



**SCHOOL BUS SAFETY**  
**RESPONSIBILITIES**  
**&**  
**PROCEDURE GUIDELINES**



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Bus Driver \_\_\_\_\_

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## **SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION IN NORTHWEST SCHOOL DIVISION NO. 203**

### **Preface**

This manual was developed to assist in understanding the school bussing system throughout our division. It provides an overview of specific responsibilities within that system.

Within broad guidelines established by the Board, the responsibility for the school bus transportation system is delegated to the Supervisor of Transportation. The Board has also adopted several specific policies related to school bus discipline, emergency procedures and the like, but it is stressed that a safe and successful transportation operation requires the cooperation and understanding of students, parents, bus drivers, school administration and School Board Administration.

This manual is published in order that students, parents and all others concerned with safe operation of the bussing system have the opportunity to become aware of the major factors and interlocking responsibilities which combine to provide a safe and adequate school bus service.

## **SECTION 1**

### **GENERAL ADMINISTRATION & OPERATION OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

Day-to-day administration of all school bus services is the responsibility of the Transportation Department of the School Division Office. School buses in your division are managed by the Supervisor of Transportation.

Questions or problems relating to specific bus routes should first be asked of the appropriate bus driver. If the matter cannot be satisfactorily answered at that level, it should be referred to the Supervisor of Transportation.

## **SECTION 2**

### **RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENT(S) OR GUARDIAN**

#### **1. General**

Parents/guardians will obviously play the key role in influencing their children in all aspects of safety at home, at play, and going to and from school. This is particularly true of younger children.

#### **2. Parents/guardians can promote school bus safety in the following ways:**

- (a) Go over with and discuss with your children the contents of this booklet, particularly the responsibilities of the students.
- (b) Provide extra help and guidance during the first several weeks of school, especially for kindergarten and grade one students. The child must have a good understanding of the location of stops, behavior while waiting for buses (as well as on board), what to do when buses are late, etc. Safety is of the utmost importance and should be emphasized by the parents.
- (c) Report any obvious and significant safety problems to the Transportation Department giving specific details as to bus number, date, time, place, etc.
- (d) Remind children that even though all vehicles are required by law to stop when flashers are in operation on a school bus, vehicle drivers are sometimes negligent or careless and do not stop when they should, therefore, children should proceed across the road with the utmost caution.
- (e) Promote awareness in other drivers that it is a traffic offence to pass a school bus with its red lights flashing (IN EITHER DIRECTION).

### **3. What parents should be aware of regarding school bus service:**

- (a) Students should be at the bus stop at least 5 minutes before normal pick-up.
- (b) Parents having problems concerning bus routes or pick-up points should first contact the bus driver. If the matter can not be resolved with the driver, it should be referred to the Transportation Department.
- (c) Parents are responsible for students until they board the school bus.
- (d) Be aware that the Board may have surveillance cameras installed on school buses as they deem necessary.
- (e) Parents will be responsible for willful damages to school buses caused by their children.
- (f) When the bus transportation privileges of a student are suspended, under the provisions of the School Board policy, school attendance is still mandatory and the parents must make their own alternative arrangements. Transportation Assistance Allowance will not be paid in these circumstances.
- (g) Be aware of Board Policy relating to general suspension of transportation services through emergencies such as inclement weather.
- (h) Provide a written note or phone call to the driver if your child is to return home by any other route than normal or is not to ride the bus at all.
- (i) Request permission for additional children to ride the bus (i.e. to attend a party, meeting, music lesson, etc).

**GUIDELINES REGARDING ITEMS HAULED  
ON THE SCHOOL BUS**

**\*ONLY ITEMS REQUIRED FOR CURRICULUM  
ARE TO BE TRANSPORTED**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Lunch containers and books</b>         | - | students take care of their own  |
| <b>Skates</b>                             | - | blades must be properly covered and placed on the floor at the student's feet  |
| <b>Hockey sticks &amp; curling brooms</b> | - | under the seat   |
| <b>Musical instruments</b>                | - | small instruments may be held by the students, large instruments to be left in an empty seat, not on the floor by the driver |

**\*NOTHING IS ALLOWED IN THE AISLES\*  
\*NO FIREARMS OR LIVE ANIMALS\***

Permission to transport anything not mentioned above must be obtained from the Supervisor of Transportation.

