

Board Policy 20

TRANSPORTATION

The Board shall provide transportation to resident students of Northern Lights Public Schools to and from school in a safe, economical and efficient manner. A student is a resident student of the Board of the school division in which the student's parent/guardian or independent student resides or as defined by the Education Act.

1. Funded Students

Recognizing that Alberta Education provides transportation funding for resident students that live further than 2.4 kilometres from the designated school, Northern Lights Public Schools shall provide school bus transportation for students that live in the boundaries of the school division in accordance with Section 59 of the Education Act and the policies and regulations as outlined therein.

- 1.1. Transportation shall be provided for all 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.
- 1.2. Transportation may engage other authorities to transport resident students.
- 1.3. Any agreements shall be in accordance with the School Transportation Regulation.
- 1.4. The Director of Transportation will provide an annual report to the Board on this matter including a summary of the above for each geographical region ie. Bonnyville, Cold Lake, and Lac La Biche.

2. Non-Funded Students

The Transportation Department may provide school bus transportation for resident non-funded students within 2.4 kilometres from their designated school in accordance with Section 59 of the Education Act and the policies and regulations as outlined herein.

- 2.1. Non-funded transportation is defined as fee-for-service transportation provided to students resident in the City of Cold Lake, the Town of Bonnyville and the Hamlet of Lac La Biche.
- 2.2. Transportation shall be provided without fees to non-funded Kindergarten to Grade 4 students residing at a greater distance than 1.6 kilometres from their designated school.
- 2.3. A transportation fee schedule shall be established and approved annually by the Board of Trustees and shall apply to all non-funded students utilizing the in-town service, less than 2.4 kilometres (Grades 5 to 12) and 1.6 kilometres (Kindergarten to Grade 4) from their designated school.

- 2.4. The Transportation Department shall establish and communicate a criteria and process for the waiving of transportation fees to be approved by the Board.
- 2.5. The establishment of in-town routes shall be subject to availability of bus contractors and drivers and sufficient numbers of students requesting transportation. When necessary, students will be placed on a waiting list until a viable bus route can be established.

3. Non-Resident Students

Non-resident students are those students that reside outside of Northern Lights Public Schools' attendance area. The Director of Transportation may enter into contractual agreements to provide transportation services to non-resident students of the school jurisdiction.

- 3.1. Any agreements shall be in accordance with the School Transportation Regulation.
- 3.2. The Director of Transportation will provide an annual report to the Board on this matter, including a summary of the above for each geographical region ie. Bonnyville, Cold Lake, and Lac La Biche.

4. School Bus Routes and Stop Locations Planning

4.1. Rural Routes

- 4.1.1. All school bus routes will be designed by the Director of Transportation.
- 4.1.2. The routes, including stop locations, shall be designed in such a manner as to ensure the safety of all students transported and to establish cost and time efficiencies.
- 4.1.3. Generally, 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:

- A student presenting a medical certificate will be provided with yard pick-up when, at the discretion 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.
- All other considerations are at the sole discretion of the Director of Transportation.

- 4.1.4. The Board recognizes that in extenuating circumstances (ie. severe weather), school bus drivers may enter onto private property, make additional stops and/or extend bus routes to ensure that students are transported safely.
- 4.1.5. 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,

4.2. In-Town Routes

- 4.2.1. All in-town routes and stop locations shall be designed by the Director of Transportation.
- 4.2.2. The routes, including stop locations, shall be designed in such a manner as to ensure the safety of all students transported and to establish cost and time efficiencies.
- 4.2.3. Stop locations must be located at a distance of at least 800 metres or further from the designated school. Exceptions to this are made at the discretion of the Director of Transportation for safety considerations.
- 4.2.4. Ridership on in-town busing is based on payment of the Board approved fees.

4.3. Individualized Agreements for Transportation of Students

- 4.3.1. Any individualized agreements for the transportation of students must be approved by the Superintendent or designate.
- 4.3.2. The Board shall receive an annual report on any individualized agreements for the transportation of students that exist outside of contracts for established routes.

5. Operation of School Buses in Inclement Weather

- 5.1. The Director of Transportation may cancel routes either individually or collectively when inclement weather or road conditions constitute a safety hazard to the students being transported. School buses will not operate in the event of the following conditions:
 - 5.1.1. When the outside air temperature reaches -40 degrees Celsius or colder, or
 - 5.1.2. When the wind chill factor reaches -40 degrees Celsius and the air temperature is at least -30 degrees Celsius or colder, or
 - 5.1.3. When road conditions or visibility are significantly impacted by heavy snowfall, blowing snow, freezing rain, heavy fog, or other circumstances.

