

## TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

### Background

High Prairie School Division (HPSD) will provide a quality and efficient transportation service consistent with Alberta Education regulations and the laws of Alberta. HPSD believes that the safety of our students and drivers is of paramount importance.

### Procedures

#### 1. Operation of Buses

- 1.1. The Superintendent directs buses to operate on all instructional days wherever possible.
- 1.2. The Director of Transportation is responsible for authorizing bus operations and cancellations.
- 1.3. Students, while travelling on school buses, are under the immediate authority of the school bus driver. The school bus driver is in full charge of the bus operations at all times. Passengers must obey the driver promptly and in a courteous manner.
- 1.4. Drivers must not reverse buses on school grounds or in loading/unloading zones without guidance from a responsible adult positioned outside at the rear left (driver's side) of the bus.
- 1.5. When a bus driver deems that the bus cannot or should not be operated:
  - 1.5.1. The driver will contact the Shop Foreman/Transportation Secretary and provide the reasons for the non-operation.
  - 1.5.2. Where the reason is for mechanical problems or safety issues, the bus is not to be operated until the issues are corrected.
  - 1.5.3. The Transportation Secretary will ensure that each school affected is notified as soon as possible.
  - 1.5.4. The driver will notify each parent/guardian of the cancellation or delay by phone.
- 1.6. If a bus breaks down enroute or if safe delivery of students is uncertain, the driver must take action to ensure student safety. This may include returning students to school or taking them to a pre-arranged safe location.
- 1.7. When students are travelling 150 kilometres or more (round trip) in a school bus, HPSD will strive to limit passengers to two persons per seat, including supervisors.
- 1.8. On regular morning or afternoon routes, no persons other than the driver, students, spare drivers, approved educational assistants for students, and the Director of Transportation shall ride the bus unless written or verbal approval has been granted by the Director of Transportation.
- 1.9. On educational/athletic trips, only the driver and persons authorized by the principal may ride on the bus.

#### 2. Responsibilities

The responsibility for ensuring the safe, efficient, and effective transportation of students is shared by HPSD, parents/guardians and the students.

- 2.1. Division: The Director of Transportation is responsible for:
  - 2.1.1. establishing and assessing the bus routes including stops, loading, and unloading sites using information acquired including but not limited to reports submitted by drivers, information from parents/guardians and law enforcement officers,
  - 2.1.2. hiring, training and evaluation of drivers,
  - 2.1.3. ensuring the buses meet the current standards established by Alberta Transportation,
  - 2.1.4. maintaining the buses in sound operating condition, and
  - 2.1.5. communication with drivers, schools, parents/guardians, and students.
- 2.2. Principals: The principal is responsible for:
  - 2.2.1. communications with the drivers, students, parents/guardians, and Director of Transportation as soon as possible in the event of school closures or early dismissals,
  - 2.2.2. following up on behavioural situations which occur on the bus that are reported,
  - 2.2.3. informing the bus driver of any student whose parent/guardian has provided a note to get the student dropped off at a different location or to ride a different bus and providing the

- driver with said note for their records (only to be done in rare, extenuating circumstances).
- 2.2.4. informing the Director of Transportation of any student transported by bus, who is suspended or expelled, and
  - 2.2.5. informing the bus driver and Director of Transportation, if it is deemed that the driver needs to know, of a student who has special medical needs or conditions.
- 2.3. Drivers: Bus Drivers are responsible for:
- 2.3.1. maintaining a valid class 2S Alberta Driver's License,
  - 2.3.2. notifying the Director of Transportation of any changes to the status of their driver's license and all traffic violations, including those incurred with a personal vehicle,
  - 2.3.3. Providing HPSPD with a Commercial Drivers' Abstract. Drivers may fulfil this through one of two options:
    - 2.3.3.1. Providing a Driver's Abstract to the Transportation Department annually (this is a condition of employment); or
    - 2.3.3.2. Providing a signed Driver's Abstract consent form to the Transportation Department every three years (the Transportation Department will obtain updated abstracts on behalf of the driver at HPSPD's expense)
  - 2.3.4. providing an acceptable Criminal Record Check (including vulnerable sector check) prior to employment and once employed, must advise the Director of Transportation immediately upon being charged with or convicted of an offense under the *Criminal Code of Canada* and/or the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*,
  - 2.3.5. operating the bus in a proper and safe manner complying with all *Alberta Traffic Laws*, *HPSPD Administrative Procedures*, practices as outlined in the *School Bus Drivers Improvement Program* and the *Transportation Handbook*,
  - 2.3.6. loading, unloading, and transporting students who reside on their bus route to school in the morning and returning the students to their bus stop in the afternoon,
  - 2.3.7. ensuring the bus is clean and the driver shall ensure that any HPSPD vehicle used for a field trip is cleaned and refueled when returned,
  - 2.3.8. reporting of hazards, safety issues and student incidents to the Director of Transportation,
  - 2.3.9. reporting of traffic violations observed, or any other incident, through a report filed with the Director of Transportation,
  - 2.3.10. completing route assessments on the required forms and submitting them to the Director of Transportation by October 15th of each school year, and
  - 2.3.11. immediately disclosing any health issues (physical or mental health conditions including use of medication) or any conditions which might affect the driver's ability to safely operate the bus or carry out their duties and responsibilities as a HPSPD bus driver,
  - 2.3.12. Parent Communications
    - 2.3.12.1. Prior to the new school year, making verbal contact with all the students' parents/guardians notifying them of:
      - 2.3.12.1.1. who you are,
      - 2.3.12.1.2. pick up and drop off times,
      - 2.3.12.1.3. bus number, and
      - 2.3.12.1.4. driver's contact information.
    - 2.3.12.2. At the time of initial contact, asking the parents/guardians if there is any information that needs to be known about the child such as allergies or medical issues/medications etc.
    - 2.3.12.3. During the school year, making verbal contact as required with the students' parents/guardians on:
      - 2.3.12.3.1. route changes affecting them,
      - 2.3.12.3.2. change in driver,
      - 2.3.12.3.3. change in pick up or drop times,
      - 2.3.12.3.4. bus delays and or cancellations, and
      - 2.3.12.3.5. student discipline and accolades.
    - 2.3.12.4. In case of illness where the driver is unable to drive the route:

