



Niagara Catholic District School Board

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION POLICY

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

500 – Auxiliary Services

Policy No 500.2

Adopted Date: March 27, 2007

Latest Reviewed/Revised Date: September 24, 2024

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE SAFETY OF STUDENTS

Where a student is eligible for transportation it is the responsibility of parents:

- a. To make appropriate arrangements for the safety of their children while they travel from home to school;
- b. To ensure that the student is adequately supervised while walking to and from the designated bus stop.
- c. To explain and reinforce the expected behaviour of their children at the designated bus stop and on the bus.
- d. To develop and review a plan for their children if they miss the transportation service arranged for them or if service is impacted by route delays or cancellations.
- e. To notify the school of any pick-up or drop-off location that differs from their home address and any health conditions of their children that may require immediate medical attention.
- f. To consult with the school Principal or designate to determine if an Individual Student Transportation Plan (ISTP) for their child with special needs is necessary.

TRANSPORTATION – HAZARDS

Hazards are assessed by the Niagara Student Transportation Services (NSTS) annually according to established standards, in consideration of parental responsibilities and with careful attention to consistency across Niagara.

TRANSPORTATION – MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Students with special medical conditions may be provided with transportation. Documentation from a physician must be provided to NSTS and the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education for approval.

TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

Transportation for students with special education needs will be provided in accordance with the following criteria.

- a. The Special Education Department, in consultation with the school Principal and Niagara Student Transportation Services (NSTS), will determine if a student with special needs requires special transportation and will obtain approval from the Superintendent of Education responsible for Special Education.
- b. The safety of a student with special education needs will be a factor when considering alternative transportation arrangements.
- c. Students with special medical conditions that are debilitating and of a long-term nature, and that are documented by a physician, will be provided with transportation as approved by the Family of Schools Superintendent of Education.
- d. Students enrolled in a Special Education Class, that is unavailable at the student's home school, will be provided with transportation with the approval of the Superintendent of Education - Special Education.

- e. When no such specific education program is involved, parents are responsible for providing transportation for students with special needs attending a school that is outside of their school area.
- f. One school week is required to implement special transportation arrangements.

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM STUDENTS:

- a. Transportation for eligible students in Kindergarten will be provided on the regular morning and afternoon routes. To receive transportation services, parents/guardians of new Kindergarten students must express their intent to use the service through an opt-in notification to NSTS completed in the summer months prior to the start of the school year.
- b. When a student is eligible for transportation, parents are responsible for the safety of their child at the designated pick-up and drop-off stop location including being present at the stop location to assist their child on and off the bus. A Kindergarten student will not be released at a bus stop unless a parent/guardian is present.

TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS FOR PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

Students enrolled in the following programs that are unavailable at the student's home school, will be provided with home to school or school-to-school transportation:

- a. Eucharistic and Liturgical Programs
- b. Alternative Co-operative Education Programs
- c. French Immersion for inbound students within their Family of Schools, subject to current eligibility criteria
- d. Identified Specialist High School Major Programs
- e. Learning Strategies and Social Skills Programs

In accordance with the Board Admission of Elementary and Secondary Students Policy, when no such approved educational program is involved, parents are responsible for providing transportation for students attending a school that is outside of their school area.

TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS TO SUMMER SCHOOL

Transportation may be provided for students who are authorized to attend secondary school summer courses, as approved by the Superintendent of Education – Continuing Education. The summer school routes cover a large geographic area with central pick-up and drop-off stop locations. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to arrange for the student to report to the designated stop location.

TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS ON FIELD TRIPS

Transportation may be provided for students who are authorized to participate in field trips organized by the school, in accordance with Board Educational Field Trips Policy.

TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS ON “LATE BUSES”

In order to facilitate the participation of students in co-curricular activities, the Board will endeavour to provide transportation for students who reside in rural areas which are distant from the school. The “late bus” routes cover a large geographic area with central pick-up and drop-off stop locations.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

Students shall be made aware of the following expectations regarding behaviour on buses and taxis at the beginning of each school year. It is the responsibility of all students:

- a. To avoid anything which might disturb the driver or interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle;
- b. To exercise care, caution, good manners and consideration for others;

- c. To refrain from throwing articles inside the bus or out a window;
- d. To obey promptly the instructions of the driver, rider and school patrollers;
- e. To refrain from smoking, vaping, drugs and alcohol;
- f. To refrain from using obscene, offensive and discriminatory language;
- g. To keep all parts of the body inside the vehicle at all times;
- h. To remain seated at all times facing forward;
- i. To be aware of the fact that misbehaviour on buses may result in suspension or loss of transportation privileges.
- j. To adhere to the Board Code of Conduct while travelling on transportation vehicles.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BUS DRIVERS

Bus drivers and riders shall adhere to applicable laws, regulations and Board Policies. It is the responsibility of the drivers and riders:

