

Student Transportation Policy

Policy Overview

This policy describes how the Halifax Regional School Board meets its responsibilities for transportation of students to and from schools.

It also includes the criteria for eligibility of students for school bus service.

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Policy and Procedures History

- Policy B.009 Pupil Transportation Policy – Approved June 27, 2000
- Policy Renamed and Renumbered to F.005 Student Transportation Policy – Approved January 27, 2010
- Procedures – Approved January 30, 2013

1.0 Legislative Context

- 1.1 The Halifax Regional School Board is committed to ensuring transportation for students in accordance with the *Education Act* and the following provincial acts and Board policies:

- 1.1.1 *Motor Carrier Act, 2013 & GIC Motor Carrier Act Regulations 2015*
- 1.1.2 *Motor Vehicle Act, 2016*
- 1.1.3 *Nova Scotia Provincial School Code of Conduct Policy*
- 1.1.4 *HRSB B.012 School and Bus Cancellation Policy*
- 1.1.5 *HRSB B.014 School Trips Policy*
- 1.1.6 *HRSB C.006 Special Education Policy*
- 1.1.7 *HRSB E.001 Purchasing Policy*

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2.0 Principles

- 2.1 The Halifax Regional School Board recognizes that safety of students is a shared responsibility of the board, service contractors, parents/guardians and students.
- 2.2 The Halifax Regional School Board will ensure that student transportation service is provided in a manner that is safe and adheres to all regulatory requirements.
 - 2.2.1 Transportation will be provided for students in grades 7 through 12 who live 3.6 kilometres or more away from school.
 - 2.2.2 Transportation will be provided for students in grades Primary through 6 who live 2.4 kilometres or more away from school.
 - 2.2.3 The Halifax Regional School Board will provide transportation for students with special needs.
- 2.3 The Halifax Regional School Board will support schools in promoting initiatives regarding active transportation.

3.0 Authorization

- 3.1 The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures in support of this policy.

4.0 Policy Review

- 4.1 This policy will be reviewed every five (5) years, or on an as needed basis.

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1.0 Criteria for Eligibility of Students for School Bus Service

- 1.1 Eligibility for school bus service is based on the shortest safe walking route along sidewalks, roadways and established pedestrian pathways from a student's primary residence road front property line to the assigned school property line.
- 1.2 In accordance with the *Governor in Council Education Act Regulations Section 6(1)(a)*, student transportation will be provided to students who live 3.6 kilometres or more away from school.
- 1.3 Beyond the requirements of the *Governor in Council Education Act Regulations*, the board will provide transportation to students in grades Primary through 6 who live 2.4 kilometres or more away from school.
- 1.4 In accordance with the *Governor in Council Education Act Regulations Section 6(1)(b)*, any student requiring transportation because of special needs shall be conveyed from home to the assigned school irrespective of distance.

2.0 School Bus Scheduling and Routing

- 2.1 Bus routes, schedules and stop locations will be developed under the direction of the service contractor in consultation with the Director of Operations.
 - 2.1.1 Bus routes will be scheduled so that no student is on a school bus longer than one (1) hour for regular school bus service to or from school.
 - 2.1.2 Bus routes will be scheduled so that busses do not arrive at a school more than 20 minutes prior to the instruction start time bell, nor depart more than 20 minutes after the last dismissal bell.

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- 2.1.3 Parents/guardians will normally be provided with a notice of changes to scheduled bus routes, pick-up or delivery times one week prior to implementation.
- 2.1.4 Bus schedules and/or routes may be altered in the event of an emergency or severe weather.
- 2.2 In determining stop locations, consideration will be given to accommodations for parents/guardians with disabilities, when the disability affects the student's safe access to transportation under this policy.

3.0 Courtesy Bussing

- 3.1 Courtesy bussing may be extended to students who live closer to the school than the distances stipulated in sections 1.2 and 1.3 above if there is available seating capacity on the bus. Once approved these students are always considered courtesy students and the service may be discontinued at any time.
 - 3.1.1 Requests from parents/guardians for courtesy bussing must be submitted to the Service Contractor.
 - 3.1.2 The bus schedule and routing will not be altered to accommodate students being transported as a courtesy.
 - 3.1.3 When additional seating spaces are required for eligible students, the courtesy student(s) closest to school will no longer be permitted to ride the bus.

4.0 Student Transportation in Private Vehicles

- 4.1 Some school employees may be requested to use their own automobiles or rent vehicles to transport students.
 - 4.1.1 Prior to transporting students, Form J [*Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board in the matter of the Motor Carrier Act Confirmation and Undertaking respecting Clause 42A(2)(a)*] must be completed and submitted to the school principal.
 - 4.1.2 Students enrolled within HRSB are not permitted to operate vehicles for the purpose of transporting students.
- 4.2 The board may use alternate means of service delivery for student transportation including but not limited to public transit and private taxi services.

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5.0 Safety of Students

- 5.1 The safety of students during their transportation to and from school is a shared responsibility of the board, service contractors, parents/guardians and students.
- 5.2 Parents/guardians are responsible for the safety of students until boarding the bus and after exiting the bus at an authorized bus stop.
- 5.3 Students are responsible to adhere to the *Provincial School Code of Conduct* policy and driver instructions pertaining to the safe use of school busses.
- 5.4 Bus drivers are responsible for the safe operation of school busses and the safety of students boarding, riding on and disembarking from the school bus.
- 5.5 Bus Monitors are responsible to ensure the safety of their assigned students boarding, riding on and disembarking from the school bus.
- 5.6 Principals must ensure adequate supervision is provided at schools for bus arrival and departure times.
- 5.7 Emergency bus evacuation for all students must be practiced at least once a year.
- 5.8 The service contractor will investigate all accidents and report the circumstances to the board.
- 5.9 The transport of curriculum related materials (i.e. musical instruments, school projects) will be accommodated only when there is room on the bus in accordance with *Motor Carrier Act Regulation 26A, 1(4)(a)*.

6.0 Communications

- 6.1 Parent/guardian questions or concerns regarding day-to-day school bus service should be directed to the service contractor by phone at 902-481-8400.
 - 6.1.1 If a parent/guardian seeks further information that cannot be provided by the service contractor, requests should be directed to the HRSB Contract Specialist at 902-464-2000 ext. 2454.
- 6.2 Opportunities to support active transportation initiatives will be communicated to schools and celebrated through a variety of methods/mediums including, but not limited to, the board's website (www.hrsb.ca) and Twitter account (HRSB_Official).

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