It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that their children are properly dressed for inclement weather conditions. In order to board school buses during winter, students must have a winter jacket, footwear that can be considered as winter wear, head and hand protection. Bus drivers may refuse admittance of students not adequately dressed for winter conditions.

## **SECTION 3**

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT**

Students riding on the school bus must remember they are responsible for their conduct to the bus driver and through him/her to the principal of their attending school.

1. The driver is in full charge of the bus and his/her directions must be obeyed.
2. The driver will report any misconduct to the principal of the school concerned.
3. The driver may assign specific seats to students at any time.
4. While the bus is in motion, students must not extend parts of their bodies out of the windows, attempt to get on or off the bus, or move within it.
5. Students must not throw paper or other material on the floor or out of the bus window.
6. While on the bus, students must conduct themselves in a quiet and courteous manner, showing consideration for the comfort and safety of others.
7. Scuffling, fighting, smoking, chewing tobacco, drinking alcoholic beverages, using drugs and using obscene language on the school bus is prohibited.
8. Lunching on the bus is at the driver's discretion.
9. Parents of students causing willful damage to the bus will be held fully accountable.
10. When leaving the bus, students must observe the bus driver's instructions. They should not cross the road without having a clear view in all directions.
11. In extreme cold or inclement weather, or under hazardous road conditions, students must be properly dressed. Parents must also arrange for alternate shelter and care if necessary.

12. Safety of students required to ride on school buses shall not be placed at risk by requiring operation of school buses or other transportation during extreme inclement weather or under hazardous road conditions. The responsibility for the safety of the students who are required to travel on school buses or other school provided transportation is shared by the board, its staff, bus drivers and parents. School system staff and bus operators shall exercise their responsibilities in accordance with the guidelines approved by the Board.
13. Students are advised not to leave personal belongings in the school bus such as lunches, clothing or books.

## **SECTION 4**

### **STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES**

The Board believes that bus drivers are an integral part of the staff of the jurisdiction. They serve not only as drivers of school buses for the conveyance of students, but are responsible for safety and conduct of the students while they are on the bus. Students riding on a bus are therefore expected to give the bus driver the same due respect, consideration and co-operation they give their teachers and always and immediately carry out his/her reasonable demands and instructions.

#### **PROCEDURES**

If a student chooses to break a rule, the following consequences will be applied:

- 1st incident Student warned by driver.
- 2nd incident Student assigned designated seat, parents contacted and a Student Conduct Report filed with the principal.
- 3rd incident Principal, parent, student and driver conference.
- 4th incident Suspension of bus privileges for a designated period of time; parents notified by letter and made responsible for transportation.

**The following procedures shall be carried out when it becomes desirable or necessary to suspend a student from riding a school bus:**

1. Decisions to permanently suspend a student from riding a school bus shall be made by the board.
2. The parents of the student must be personally informed of the suspensions and the reasons for the suspension prior to the next pick-up time by the Principal (or designate).
3. If the suspension becomes necessary during the evening run and the parents cannot be notified, then the student shall be conveyed to the school the following morning at which time the student and the reasons for suspension shall be presented to the Principal. Under extreme circumstances, the student may be denied conveyance until such time as the parents and Principal have been so informed.
4. Re-instatement on the school bus may take place:
  - (a) where the suspension is for five days or less, a meeting and/or communication with the parent(s), student, Principal and bus driver whereby the situation is resolved; or
  - (b) a meeting with the Director of Education for problem resolution.

**SECTION 5  
DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES  
OF SCHOOL BUS DRIVER**

The primary responsibilities of the bus driver, at all times, shall be the care and safe delivery of students to school and home, as applicable, and the bus be operated in a courteous manner.

**1. GUIDELINES**

**The bus driver shall:**

- (a) be properly licensed for operating a school bus;
- (b) be familiar with and adhere to the requirements of the HIGHWAY TRAFFIC ACT and related sections of other ACTS;
- (c) shall submit all required Division documents in a timely manner;
- (d) prior to being employed, provide the Supervisor of Transportation with a driver abstract from SGI;
- (e) have a yearly medical after reaching age 65, submitted to the Transportation Department by August 1 prior to the start of the current school year;
- (f) be thoroughly familiar with and adhere to transportation policies;
- (g) attend seminars and in-service activities as required;
- (h) shall not drive a school bus while impaired by drugs, alcohol or both, regardless of how many hours have elapsed since their last drink. This includes impairment from all illegal, prescription or over-the-counter drugs.