- 2.3.12.4.1. the driver will make verbal contact with Transportation Department staff who will arrange coverage for the route.
- 2.3.12.4.2. If no spare driver is available, the route will be cancelled by the Director of Transportation for the day.
- 2.3.12.4.3. the Transportation Department staff shall notify principals of the schools affected.
- 2.3.12.5. When a driver requests a personal leave day(s):
  - 2.3.12.5.1. a "Request for Unpaid Personal Leave" form must be submitted to the Director of Transportation and the leave must be approved prior to the leave occurring, and
  - 2.3.12.5.2. the bus driver requesting the personal leave is responsible for acquiring a substitute driver for the route and getting their bus to the substitute driver.
- 2.3.12.6. Each bus driver shall establish a phone contact list of parents/guardians along their route to inform them of bus cancellations or delays resulting from illness/leaves of absence.
  - 2.3.12.6.1. It is the responsibility of each bus driver to check for cancellation notices on extremely cold or inclement days.
- 2.3.13. maintaining daily attendance records, seating plans, and misconduct reports of all students on their bus, inclusive of visiting students. Short Term Rider forms are to be submitted to the driver prior to visiting students riding the bus. (drivers will include the visiting child's name and parent's/guardian's contact information with their attendance record).
- 2.3.14. ensuring all applicable Occupational Health and Safety Courses assigned as completed by September 30 of the school year.

#### 2.4. Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians share responsibility for the safe, efficient, and effective transportation of their children and have the responsibility for:

- 2.4.1. teaching their children safe traffic rules for crossing the road and waiting for the bus,
- 2.4.2. their children's safe travel from home until they board the bus,
- 2.4.3. their children's safety after leaving the bus until they arrive at home,
- 2.4.4. their children's conduct and behaviour while waiting for the bus, while on the bus and after leaving the bus,
- 2.4.5. any damage that may have been caused by their children to HPSPD property,
- 2.4.6. communicating with the bus driver as follows:
  - 2.4.6.1. informing the driver, by phone, if possible, when their children are to be absent from riding school bus,
  - 2.4.6.2. Informing the bus driver when their children are not available to be picked up.
- 2.4.7. assuring that students are dressed appropriately, in accordance with the weather. If, in the opinion of the bus driver, a student is not dressed appropriately for the weather conditions, the student will be picked up and the matter reported to the principal for appropriate action,
- 2.4.8. making arrangements for their children's early arrival from school, when students are sent home early,
- 2.4.9. looking for HPSPD bus cancellations by visiting HPSPD's website for bus status reports. (All parents/guardians should receive a message from a driver if the route is being cancelled),
- 2.4.10. ensuring that their student(s) is at the bus stop 5 minutes ahead of the pick-up time stated by the bus driver, and
- 2.4.11. ensuring their children obey all traffic rules and regulations.

#### 2.5. Students

HPSPD expects students riding on school buses to behave appropriately ensuring the safety of all passengers. Students are responsible for:

- 2.5.1. giving the bus driver the same due respect, consideration, and cooperation that is expected within the classroom and they give to school staff,

- 2.5.2. always obeying the bus driver before and after boarding the bus, and immediately carrying out all reasonable demands and instructions,
- 2.5.3. following traffic laws and safe crossing of traffic lanes, and
- 2.5.4. following the proper rules for riding the bus. (For specific rule details see Section 10.4)

### **3. School Bus Scheduling and Routing:**

HPSD believes that bus routes, schedules and stops are to be established to achieve maximum service with a minimum fleet of buses consistent with rendering reasonable service to all students.

#### **3.1. Route Design and Driver Assignments**

- 3.1.1. Route and driver assignments shall be completed and approved by the Director of Transportation.
- 3.1.2. Bus routes will follow the most direct roads practical for bus travel to serve those students entitled to transportation service, while minimizing left hand turns, as well as highway and railroad crossings.
- 3.1.3. Bus routes will be established to employ as nearly as practical the full carrying capacity for each bus trip.
- 3.1.4. Route design will include bus stops that will be, as much as is practical, placed at convenient intervals in places where students may get on/off, cross highways, and await the arrival of buses with utmost safety permitted by highway conditions.
- 3.1.5. Bus route design shall ensure that student travel time under normal weather conditions, where possible, does not exceed 90 minutes for one-way travel.