- 5.2. Bus routes assigned as special needs routes with wheelchair capabilities will not operate when the outside air temperature is -35 degrees Celsius or colder, or when the wind chill factor is -35 degrees Celsius or colder, and the air temperature is at least -30 degrees Celsius or colder.
- 5.3. The decision to cancel routes based on air temperature, wind chill, or other factors, will be made at the discretion of the Director of Transportation in consultation with the Superintendent or designate. When possible, a decision will be made prior to 6:00 a.m.
- 5.4. Notification to cancel or delay any or all bus operations will be provided on a timely basis to parents/guardians and the general public using established NLPS communication tools, the NLPS website, and local media outlets.
- 5.5. In the absence of a decision by the Director of Transportation, the Board recognizes that individual bus drivers may cancel or alter their route to ensure the safety of students being transported.
 - 5.5.1. Individual bus drivers cancelling or altering their routes are responsible for notifying the Director of Transportation of such cancellation or alteration at the earliest possible opportunity.
 - 5.5.2. Individual bus drivers cancelling or altering their routes are individually responsible for notifying parents/guardians on that route of such cancellation. Additional notifications of bus route cancellations or alterations will be provided by the Transportation Department using NLPS communication tools as appropriate.

6. Contractor/Driver Requirements

The contractor is responsible for the actions of all of their drivers (including space or substitute drivers) and must ensure that all drivers are aware of and follow all regulations including Northern Lights Public Schools policy, procedures and expectations.

- 6.1. In order for established routes to operate, the Contractor must meet the following criteria:
 - 6.1.1. Adhere to all relevant Federal and Provincial commercial transportation legislation and regulations.
 - 6.1.2. Adhere to the requirements as outlined in the School Bus Operator Agreement.
- 6.2. The School Bus Operator Agreement shall be updated from time to time to incorporate current legislation and regulations.

7. Student Rules and Regulations

The Student Rules and Regulations refer to the conduct through the Education Act, the Traffic

Safety Act, and the Motor Transport Act, of students while being transported on a school bus.

- 7.1. The Director of Transportation shall develop, in consultation with the Superintendent or designate, rules and regulations for students transported on a school bus. This document shall be communicated to all students that require transportation, and their parents/guardians, and will be available on the school division website. The rules and regulations for students shall be posted on the bus as well. All student rules and regulations will comply with the Northern Lights Public Schools' Student Code of Conduct.
- 7.2. As per the Education Act, students in violation of these rules and regulations may be suspended from school bus privileges for up to five days by the Principal of the school they attend. Additionally, the Principal may recommend expulsion as per the Education Act and Administrative Procedures.
- 7.3. Student conduct and student discipline are governed by various Northern Lights Public Schools policies and administrative procedures as well as sections of the Education Act. Drivers must be specific about disciplinary concerns and what actions or interventions are used by the driver to reduce and deter inappropriate student behaviour. In order for Principals to take appropriate 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 behaviour, 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.
- 7.4. It is expected that in order to decrease inappropriate student behaviour, and subsequent disciplinary actions and confrontations, bus drivers will actively develop positive relationships and a mutually respectful climate.

8. Channels of Communication

In the event of a parent concern or issue, communication will follow the steps as outlined:

- 8.1. The parent should share their concern with the bus driver/contractor.
- 8.2. If unresolved, the concern can be forwarded to the Director of Transportation and/or the School Principal.
- 8.3. If unresolved, the concerned can be forwarded to the Superintendent or designate.
- 8.4. If unresolved, the concern can be forwarded to the Transportation Appeal Committee of the Board of Trustees. In matters relating to the expulsion of students any appeals shall follow the process outlined in Section 43 of the Education Act.

9. 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 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 Transportation Appeal Committee is composed of the board members of the Transportation Committee. The Transportation Committee is a standing committee of the Board of Trustees with three members. 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 Public Schools Board of Trustees and receive a decision.

- 9.1. The request for an appeal must be received in writing.
- 9.2. The appeal shall be heard within 30 school days of Northern Lights Public Schools receiving the request for an appeal.
- 9.3. Northern Lights Public Schools will establish the date of the appeal at a mutually agreeable time and communicate the location of the hearing.
- 9.4. The Appellant will be advised in writing (letter or email) of the time, location and approximate length of the hearing.
- 9.5. The Appellant shall be advised that they are entitled to bring an advocate of their choosing to assist with the presentation of their appeal if they so wish.
- 9.6. 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.
- 9.7. A Trustee may request that they be excused from an appeal hearing if they believe 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.
- 9.8. The decision of the Transportation Appeal Committee is final.

Reference: Section 4, 42, 57, 59.1, Education Act
Revised: April 16, 2012. March 3, 2021