**The Board shall:**

- (a) in situations in which schools may be closed due to weather or road conditions, plant break down, or epidemic, pay a driver basic salary for that day;
- (b) review with the Transportation Department suspension of license for any driving infraction.

## 2. SCHEDULE REQUIREMENTS

### The bus driver shall:

- (a) conduct a bus evacuation drill with the students during the first week of school and advise the Transportation Department of the date on which the drill was conducted;
- (b) check the bus after dropping off the students at the school in the morning and after the last drop-off at the end of the day to ensure that all students have left the bus;
- (c) establish a schedule for his/her route within one week of the beginning of school and arrange it to ensure that the bus arrives at the school based on the times specified by the Transportation Department;
- (d) be at the first school pick-up five minutes before dismissal time;
- (e) before leaving the school, ensure that all students are accounted for to the best of their knowledge;
- (f) leave the school when the load is complete at the direction of the Principal or designate;
- (g) provide the Transportation Department with a phone number that the driver can be reached in case of emergency;
- (h) only stop at Division designated drop-off or pick-up points, unless prior approval has been granted by the Board;
- (i) not smoke on the bus loaded or unloaded;
- (j) not use a cell phone while operating a school bus;
- (k) not be obligated to wait for students if (s)he is on time of her/his bus route.

Bus drivers shall ensure that students will reach their school and home safely. Students will not be allowed off at other stops without written consent of the parents and approval of the Transportation Department. Under extreme conditions where this cannot be assured, the students will remain on the bus until released to responsible adult care.

The bus driver shall submit a medical certificate on request of the Supervisor of Transportation.

### **3. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

**The bus driver shall:**

- (a) ensure the bus and equipment is in safe mechanical condition;
- (b) ensure the bus interior is clean and that the exterior lights are free of any obstacles;
- (c) ensure the garage is notified of any repairs or regular maintenance items required for the school bus.

## **SECTION 6**

### **SCHOOL BUS COLLISION**

The Board believes that a format shall be established, and followed, for the reporting of school bus collisions.

#### **PROCEDURES**

The driver of the school bus must first contact the Maintenance Shop and relay the following information:

1. Location
2. Number of students on the bus
3. Injuries, if there are any
4. Number of vehicles involved

The Maintenance Shop must immediately:

1. Contact the RCMP.
2. Send a relief bus to the scene of the accident. The Supervisor of Transportation or designate will attend if possible. Protect the scene until the RCMP gives permission to move vehicles.
3. All parents will be notified by telephone or by a note sent home with the student.

## **SECTION 7**

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION**

#### **1. GENERAL**

School Administration is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school bus system at the school level. This involves the supervision of arrivals and departures and dealing with disciplinary problems. From time to time, safety aspects should be brought to the attention of the students.

#### **2. ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF SCHOOL BUSES**

The school administration shall:

- (a) arrange for alternate shelter and care if necessary;
- (b) arrange for appropriate supervision of students during loading and unloading of school buses;
- (c) restrict students not riding school buses from using the loading area;
- (d) bring any bus timetabling problems to the attention of the Transportation Department;
- (e) have a clearly understood procedure for students to follow when a bus is missed.

#### **3. DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Based upon reports submitted by drivers or supervisors of the loading or unloading activities, school administration will deal with each case as provided by Division policy.

#### **4. DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION**

**The School Administration shall:**

- (a) ensure that the regulations, responsibilities and disciplinary channels are made known to staff and students at the beginning of each school year and throughout the year as required;
- (b) make available a copy of this handbook for the use of students, parents and guardians;
- (c) institute a year-round follow-up program to encourage and continue safety consciousness on the part of all students and teachers;
- (d) make every effort to inform parents of younger children their responsibility to their children in respect to bus safety, expected behavior, and disciplinary measures which will be taken for breach of regulations;
- (e) where it deems necessary, coordinate meetings with drivers, students, teachers, parents and the Transportation Department;
- (f) consider the bus driver as an extension of school staff and ensure that any problems are discussed with the driver immediately.

