

SECTION 300

How We Plan to Support Schools and Ensure Alignment



Administrative Procedure 301.1AP – Bussing

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidance with respect to how the District supports the transportation of eligible students to school by bus or through transportation assistance.

Scope

This procedure outlines the District's process for:

1. school bus service registration for students with disabilities or diverse abilities,
2. school bus service registration for students who meet set distance criteria,
3. transportation assistance registration,
4. student safety onboard District school buses,
5. student behaviour and discipline onboard District school buses, and
6. school bell schedules and route review.

Definitions

"Catchment school" is an area consisting of a geographical area around the school that includes all or part of the school district.

"Courtesy riders" are students who are not eligible for bussing based on set distance criteria to their catchment school. This may be a student who is provided bussing due to space being available or alternatively a recognized safety concern or hazard with respect to walk routes to school.

"District program" is a program without a catchment including but not limited to the Career Technical Program, Skills for Life, French Immersion and Learning Alternatives.

"District-provided bussing" is school bus service provided to a student to access their catchment school.

"Set distance criteria" is the minimum distance between a student's residence and their catchment school that qualifies the student for bussing or, if that is not available, then transportation assistance. Kindergarten to Grade 3 students meet set distance criteria if their residence is located more than 4km from their catchment school. Grades 4 to 12 students meet set distance criteria if their residence is located more than 4.8km from their catchment school.

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"Transportation assistance" is a monthly stipend provided to students who meet set distance criteria but cannot access District-provided bussing.

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Procedures

1. School Bus Service Registration for Students with Disabilities or Diverse Abilities

The District recognizes that students with disabilities or diverse abilities may require specific transportation supports. The extent of this service will take into account factors identified below. Fiscal and logistical constraints may have a bearing on whether the desired transportation service can be provided. All arrangements shall be confirmed by the Transportation Department before they are finalized each year. Travel time and time at school will be given due consideration when routes are developed.

1.1. There are several considerations which may have bearing on whether transportation is provided to students with disabilities or diverse abilities. Considerations include:

- a) The student is enrolled in the Functional Life Skills Program;
- b) The student's disability is of a physical nature;
- c) The student's ability to make safety related decisions;
- d) The student's Individual Education Plan (e.g. Learning to ride public transit independently may be part of the student's plan);
- e) The family's circumstances (e.g. Availability, ability and/or desire to assist with their child's transportation to school);
- f) The student's behaviour; and/or
- g) The availability of District resources.

1.2. Subject to other provisions in this administrative procedure, typically only students with a physical disability, or those who are enrolled in the Functional Life Skills Program will be eligible for consideration for transportation under this section.

1.3. Siblings of students with disabilities or diverse abilities are not eligible for consideration for transportation under this section even though they may attend the same school.

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1.4. Transportation decisions concerning every student with disabilities or diverse abilities shall be subject to an annual review. To apply for transportation support under this section please speak to your child's school principal.

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1.5. It is recognized that some students with disabilities or diverse abilities will require door-to-door service. Approval for the provision of door-to-door service will be based on needs as assessed by District staff on a case-by-case basis.

2. School Bus Service Registration for Students who Meet Set Distance Criteria

- 2.1. Students who meet the following criteria will be considered eligible for school bus service to and from their designated catchment school:
 - a) Kindergarten to Grade 3 students who live in a residence that is located more than 4 km from their catchment school.
 - b) Grades 4 to 12 students who live in a residence that is located more than 4.8 km from their catchment school.
- 2.2. All Kindergarten to Grade 12 students may be required to travel up to 3.2 km to the nearest bus stop.
- 2.3. Students who meet set distance criteria must [register online](#) for transportation privileges within two weeks of commencing school.
- 2.4. Once registered, students must use school bus transportation regularly; otherwise their seat will be re-allocated or service to that bus stop may be eliminated. If a student's ridership falls below 50%, their case will be reviewed by the District with a possible outcome being termination of their ridership.
- 2.5. Students who fail to register online for school bus service within two weeks of commencing school will be considered to have elected to make their own way to and from school and must do so for the entire year.
- 2.6. Gabriola secondary school students are provided school bus transportation, in accordance with this procedure, from their bus stop to the Gabriola ferry. Once on the Nanaimo side, transportation is provided by the District to the designated school of attendance. [BC Ferries](#) provides an assistance program which covers fares for school attendance.
- 2.7. The District offers an option area in the North Oyster catchment. This offers students the option of bus service to either École North Oyster School, Ladysmith Primary or Ladysmith Intermediate Schools.
- 2.8. ****How do students under the BCTEA register for school bus service? Is this done for them via the agreement?*****
- 2.9. Students who do not meet set distance criteria may be eligible to register for school bus service if they lack a safe walking route to school or access to public transit. District staff will evaluate concerns regarding the safe walk route or public transit route of a student to and from school and make a determination on related bussing requests using the [Bus Route and Hazard Evaluation form](#).

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Commented [AC8]: Who should students or parents bring safe walk route/transit access concerns to? Their school principal?

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Policy 3.8 at 1.1.4.

AP 512 on page 4.