#### **3.2. Bus Stops and Load/Unloading Zones**

Drivers will not transport individuals who are not registered and are not to add stops to the route to accommodate the student's personal activities (piano lessons, sports activities, sleepovers). Bus routes will be established to pick up and deliver students at the residence gate immediately adjacent to the municipal road allowance or the highway on which the school bus is directed to travel. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the following exceptions shall apply when necessary:

- 3.2.1. In rural areas where residences are in close proximity, or back tracking and turnarounds are required, where common pick-up and delivery points are established, they will be within reasonable proximity of the students' approach. Students will be required to get on/off the bus at these points. In urban areas, common pick-up points will be established.
- 3.2.2. School bus routes shall be established to provide door service, where it is safe to do so, in situations where a student's disability prevents them from meeting the bus at the location of the usual gate pick-up.
- 3.2.3. The Director of Transportation may make appropriate arrangements to permit the bus to enter on private property to pick up the student(s) at a point closer to the student's residence, in situations where it is safer to provide this bus service rather than "gate service".
- 3.2.4. Other extenuating circumstances the Director of Transportation believes appropriate to authorize temporary route changes which would not place other students at risk.
- 3.2.5. For every in-yard pick-up that is being considered, a full risk assessment will be conducted. The assessment will evaluate, but is not limited to, the following items:
  - 3.2.5.1. length of driveway
  - 3.2.5.2. special needs of student
  - 3.2.5.3. age of student
  - 3.2.5.4. wildlife threat
  - 3.2.5.5. visibility and line of sight
  - 3.2.5.6. route turn-around point
  - 3.2.5.7. width, grade, and condition of driveway
  - 3.2.5.8. temporary or long-term
  - 3.2.5.9. yard obstacles such as layout, slopes, power lines & poles, equipment, buildings, animals, etc.
  - 3.2.5.10. turn-around area in yard
  - 3.2.5.11. railroad crossings

- 3.2.5.12. safety issues
  - 3.2.5.13. effect on balance of route
  - 3.2.6. The Director of Transportation may direct school bus pickup and delivery to occur within the yard of a student's residence in circumstances where the act of a bus traveling and/or turning around at the gate may imperil the safety of the bus and/or the occupants of the bus.
  - 3.2.7. In circumstances where the pick-up and delivery point has been designated to be on private property, the *Driveway Authorization Agreement Form* must be signed by the landowner, and the parents/guardians and retained on file by the Director of Transportation. This form is available at the HPSD Transportation Department Office.
  - 3.2.8. Where yard pick up has been approved, parents/guardians shall be responsible for providing ample turn around area free of all obstacles and for keeping laneways free of snow in the winter months and graded and graveled in the spring and summer months. Where this condition is not met, yard pick-up will be cancelled.
  - 3.2.9. The Director of Transportation will annually review all pickup/drop-offs which are not residence gate locations.
- 3.3. Drop-In Busing Services for Out-of-Catchment and Out-of-Division Students
- 3.3.1. **Purpose:** To establish guidelines for providing drop-in busing services to students who reside outside High Prairie School Division (HPSD) catchment areas and outside the school division boundaries.
  - 3.3.2. **Scope:** This procedure applies to all requests for temporary transportation services for non-resident or non-catchment students being transported to non-HPSD/HPSD schools.
  - 3.3.3. **Definitions:**
    - 3.3.3.1. Drop-In Service: Temporary transportation service provided on a day-by-day basis. This service is for emergent situations only. It does not include birthday parties, sleepovers or transportation for social reasons.
    - 3.3.3.2. Out-of-Catchment Student: A student attending a school outside their designated attendance area.
    - 3.3.3.3. Out-of-Division Student: A student whose primary residence is outside HPSD boundaries.
  - 3.3.4. **Eligibility:**
    - 3.3.4.1. This service is available only to students who are both out-of-catchment and out-of-division, and is for emergent situations only.
    - 3.3.4.2. Service provision is contingent upon:
      - 3.3.4.2.1. Available seating capacity on existing bus routes,
      - 3.3.4.2.2. Driver availability.
      - 3.3.4.2.3. Advance application and approval
  - 3.3.5. **Application Process:**
    - 3.3.5.1. Parents/guardians must submit a Drop-In Transportation Request Form at least 5 business days prior to the requested service date
    - 3.3.5.2. Applications must be submitted to the Transportation Department
    - 3.3.5.3. Contact information for the Transportation Department must be included on all request forms
  - 3.3.6. **Fee Structure:**
    - 3.3.6.1. \$15.00 per student per day.
    - 3.3.6.2. Maximum chargeable days: 15 days per student per school year.
    - 3.3.6.3. Maximum annual fee per student: \$225.00.
  - 3.3.7. **Payment Terms:**
    - 3.3.7.1. Payment must be received within 30 days of service being provided
    - 3.3.7.2. Acceptable payment methods include: credit card, debit card, cash, or EMT payable to High Prairie School Division
    - 3.3.7.3. No refunds will be issued for days when service is not utilized, unless cancellation occurs at least 48 hours in advance
  - 3.3.8. **Capacity Management:**