## **SECTION 8**

### **RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SCHOOL BOARD**

The board believes it has a responsibility to make arrangements for the safe conveyance of resident and other students approved by the Board to and from school. The board may provide conveyance to students living outside their school attendance area providing the following:

- there is sufficient seating on the bus;
- allows sufficient time to complete the route;
- the student is picked up at an existing stop on the route of the attending school boundary;
- must have approval of the board;
- applications must be submitted in writing to the Transportation Department.

### **GUIDELINES**

1. Service is provided for students living in excess of 1 km from the school of attendance. In the town of Meadow Lake, service is provided at designated stops.
2. Door service is provided for handicapped and other medical conditions upon application and approval of the Transportation Department.
3. In cases where it is not feasible to provide transportation the Board reserves the right to make payments to parents in lieu of transportation.
4. Yard pick-ups will be made for residences where feasible as per conditions in (5).
5. The board may approve highway pickup/delivery to homes along provincial highways when necessary.

## **SECTION 9**

### **PROCEDURES IN INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Schools are expected to remain open and operational on all designated days of the school year. However, in order to ensure the health and safety of students and school division personnel during periods of severe weather conditions, plant breakdown, or interrupted services, a decision may be made to suspend the operation of school buses and/or schools.

The Director of Education is authorized to dismiss students, discontinue transportation services, and close schools as emergencies arise. The following criteria may be used as a guideline:

- temperature at or lower than -40 degrees Celsius by no later than 7:00 a.m.
- severe wind chill at or no later than 7:00 a.m.
- severely drifted or extremely icy roads.
- limited visibility because of fog or blowing snow.
- all the above conditions will be determined by key area drivers in consultation with the Supervisor of Transportation.

Procedure for decisions to alter/cancel bus transportation (following the above guidelines):

1. The Director or designate may cancel school buses either individually or collectively when weather conditions are so inclement or road conditions are so hazardous as to constitute a safety risk to the students being transported.
2. In the absence of a decision by the Director or designate, the individual driver is granted discretionary power to cancel or alter his/her route to ensure the safety of students being transported.
3. Parents have the right to decide whether to send students to school in the event of inclement weather. However, that school and their operations will be open and the students will be marked absent. Parents are urged to notify the school in the event of retaining their student(s).
4. Where the individual driver makes the above decision(s), he/she will advise the parents and principal of the respective school and the Supervisor of Transportation.

5. Normal operation of buses will be cancelled by the Director or designate when determined that it is in the interest of safety. This will be done by direct communication prior to 7:00 a.m.
6. Regarding inclement weather, schools **WILL REMAIN OPEN TO STUDENTS** even if any or all school buses are not operating.
7. If extreme weather conditions exist when bus drivers are returning students from school to their homes, the bus driver shall ensure that each student is delivered to his/her home and enters the house. If circumstances make it impossible to deliver the student to his/her home, the driver shall keep the student in the vehicle and, in consultation with the principal, make appropriate arrangements for the safety and well-being of the student.
8. School buses are not to leave schools earlier than their usual times in circumstances of extreme weather.
9. Principals are responsible for establishing billets in town for all bus students. This should be done no later than October 15 of a school year. The principal is responsible for the safe care of all students and staff at the school until safe transportation is assured.
10. In the event school bus or buses are not operating, the regular staff and in-town students are expected to be in their regular appointed places. Employees should not place themselves in danger by traveling.

## **SECTION 10**

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Board believes it has a responsibility to make arrangements for the safe conveyance of residents and other students approved by the Board to and from school.

1. The School Board, as the final authority on all local aspects of school bussing and as elected officials of the community, must try to meet the needs of the community by:
  - (a) Providing adequate policy statements to give clear direction to all parties concerned with bus transportation;
  - (b) Delegating to staff members the authority necessary to carry out their responsibilities;
  - (c) Acting as a final authority when a problem cannot be resolved by the Director of Education or the Transportation Department.

## **GENERAL AND LEGAL**

The Board, in accordance with the Education Act, shall establish and maintain a system of student transportation that will be operated in accordance with this policy, regulations and guidelines. The Board, believing that students who are transported with school division vehicles are entitled to safe and efficient travel, expects that an efficient route system will be maintained using clean and safe vehicles operated by qualified drivers.



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