

Transportation Services Frequently Asked Questions

Who is eligible to ride a bus?

As per Bill 1, Alberta Education states that transportation is free for those students residing greater than 2.4km from their designated neighbourhood school. Students with severe disabilities do not have a walk limit and are considered eligible.

What does “designated school” mean?

A designated school is one which the school district has directed the student to attend. This is based on attendance boundaries set by the school district. The home address of the student determines their designated school in relation to the attendance boundary.

To determine your designated neighbourhood school, please refer to the district website: www.spschools.org

How is walk distance calculated?

Distances are measured using the most direct route on a street and/or walkway. This distance is calculated using a map within our transportation software that utilizes GIS (Geographic Information System) coordinates provided by the City of St. Albert.

How are bus stops determined?

Transportation service is not door to door. Instead, eligible students must access established bus stops and can be expected to walk up to the following distance to bus stops:

- Elementary (Kindergarten – grade 6) – 400 metres or 0.40 km
- Junior High (grades 7 – 9) – 600 metres or 0.6 km
- Senior High (grades 10 – 12) – 800 metres or 0.8 km

Stop locations are based on applications received by the district prior to the June 1st deadline. Stops are designed to be equitable while accommodating students in the same geographic area. City transit stops are the preferred stop locations as they are visible and are cleared in the winter, which increases student safety. Stops will not be changed once the school year has commenced.

Ineligible students can be expected to walk further than the above guidelines. Students are expected to be at the bus stop 5 minutes before the listed depart time on the bus schedule.

Why can't you come further into my sub-division?

All school boards in St. Albert are required to adhere to the City of St. Albert's road access agreement. This agreement states that all buses must remain on arterial and collector roads only, we are not permitted to access residential roads.

Who is responsible for my child before and after riding the bus?

Parents are responsible for students getting to and from the bus stop; this also includes the necessary supervision while waiting for the bus. Parents must ensure students are at the bus stop on time (5 minutes before designated time). Provide the necessary supervision for students while going to and from the bus stop, meeting kindergarten and severe special needs students at the bus stop.

Will my child be released from the bus if I am not there?

Kindergarten students must be met at the bus stop by an adult or older designated sibling. Kindergarten students who are not met at the bus stop will be returned to the school.

Students in grades 1-12 do not require an adult present to be released from the bus. Students in grades 1-12 will be released regardless of cold weather conditions, so please ensure the child is dressed for the conditions.

Can my child bring a friend home after school with them on the bus?

Elementary students wishing to bring a friend home on the school bus will be required to contact Transportation Services at least 3 business days from the date transportation is required. This is subject to space availability and pertains to only those buses contracted by St. Albert Public Schools. Students that wish to ride home with another student on a regular basis will be required to purchase a bus pass. Because of limited space available, junior & senior high school students must have a bus pass issued in their name in order to board a school bus.

How does my child use the bus pass?

All students are issued an RFID bus pass, which students use to scan when entering and exiting the school bus. There is no personal information stored on the card itself as the card cannot hold any information. Each card has a unique ID number which is located on the back of the card. This ID number is transmitted to a secure database when the student scans their bus pass in front of the scanner located near the entrance of the bus.

What if my child needs a replacement bus pass?

If your child breaks his or her bus pass and it no longer scans, there is a replacement cost of \$15. Your child has 3 business days to replace his or her pass. Failure to produce a pass will result in the child being denied transportation at school. Please contact Transportation Services to obtain a new bus pass.

We are moving, how do we get a new bus pass?

If your family is moving and requires new bus passes, please contact Transportation Services to inquire if there is space and/or availability from your future home location.

We no longer require a bus pass, how do we cancel?

Please contact Transportation Services to cancel busing. The pass must be returned to Transportation Services before a prorated refund is issued. Refunds will not be issued after February 1st.

When should I apply for busing?

Transportation Services will establish routes and schedules based on bus pass applications received on or before June 1st for the upcoming school year. Those applications received after June 1st will result in students having to access a stop already established on the bus route.

Where do I find my child's bus information?

Transportation Services uses a suite of transportation products called BusPlanner. Your child's schedule is located on the transportation portal. You must log into the BusPlanner portal in order to access your child's bus schedule. The transportation parent portal is located here: <https://transportation.spschools.org/>

What happens during cold weather conditions?

Should we experience extreme winter temperatures or road conditions, school buses may be delayed or cancelled. Please have a back-up plan in place for getting your children to and from school. If the temperature reaches -40C with the wind chill, buses will not be operating and notifications will be sent out.

How will I be notified of a delayed bus?

We will notify parents via our transportation portal as soon as we become aware of any delays or cancellations.

- Track your child's bus through the transportation portal using "Where's My Bus?"
- Subscribe to text message notifications through the transportation portal.
- Download the BusPlanner Delays App for iPhone and Android.
- Follow St. Albert Public Schools on Twitter and Facebook.
- District-wide cancellations will be shared through local media.

**Note: All notifications are manually updated from District Office.*

How will I be notified if a collision occurs?

We will notify parents via our transportation portal as soon as we become aware of any collisions. Following the initial notification, we will notify parents via district email with more details regarding the collision itself.

How long should my child wait at the bus stop?

Please ensure that if your children are going to the bus stop, they are dressed appropriately and are aware they should not wait at the stop longer than 10 minutes.

Can I request a closer bus stop?

Stop change requests will not be granted if your child's stop location is within the guidelines listed above or if road structures prohibit a closer stop. We make all efforts to ensure your child has the closest stop possible. If you apply after June 1st, you must access an existing stop, as stops are not added once school has commenced.

Can my child bring their music or sports equipment on the bus?

Parents of students who are enrolled in programs that require special equipment, tools or instruments are responsible for transporting those items to and from school. Students are not permitted to transport oversized items on a school bus. This includes the following but not limited to: skateboards, hockey sticks, hockey equipment, curling brooms, ski equipment, scooters and musical instruments that do not fit within a backpack. This is in accordance with the Alberta Traffic Safety Act and National Safety Code Standards.

What is First Rider's Night?

It is an education and awareness program designed to promote school bus safety to young children and their parents. It familiarizes young children with school buses. It provides information to children and parents on school bus safety procedures, including school bus safety rules and how to get on and off the bus safely.

The program, which includes a ride on a school bus, is planned as a fun learning experience and lasts approximately 45 minutes. It is designed for Kindergarten students and those students up to Grade 2. First Rider's Night is open to all residents of St. Albert, regardless of which school they're enrolled in. Parents must attend along with their children. The event is held at District Office prior to the start of the school year. Admission is free but pre-registration is required through the district website: www.spschools.org.

Where can I find more transportation policies and procedures?

The Transportation Services manual is located on the district website: www.spschools.org