- 3.3.8.1. The Transportation Secretary will maintain a record of all drop-in transportation requests.
- 3.3.8.2. Priority will be given to regular route students.
- 3.3.8.3. Drop-in service may be denied or discontinued if space becomes limited.
- 3.3.9. **Conduct and Safety:**
  - 3.3.9.1. All students using drop-in services must adhere to HPSP Student Transportation Code of Conduct.
  - 3.3.9.2. Violation of conduct rules may result in suspension or termination of drop-in privileges.
  - 3.3.9.3. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring students are at designated pickup locations on time.
- 3.3.10. **Record Keeping:**
  - 3.3.10.1. The Transportation Department will maintain records of:
    - 3.3.10.1.1. All drop-in service requests and approvals,
    - 3.3.10.1.2. Payment receipts,
    - 3.3.10.1.3. Daily ridership of drop-in students,
    - 3.3.10.1.4. Cumulative usage per student to ensure compliance with the 15-day maximum.
- 3.3.11. **Annual Review:**
  - 3.3.11.1. This procedure will be reviewed annually by the Transportation Department and the Superintendent.
  - 3.3.11.2. Fees may be adjusted annually based on operational costs.
- 3.4. **Alternate Drop-Off Address – Fee for Service**
  - 3.4.1. **Alternate Drop-Off Address – No Cost:** Eligible HPSP students who are funded for transportation may request one (1) alternate drop-off address.
    - 3.4.1.1. **Eligibility and Conditions:** To qualify for an alternate drop-off address with no fee, the following conditions must be met:
      - 3.4.1.1.1. Your child must be an eligible, funded HPSP transportation student.
      - 3.4.1.1.2. The alternate address must be located on an existing bus route at an existing route stop.
      - 3.4.1.1.3. Approval is subject to available space on the bus. We cannot guarantee this service if the route is at capacity.
      - 3.4.1.1.4. The alternate drop-off address must be consistent. This option is not intended to accommodate day-to-day or week-to-week changes in drop-off location. Families requiring variable arrangements are encouraged to make independent transportation plans on those days.
  - 3.4.2. **Alternate Drop-Off Address – Fee-for-Service:** Eligible students who are funded for transportation may request one (1) alternate drop-off address for a fee of \$350.00 for the full school year or \$175.00 for a half school year. Fees collected from this fee-for-service may be split into two payments. Family rates may be considered. The fee is due prior to the commencement of services.
    - 3.4.2.1. **Eligibility and Conditions:** To qualify for an alternate drop-off address, the following conditions must be met:
      - 3.4.2.1.1. Your child must be an eligible, funded transportation student.
      - 3.4.2.1.2. The alternate address must be located on an existing bus route, as a new stop on that route.
      - 3.4.2.1.3. The alternate address must not exceed the funded transportation distance applicable to your child's home address.
      - 3.4.2.1.4. Approval is subject to available space on the bus. This service cannot be guaranteed if the route is at capacity.
      - 3.4.2.1.5. The alternate drop-off address must be consistent. This option is not intended to accommodate day-to-day or week-to-week changes in drop-off location. Families requiring variable arrangements are encouraged to make independent transportation plans on those days.
- 3.4.3. **How to Apply**

- 3.4.3.1. Families wishing to request an alternate drop-off address for the 2026-27 school year should contact their child's school or the HPSD Transportation Department.
- 3.4.3.2. We will review requests to confirm eligibility and route availability. Please submit your request as early as possible, as approvals are granted on a first-come, first-served basis depending on route capacity.

#### **3.4.4. Important Reminders**

- 3.4.4.1. Only one (1) alternate drop-off address may be registered per eligible student.
- 3.4.4.2. The alternate address applies to drop-off only and must comply with all standard HPSD transportation policies.
- 3.4.4.3. HPSD reserves the right to withdraw approval if the alternate address creates operational challenges or if route capacity changes.
- 3.4.4.4. The fee is non-refundable once service has commenced.

#### **3.5. Urban (In-Town) Pick-ups**

- 3.5.1. HPSD may provide urban or in-town pick-ups for students who are less than 1.6 kilometers (Grade K-6) or less than 2.0 kilometers (Grades 7-12) from their designated school (as calculated by government approved software) for a bus-fee as established by the Board of Trustees, providing sufficient space is available on the buses.
- 3.5.2. In-town service must be paid in advance for the school year and can be paid in two installments (September and January).
- 3.5.3. Space on town buses is very limited, and paid service will not be sold if the buses are full.
- 3.5.4. Students may only ride In-town buses if they are eligible or have paid for service.
- 3.5.5. Bus rates are not prorated if purchased after September. Exceptions will only be considered for extenuating circumstances such as:
  - 3.5.5.1. change of address
  - 3.5.5.2. new residents to the community
- 3.5.6. Further information can be obtained by contacting the Director of Transportation.

#### **3.6. Transportation of Students with Special Needs and Disabilities**

- 3.6.1. The Director of Transportation, when informed of students with special transportation needs, will complete an analysis of what will be required to meet the challenges of transporting the student in an appropriate and safe manner.
- 3.6.2. The Director of Transportation will utilize appropriate resources to complete the analysis including identifying the equipment, processes and training which will be required to transport the student safely.
- 3.6.3. The Director of Transportation will ensure appropriate training is provided to the bus driver and other persons involved with the transportation of the student.
- 3.6.4. Where equipment supplied by the student's parents/guardians do not meet regulations, or CSA standards for safe transportation, the Director of Transportation will communicate with the parents/guardians for the need for providing equipment that meets the transportation requirements.
- 3.6.5. Parents/guardians are required to inform the bus driver and the Director of Transportation of any changes relating to the student that may affect the safe transportation of the student.