- a. To be courteous, kind but firm and above reproach at all times;
- b. To maintain safe conditions for the students riding in the vehicle at all times;
- c. To exercise due care and precaution at all times;
- d. To ensure that all students have left the bus before considering the route complete;
- e. To maintain consistent pick-up and discharge locations and times and to refrain from changing the bus routes without the approval of the Board;
- f. To refrain from smoking inside the vehicle or on Board property;
- g. To dress in a suitable and acceptable manner;
- h. To issue a warning to a student who violates the student bus expectations;
- i. To report to the school Principal, in writing, the name of any misbehaving student, the nature of the misbehaviour and any specific action taken.
- j. To respect and secure confidential route and student information provided to perform the transportation service.
- k. To release a Kindergarten student at the scheduled bus stop only when their parent/guardian is present to receive the student; and
- l. To work collaboratively with school staff and NSTS to implement the Individual Student Transportation Plan (ISTP).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRINCIPALS

Principals are responsible for the care and well-being of the students while they are being transported on approved vehicles. It is the responsibility of Principals:

- a. To investigate thoroughly all reported misbehaviour on school vehicles;
- b. To discipline and, if necessary, withdraw or suspend transportation privileges;
- c. To inform parents personally by telephone, and confirm in writing, the details of the disciplinary problem and the action taken;
- d. To encourage and support the use of bus safety education programs for students provided by the Board, bus operators and Niagara Regional Police Service;
- e. To provide adequate supervision arrangements for the loading and unloading of buses and taxis at their respective schools and be available should a problem arise during the runs;
- f. To notify the parents in writing if a student misbehaves on the bus and inform the parent that further offences may result in the student losing bus riding privileges.
- g. To keep student data accurate and up to date in the Board student database, including pick-up and drop-off locations and health related conditions that may require immediate medical attention.
- h. To email a copy of the ISTP for all students in the school to general@nsts.ca using the subject line 'ISTP', and
- i. To email a copy of the emergency procedures to NSTS to general@nsts.ca using the subject line 'Student Plan of Care'.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF NIAGARA STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Niagara Student Transportation Services (NSTS) is responsible to plan and administer services in accordance with applicable legislation, regulations and Board Policy, Administrative Operational Procedures. It is the responsibility of NSTS to arrange transportation for students within a reasonable amount of time, with due care for safety and in consideration of students with exceptional needs.

To ensure the safety of students including consistent pick-up and drop-off stop locations, maintain accurate route manifests, support resolving bus safety and behaviour concerns and to communicate health related conditions of students that may require immediate medical attention.

OPERATION OF SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION VEHICLES

Transportation services may be provided to eligible students using contracted school buses, taxis or through services provided by a Public Transit Commission. All transportation agreements for home to school and school to school service will be held between NSTS and the service operators.

Where possible, bus stops should be located where the driver has a clear view of the road in both directions for at least 150 metres. Where possible, bus stops should not be located on a steep grade, brow of a hill, or on a blind curve. Students shall not be discharged on a road or highway until all traffic has come to a complete stop.

At no time shall the number of passengers in any vehicle exceed the capacity for which the vehicle has been licensed by the Ministry of Transportation. Students are not permitted to stand on school buses as a result of a lack of seating spaces.

Where it is possible and practical, there shall be co-operation and co-ordination of services with other school boards or private schools in the transportation of elementary and secondary school pupils.

EQUIPMENT AND OTHER ITEMS ON TRANSPORTATION VEHICLES

Where equipment or other items are transported, it is important to ensure that the centre aisle is kept clear in case of an emergency where a quick exit is required. In the interest of student safety, only certain equipment is permitted on school vehicles, as follows:

- a. Musical equipment in cases shall be transported and shall be kept on the students' lap or under the seat, if possible.
- b. Ice skates shall have the blades covered and be tied together or carried in a sports bag. They shall be kept on the floor under the student's seat.
- c. Sports equipment such as skis, poles and skateboards shall not be allowed on the bus.
- d. Program related items shall be transported if special arrangements have been made in advance between the principal (or designate) and the driver.
- e. Animals, birds, laser pointers, firearms, explosives, water pistols and any items that may interfere with the safe operation of the bus are prohibited on any student transportation vehicle/bus.

In case of a dispute, the final decision as to what shall or shall not be transported rests with Niagara Student Transportation Services.

COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCESS

In accordance with the Board Complaint Resolution Policy, every effort shall be made to investigate concerns while recognizing the need for the efficient and safe transportation of students in compliance with Board Policies and Administrative Operational Procedures.

Concerns are to be processed in accordance with the following procedures:

- a. A concern should be directed initially to the school Principal.

- b. If the concern is not resolved at the school level, the parent shall be directed to contact Niagara Student Transportation Services.
- c. In accordance with the Board Complaint Resolution Policy if the concern is still not resolved, the parent will be requested to contact the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education for further consideration.

EXCEPTIONS TO ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

All exceptions to the Administrative Operational Procedures criteria must be made by application to NSTS and approved by the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education. If an additional cost is projected, the Superintendent of Business and Financial Services and Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education will be required to approve the request.

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