[Bus Route & Hazard Evaluation Form](#)

- 2.10. Students who choose to attend a school outside their catchment area or attend a district program of choice other than the Life Skills Program (e.g. Career Technical Program, French Immersion, etc.) are not eligible for bussing or transportation assistance but may be permitted to access bussing as a courtesy rider.
- 2.11. The provision of courtesy ridership will only be available when seats remain unfilled after routes have been fully maximized by eligible students.
- 2.12. Courtesy ridership applications can be completed at any time but will not be considered until October 1st of each school year. Courtesy seats may be granted for students who are not eligible for school bus transportation services, provided all of the following conditions are met and understood:
- a) a seat is available on the bus (as determined by the Transportation Department);
 - b) the bus stop already exists (no new stops will be added);
 - c) the parent or guardian accepts responsibility for accompanying the student to and from the existing bus stop;
 - d) the bus route and the length of the trip are not affected;
 - e) the need has been identified for the entire school year;
 - f) permission is granted for the current school year only;
 - g) students shall abide by their school's code of conduct and expected school bus behaviour; and
 - h) courtesy ridership may be canceled at any time with one week's notice.
- 2.13. Once eligible students are registered, they will be issued a [ZPass card](#) by the Transportation Department. Students must use their ZPass card when boarding and exiting the bus. This procedure provides safety information for staff and parents as well as ridership statistics for route management. Additional or replacement ZPass cards must be purchased.

3. Transportation Assistance Registration

- 3.1. Students who meet the set distance criteria in an area where there is an insufficient number of students to establish a bus route may be eligible for transportation assistance. Parents of such students may apply for a transportation assistance allowance to partially cover the cost of transporting their children to school themselves.
- 3.2. In order to qualify for transportation assistance each year, the student's parent or guardian must apply to the Transportation Department via the [Transportation Assistance Allowance form](#). Download the form and return it to the District's

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Commented [AC12R11]: I assume they register online with the same registration form?

Transportation Department. Please call (250) 741-5214 or email transportationregistration@sd68.bc.ca.

- 3.3. The District will reimburse parents or guardians for the actual use of the Protection Island ferry for the purpose of attending school.

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- 3.4. The continued payment of transportation assistance is dependent upon the student's regular attendance at school and satisfactory behaviour. Irregular school attendance or unsatisfactory behaviour may result in a discontinuation of payment.

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- 3.5. The District may elect to offer parents travel assistance in lieu of providing school bus service and will provide parents or guardians with a minimum of one month notice.

- 3.6. From time to time, the Transportation Manager will review the amount provided and/or calculation for transportation assistance. In doing so they will consider other Districts' practices as well as the current mileage paid to staff for use of personal vehicles and make recommendations accordingly.

4. Student Safety Onboard District School Buses

- 4.1. School bus safety is a shared responsibility. Parents or guardians are a child's first teacher and provide safety instructions and/or accompany their child to the bus stop. This is very important if the child is young and must cross the street or highway, or if there is a concern about their safety while waiting for the bus.

- 4.2. The district's Transportation Department presents a student bus safety program to all Kindergarten and Grades 1, 3, 5 and 7 students on an annual basis at schools that receive regular bussing. NLPS bus drivers provide a one hour bus safety session once per year which includes:

- a) a thorough review of the bus rules;
- b) a short video for younger students;
- c) a short bus ride that includes an earthquake drill and emergency evacuation; and
- d) a question and answer period.

- 4.3. School staff then provide an evaluation of the session that is submitted to the District's Transportation Department.

- 4.4. Seatbelt use is mandatory on all District school buses where seatbelts are available.

- 4.5. Students will receive disciplinary action up to refusal of riding privileges if not using their seatbelt in a legal and safe manner. Repeated refusal to wear seatbelts will result in suspended riding privileges.

- 4.6. Bus drivers will provide assistance as required to ensure students are using the seatbelts properly. Students who may require assistance in using the seatbelts may request help from the bus driver before the bus is in motion. Drivers will announce prior to the bus moving that each student needs to be in their seat with seatbelts fastened.

5. Student Behaviour and Discipline Onboard District School Buses

- 5.1. Riding on a school bus is a privilege, not a right. At all times, the school bus is an extension of the school; its code of conduct and all NLPS Board policies and administrative procedures apply. Likewise, all disciplinary actions, including the suspension of bus riding privileges, may apply to misbehaviour.
- 5.2. The school bus driver will address student misbehaviour on a bus according to the [School Bus Ridership brochure](#). The school principal will be informed and provided opportunity to be involved in all such incidents and they will be addressed in an educative, preventative and restorative manner when possible. Student school bus misbehaviour may result in consequences by the school principal.
- 5.3. Video surveillance on school buses is used to promote positive behaviour and the safety of students and school bus drivers. In the event of a reported or observed incident, the review of recorded information may be used to assist in the investigation of the incident.
- 5.4. All records created while delivering a video surveillance program are subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. All media will be deleted at regular intervals. The recording will be kept for a minimum of twelve months.

6. School Bell Schedules and Route Review Process

- 6.1. School requests to change bell schedules will be initiated by the school in consultation with the Assistant Superintendent and must be in accordance with Administrative Procedure [501.3AP Changes to School Organizations](#). The Assistant Superintendent will involve the Transportation Department for information purposes in the decision making process.
- 6.2. The District will review bus routes on an annual basis and as requested in accordance with Policy 301 Transportation To and From School and the [Bus Route Evaluation and Recommendations Process](#).
- 6.3. School closures and openings and boundary changes will be taken into consideration in the yearly route review process.

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- 6.4. If eligible ridership falls below 50% capacity of the bus, the route will be automatically considered for review.
- 6.5. The District will collaborate with local transit authorities to minimize service duplication.

Updated:

References: [Policy 301 Transportation to and from School](#)
 [Bus Route and Hazard Evaluation Form](#)
 [Bus Route Evaluation and Recommendations Process](#)
 [ZPass+ Product Overview](#)
 [Transportation Assistance Allowance Form](#)
 [School Bus Ridership brochure](#)