#### **4. Route / Driver Evaluation**

The Director of Transportation or assigned designate may accompany a bus driver over his/her entire route for any reason or purpose. In addition, on a periodic basis, the Director or assigned designate may ride the bus in accordance with the following procedures:

- 4.1. When regular evacuations are conducted,
- 4.2. When there is a need to assess the hazards associated with the route, and/or
- 4.3. When there are questions related to driver performance.
- 4.4. The Director of Transportation or assigned designate shall keep a written log of each occasion when he/she accompanied a driver and shall, relative to each driver/trip, make written comments with respect to the driver's performance/management of passengers/ route conditions/etc. and review them with the driver.

- 4.5. The Transportation Department will regularly review the training records to assess any training or documentation needs of drivers. Furthermore, Bus Drivers will be monitored and evaluated by the Director of Transportation or designate as required to ensure competent driving skills. An anecdotal record of any driving review or evaluation shall be maintained in the driver file. The purpose of the driver evaluation is to provide an opportunity to look specifically at the driver's performance with the objective of continual professional improvement while working for the school division. The Division will perform written driver evaluations according to the following intervals:

- 4.5.1. New Hire - Evaluation on hire, and again within the first 3 months of hire.
- 4.5.2. Non-Compliant Driver - As circumstances arise that cause questions of the driver's performance.
- 4.5.3. Continuous and Spare Drivers - Every 3 years or as requested by the Director of Transportation

## **5. Transportation of Goods on School Buses**

In accordance with the *Traffic Safety Act, Alberta Regulation 437/86* Article 16.1 & 16.2, the bus driver shall ensure any luggage, equipment, or tools carried on the school bus are transported in accordance with this procedure.

- 5.1. The bus driver shall be responsible for administering these procedures.
- 5.2. The Director of Transportation shall deal with appeals regarding these procedures.
- 5.3. Personal effects and equipment may be carried in the interior of the school bus if they:
  - 5.3.1. are stored under the seats where possible,
  - 5.3.2. do not block the aisles or emergency exits, and/or
  - 5.3.3. are stored, lodged, or secured in such a manner so that they cannot be dislodged or move about when the brakes of the school bus are applied, during acceleration of the school bus or in the event of an accident involving the school bus.
- 5.4. Skates are permitted on school buses providing that blade guards protect the blades, or they are carried in a tote bag and placed under the student's seat.
- 5.5. Equipment such as skis, snowboards, skateboards, or any item that cannot fit under the seats are not allowed on buses. When schools are planning field trips requiring the transport of this type of equipment, arrangements are to be made to have a van or truck haul the equipment separately.
- 5.6. Curling brooms and hockey sticks are permitted on school buses provided they can be secured in such a fashion that they cannot be dislodged when the brakes of the bus are applied.
- 5.7. Band instruments and similar items may be carried on the bus provided they will fit under the bus seats.
- 5.8. No person shall, while transporting students on a school bus, convey in or on the school bus:
  - 5.8.1. animals
  - 5.8.2. firearms
  - 5.8.3. explosives
  - 5.8.4. flammable materials
  - 5.8.5. fuel, other than in the fuel system and fuel tank of the bus
  - 5.8.6. anything of a dangerous or objectionable nature or might endanger the lives or safety of persons in the bus.

## **6. Winter Apparel Requirement for Riding School Buses**

HPSD believes that the safety of students transported on school buses will be enhanced if students are required to wear proper apparel.

- 6.1. Parents/guardians are responsible to ensure that students are dressed appropriately for the weather conditions.
- 6.2. All students riding on school buses or other Board-approved vehicles during winter months shall be required to wear appropriate winter foot and outerwear and carry with them suitable winter headwear and gloves/mitts.
- 6.3. Bus drivers are to use their discretion in determining the suitability of the student's clothing for the weather conditions.

- 6.4. If a student presents him/herself at a morning pick-up and is not properly dressed, the bus driver shall pick up the student and, upon arrival at the school, the driver will inform the principal.
- 6.5. The principal shall contact the parents/guardians of the student immediately to request that the student be properly dressed in future and to advise that, if the cooperation of the parents/guardians and student is not received, school bus transportation may be suspended. Once suspended, bus riding privileges shall only be reinstated if the student adheres to the winter dress procedure.
- 6.6. If, after the action noted in 6.5 has taken place, a student presents him/herself at a morning pick-up inadequately dressed, the driver is to take the student to school and inform the principal, who may further suspend the student from riding the bus and possibly recommend the student be expelled from riding the bus for an appropriate period of time.
- 6.7. Depending on the age of the child, the principal will determine if Child and Family Services should be contacted if a student is not wearing proper apparel.

## **7. Cancellation of School Bus Route(s) Due to Weather/Road Conditions**

**Blizzards and drifted or icy roads are often the most difficult situations to assess. These conditions can vary greatly throughout the Division and can appear and disappear over short time spans.** It is recognized that parents/guardians have the right to decide whether or not to send their child to school on days when weather conditions are a factor. Parents/guardians are requested to notify the bus driver in advance when their children will not be taking the bus.

On occasion, it may be unwise to operate school bus routes due to the risks involved in transporting students as a result of weather and/or road conditions.

