offender(s).
10. Students may talk quietly to the person beside them. Loud noises, shouting, and disruptive noises from electronic devices are dangerously distracting to the driver.

11. Students are required to wear cold weather attire during the winter months. Non compliance will be reported to school Principal. Flagrant non-compliance may result in a suspension of service.
12. Students are requested to notify the driver when an absence is expected from school.
13. No eating of foods or drinking of beverages on bus.
14. Electronic devices deemed to be a distraction to the Driver may be banned from use or exposure on the bus.
15. The school bus is a public area. Photographic recording, by any means or form, by any device, by students, is strictly prohibited.
16. Students are expected to be respectful of others when boarding or exiting the bus; ensuring that younger students or students with disabilities are accommodated appropriately.
17. There is an expectation that students will be respectful of driver and follow his/her directions. Polite and thoughtful behavior is an asset.
18. Students acknowledge that video surveillance technology may be present on NLSD school buses and that video records may be used as evidence of inappropriate behavior in disciplinary hearings.
19. From time to time unexpected disruptions in the regular scheduling of student transportation services may occur. Drivers will attempt to contact parents, however, NLSD social media services and/or the NLSD-2-Go app will serve as sufficient notice.

Date: _____
Signature of Parents or Guardians

Signature of Parents or Guardians

Driver's Name: _____

Phone Number: _____