### 7.1. The Process for HPSD Route Cancellations

- 7.1.1. Only in instances of unusually extreme conditions or in a general system wide emergency will the Director of Transportation make an announcement covering the cancellation of bus routes affecting a school, some schools, or all schools in the system.
- 7.1.2. The bus drivers are to contact the Director of Transportation when they identify extreme road conditions which would make it impassable for their bus or endanger the safety of the students.
- 7.1.3. The Director of Transportation will make the decision on bus operations after considering the current road conditions, weather forecasts for the area or the identified safety issue. The Director of Transportation may consult with the County, RCMP, Municipal District Emergency Services representatives, a sampling of experienced bus drivers, from similarly affected neighbouring school divisions and a variety of online apps and websites dealing with weather and road conditions.
- 7.1.4. When the decision is made to cancel buses on a particular day, the buses shall be cancelled for both the morning and afternoon runs. This does not preclude an early afternoon run authorized under section 7.1.5.
- 7.1.5. Deteriorating Weather Conditions during the school day
  - 7.1.5.1. When severe weather conditions arise during the school day, the decision to dismiss students early will be made in accordance with *Administrative Procedure 130 – Early Dismissal and Closure*.
  - 7.1.5.2. The major determining factor in this instance will be the projected road conditions at the end of the school day.
  - 7.1.5.3. Buses will run early only if the safety of students is significantly jeopardized by waiting until the regular end of the school day.

### 7.2. Making the Decision and the Communication Process

The Director of Transportation after considering current road conditions and weather forecasts for the area will:

- 7.2.1. strive to make the cancellation decision and commence the communication process by 6:15 a.m.,
- 7.2.2. notify the Superintendent and Communications Department,

- 7.2.3. notify all affected schools of the decision not to operate the buses in a timely fashion, using email, text messaging, phone, or other appropriate methods,
- 7.2.4. notify the drivers of the decision to cancel bus routes,
- 7.2.5. ensure that the "Bus Status" on HPSPD's website is updated,
- 7.2.6. during the year, will inform and urge parents/guardians and students to check the website for HPSPD bus cancellations or delays. Drivers must contact each parent/guardian to inform them of their bus cancellation.
  - 7.2.6.1. The principals shall inform parents/guardians of this procedure at the beginning of each school year and shall include such procedures in the school handbook.

### 7.3. Weather and Road Conditions for Individual Routes

The following weather conditions will invoke non-operation of school buses in individual areas of HPSPD for regular routes or field trips and the decision not to operate will be made by the driver in consultation with the Director of Transportation.

- 7.3.1. To determine the appropriate course of action, the decision will be based on:
  - 7.3.1.1. key weather stations
  - 7.3.1.2. Alberta highway cameras
  - 7.3.1.3. school temperature sensors
  - 7.3.1.4. air temperature is below -35C regardless of wind conditions
  - 7.3.1.5. impassable road conditions due to extreme snowfall or blowing snow conditions creating poor visibility
  - 7.3.1.6. where heavy fog creates reduced visibility situations, the running of buses will only be delayed until fog conditions improve at which point buses will be sent out on their regular routes. After a delay of two-hours, the bus run will be cancelled.
  - 7.3.1.7. where the bus driver encounters heavy fog or other conditions which reduce visibility and the bus driver believes it is unsafe to stop, the driver will not stop. The driver will notify the parents/guardians that their child(ren) will not be picked up.
  - 7.3.1.8. other weather conditions that render roads unsafe or impassable.

### 7.4. Early Student Drop-offs

- 7.4.1. The principal is responsible to set up a phone notification system to be implemented during emergencies or early dismissals as per *Administrative Procedure 130 - Early Dismissal and Closure*.
- 7.4.2. Before students are dropped off earlier than their regular scheduled time, the bus driver must ensure that the student(s) can gain entry to their home and, in the case of elementary students, that they are under the care of a responsible person.
- 7.4.3. The driver must maintain custody of all students that cannot be dropped off safely.
  - 7.4.3.1. The driver will notify the Transportation Department which will try to contact the parents/guardians to make appropriate arrangements.
  - 7.4.3.2. The driver will maintain custody and care of the student(s) until appropriate arrangements are made.
  - 7.4.3.3. If parents/guardians cannot be contacted the driver may, in consultation with the principal, arrange for the student(s) to remain at the school until the parents/guardians can arrange for the student's pick up.
- 7.4.4. In cases of non-scheduled early dismissal, regardless of the reason, these procedures shall be followed.

### 7.5. Notification – Cancelling All Routes

When a decision has been made by the Director of Transportation to cancel all routes serving a particular school:

- 7.5.1. the Director of Transportation will notify the:
  - 7.5.1.1. Superintendent
  - 7.5.1.2. Communications Department
  - 7.5.1.3. Principals
  - 7.5.1.4. Drivers, who will notify parents/guardians

7.5.2. The Director of Transportation will ensure the “Bus Status” on the HPSPD website has been updated.

7.6. Notification – Cancelling an Individual Route

7.6.1. When a driver determines that it is necessary to cancel all or a portion of their individual route, once safe to do so, the driver will:

7.6.1.1. ensure the parents/guardians know of the cancellation, and

7.6.1.2. inform the Director of Transportation.

7.6.2. The Director of Transportation will notify the schools that are affected and the Superintendent.

7.6.3. The Director of Transportation will ensure the “Bus Status” on the HPSPD website has been updated.

## 8. School Bus Evacuation

The need to conduct school bus evacuation drills is just as important as conducting fire drills at school, as it is impossible to predict when an emergency might occur involving a school bus. School bus evacuation drills are critical so that students are familiar with how to exit the bus quickly and safely in an emergency.

8.1. Decision to Evacuate Bus

8.1.1. In extreme situations it may be necessary to evacuate a school bus. The HPSPD driver is responsible to determine when a situation warrants an evacuation of the students.

8.2. Evacuation Drills

8.2.1. All evacuation drills shall be supervised or conducted by an HPSPD bus driver.

8.2.2. Drivers are required to hold practice drills and will decide when the best time is to hold the drills.

8.2.3. Drills shall occur once in the fall of each school year for regular bus routes and will be done in a safe traffic free area on HPSPD property or sites approved by the Director of Transportation. These are to be completed by October 31.

8.2.4. Evacuation drill procedures shall be reviewed verbally prior to each field trip, and once per season for any sports team prior to their first trip.

8.2.5. Prior to conducting a drill, refer to procedures in the *Transportation Handbook*.

## 9. Application for Use of HPSPD Buses for Field Excursions

9.1. Applications

The applications for booking a school bus for field excursions must be submitted in advance and approved by the Transportation Department.

9.1.1. Refer to the *Transportation Handbook* (Field Trips) and the *Off-site Activity Handbook* on the HPSPD website for more information.

9.1.2. HPSPD staff will make application through Trips (automated field trip scheduling software) on the HPSPD website.

9.1.3. Outside agencies may make applications for vehicles and drivers through the HPSPD Transportation Department.

9.1.4. A completed itinerary of the trip must be submitted at the time of booking. Refer to 9.2.3.

9.2. Field Trip Transport

9.2.1. The Transportation Department office staff will be responsible for authorizing the use of HPSPD buses for field excursions.

9.2.2. Arrangements to secure drivers for field trips will be made by the Transportation Department office staff.

9.2.3. The school principal/agency is expected to provide an itinerary for the driver in advance of the trip indicating departure times, drive times, mealtimes, down-time, and approximate return time. The *Field Trip Itinerary Form* will be provided to the renter by the Transportation Department.

- 9.2.4. The costs of vehicle rental and driver expenses are set by the HPSD Board of Trustees and indicated in the Trips program.
- 9.2.5. Schools that do not wish to use bus transportation should refer to the *Off-Site Handbook* for procedures on the use of privately owned vehicles.

## **10. Conduct on Buses**

### **10.1. The Bus Driver:**

- 10.1.1. shall be courteous to the passengers on his/her bus and shall not use abusive language.
- 10.1.2. is in charge of the students on his/her bus.
- 10.1.3. may, if he/she wishes, appoint a responsible student as a monitor to assist the driver.
- 10.1.4. shall assign a seat for which the student shall be held responsible.
- 10.1.5. may separate students or groups of students.
- 10.1.6. will submit to the department of transportation at times set by the Director of Transportation, daily attendance records, seating plans, and misconduct reports of all students on their bus, inclusive of visiting students.
- 10.1.7. will stop to pick up students but will not wait if students are not at the bus stop at the appointed departure time. Students need to arrive at the pick-up location 5 minutes prior to the bus arrival time which is set by the bus driver.
- 10.1.8. shall not ask a student to leave the bus before his/her bus stop or refuse to pick up a student unless the principal has suspended, or the Board has expelled the student.
- 10.1.9. in the interests of safety where a pickup is on a primary or secondary highway, will use discretion as to whether or not to come to a complete stop if they do not see students waiting at the pickup point. (Repeated tardiness will be recorded on a misconduct form and handled in the usual manner.)
- 10.1.10. shall follow the rotation of buses leaving the school bus loading zone and shall not leave the school until eight (8) minutes after the last school bell, unless the load is complete or personnel from the school have indicated that the school is clear of students to be bused. This shall be subject to periodic review/adjustment as needed.
- 10.1.11. shall be governed at all times by the *Traffic Safety Act* and its associated Regulations pertaining to the operation of school buses. The driver shall operate the bus in accordance with all Federal, Provincial and Municipal laws as well as the policies and administrative procedures established by the Board of Trustees.
- 10.1.12. shall be in the bus at all times during loading and unloading of passengers.
- 10.1.13. shall operate the bus with headlights illuminated.
- 10.1.14. shall always wear a seat belt while operating the bus.
- 10.1.15. shall comply with the Alberta distracted driver legislation.
- 10.1.16. shall not use or possess intoxicants/other controlled substances or use any medication which may affect his/her ability to operate the bus.
- 10.1.17. shall not smoke, use tobacco products, or vaping devices on/or near the bus.
- 10.1.18. shall never leave an unattended bus running or with keys in the ignition.

### **10.2. Misconduct of Students**

- 10.2.1. School bus drivers are responsible for the conduct of students while they are being transported on their bus.
- 10.2.2. Drivers should first address behavioural problems through quiet conversation with the student and positive reinforcement of good behaviour.
- 10.2.3. Students are expected to follow the rules stated in Section 10.4.

### **10.3. The Handling of Student Behavioural Problems**

- 10.3.1. Drivers should use the following processes:
  - 10.3.1.1. Drivers should attempt to solve the problem by dealing directly with the student(s) involved in the incident. Dealings should be strictly verbal, as physical discipline by bus drivers is prohibited.
  - 10.3.1.2. Should verbal warnings fail, the driver may wish to try an alternate mode of discipline such as moving the student(s) to the front seat of the bus for a specific period of time.

- 10.3.1.3. The driver must document all actions that have been taken beyond that of informal discussions.
- 10.3.1.4. Should the problem(s) persist the driver may choose to contact the parents/guardians and/or school to discuss possible further disciplinary action.
- 10.3.1.5. If problems persist, the driver must complete a Misconduct Report.
- 10.3.1.6. All misconduct reports must be accompanied by a detailed explanation of the events that have transpired and disciplinary actions that have been tried to date of the misconduct report.
- 10.3.1.7. The misconduct report must be forwarded to the school administrator for further action and a copy forwarded to the Director of Transportation in a timely manner.
- 10.3.1.8. The principal will utilize the *HPSD Administration Procedures* relating to misconduct and utilize discipline techniques he/she feels are necessary to deal with the student misconduct.
- 10.3.1.9. The principal shall notify the Director of Transportation by email, that the situation has been addressed, including need to know information such as suspension or expulsions.
- 10.3.1.10. If suspension from riding the bus is being considered, the principal must ensure that the parents/guardians of the student are informed of the situation before the suspension is carried out.
- 10.3.1.11. Principals will notify the Director of Transportation of the suspension of any student riding the buses. The Director of Transportation will inform the appropriate driver of the suspension.
- 10.3.1.12. If the above attempts do not resolve the problem, or if the problem is extremely serious, the principal may recommend the student for expulsion.
- 10.3.1.13. Parents/guardians shall be informed of their children's misconduct on school buses.

#### 10.4. Students and Passengers Rules

- 10.4.1. Will only be picked up or dropped off at a prearranged and approved pick-up or drop-off location.
- 10.4.2. Shall obey the bus driver in a prompt and courteous manner.
- 10.4.3. Shall be on time. (students shall arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes ahead of the bus pickup time indicated by the bus driver. Buses will not wait if students are not at the bus stop at the designated departure time.)
- 10.4.4. Shall not engage in distracting conversation with the driver.
- 10.4.5. Shall, outside of ordinary conversation, observe classroom conduct while riding the school bus and shall not use obscene or profane language.
- 10.4.6. Shall remain absolutely quiet while the bus is stopped at railway crossings and shall remain quiet while the bus is crossing.
- 10.4.7. Shall observe the directions of the bus driver while getting on/off the bus.
- 10.4.8. Shall sit properly with feet not blocking the aisle.
- 10.4.9. When it is necessary for a student to cross a road to get on or off the bus, students shall always cross in front of the bus and will not proceed until all traffic has stopped and the driver signals the student to proceed.
- 10.4.10. Shall go directly to their designated bus at the transfer or regular loading points.
- 10.4.11. Shall remain seated in their seats while the bus is in motion.
- 10.4.12. Shall not extend any object, arms, head, or other body parts out of the bus windows.
- 10.4.13. Shall not throw anything on the floor of the bus or out of the bus windows.
- 10.4.14. Shall not use or possess intoxicants or other controlled substances.
- 10.4.15. Shall not smoke or use tobacco products on or near the bus including vaping devices.
- 10.4.16. For safety reasons, shall not bring equipment on the bus unless it can be properly secured.
- 10.4.17. Shall not be in possession of any type of weapon or flammables while on a school bus (i.e., knives, firearms, etc).

- 10.4.18. Students causing willful damage to school buses shall pay for repairs.
- 10.4.19. Shall not engage in bullying, harassment, violence, or discriminatory behaviours.
- 10.4.20. Shall use earphones when using any radio, personal device or similar apparatus capable of producing sound.
- 10.4.21. Violation of any of these rules may be reported to the principal of the school, who can suspend the student from riding the bus, in accordance with the *Education Act*, Board Policy, and HPSP Administrative Procedures.

## **11. Transportation Handbook**

- 11.1. The Director of Transportation will keep this Handbook current and familiarize all bus drivers with its content. All major changes must be presented to the Superintendent for approval.

## **12. Video Cameras on School Buses**

- 12.1. The use of video systems on school buses may help protect the safety of passengers, prevent vandalism, and be a useful resource for school administrators when dealing with student discipline matters.
- 12.2. Video cameras used in HPSP shall comply with HPSP *Administration Procedure 312 – Video Surveillance of Facilities, Property and School Buses*.

## **Forms - Available upon request at the HPSP Transportation Department**

*Driveway Authorization Agreement Form*

## **References**

*Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

*School Transportation Regulation*

*Traffic Safety Act*

*Education Act, Sections 31, 52, 53, 59, 222, 225*

## **Cross References**

*Administrative Procedure 130 - Early Dismissal and Closing*

*Administrative Procedure 310 - Student Safety*

*Administrative Procedure 312 - Video Surveillance of Facilities, Property and School Buses*

*Administrative Procedure 340 - Student Code of Conduct*

*Administrative Procedure 343 - Responding to Student Threats of Violence*

*Administrative Procedure 347 - Suspension and/or Expulsion of a Student*

*Administrative Procedure 348 - Student Substance Abuse*

*HPSP Off-Site Activity Handbook*

*HPSP Student Transportation Handbook*

*HPSP Transportation Fee Schedule*