



**St. Albert**  

---

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

# **STUDENT TRANSPORTATION MANUAL**

**2020-2021**

## **TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES**

### **BUS PASSES AND ELIGIBILITY**

These students are eligible for a bus pass:

- Grade 10 - 12 students who live more than 2.4 km away from their designated school.
- Kindergarten to Grade 9 students who live more than 1.6 km away from their designated school. Those students residing inside the walk boundary and accessing transportation may have a slightly longer walk to the established bus stop.
- Students with severe disabilities.

Distances are measured by the most direct route on the street and walkway and may be modified to reflect geographic and roadway considerations. This distance is calculated using a spatially accurate map that utilizes GIS (Geographic Information System) coordinates.

Students must purchase a bus pass to ride a school bus. Bus passes are distinctive to the bus number shown on the pass. Students that wish to ride home with another student are required to purchase a bus pass.

Students are required to scan their bus pass when entering and to exit the bus. Failure to produce a bus pass will result in the student having three busing days in which to obtain a replacement pass. On the fourth day, the bus driver will refuse to transport the student from school. It is the responsibility of the parent or student to contact Transportation Services to purchase a replacement pass.

The Division is not required to transport students involved in non-school activities, work experience, after-school jobs, tutoring, music lessons, sports events, etc. Where possible the Division will transport students to alternate daycare arrangements:

- if there is a bus available,
- there is space on the bus,
- there is no change to the route, and
- there are no additional costs involved.

As the Division is operating a student transportation system, drivers are not required to transport individuals not registered on the bus passenger list or those that repeatedly fail to produce a bus pass. Furthermore, drivers are not authorized to add bus stops or change routes. Route changes will only be implemented upon approval from Transportation Services.



## **ROUTES**

Transportation Services will establish routes and schedules based on bus pass applications received on or before **June 30<sup>th</sup>** for the upcoming school year. Those applications received after June 30<sup>th</sup> will result in students having to access a stop already established on the bus route. Bus routes are only permitted to travel on main arterial and collector roads (transit routes) as per the City of St. Albert.

Routes will only be added to new communities if and when the following criteria have all been met:

- The number of students requesting services is higher than 25% of bus capacities. Bus capacities are 60 students in elementary and 48 students in junior high and high school. Therefore, 15 students would be required in elementary and 12 students needed for both junior high and high school.
- All school boards within St. Albert require prior approval from the City of St. Albert to travel on all roadways. School Division contracted buses within St. Albert are permitted to travel on main arterial and collector roads (City transit routes). This agreement with the City means that temporary access to residential roadways would be required for new subdivisions since arterial and collector roadways are not yet fully developed.
- The City must provide adequate access for 70 passenger buses to travel in and out of each community safely.

Ride times will vary per school bus. The following are only guidelines:

- Routes located within the school attendance area: 30 minutes or less one-way.
- Routes that exist outside of school attendance areas: 60 minutes or less one-way.
- Ride into Edmonton for special education programs: 1 hour or less one-way.

All St. Albert contracted routes are equipped with Zonar GPS as well as ZPass scanners.



## **BUS STOPS**

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 meters
- Junior High (grades 7 – 9) – 600 meters
- High School (grades 10 – 12) – 800 meters

Stop locations are based on applications before the June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline. Stops are designed to be equitable while accommodating students in the same geographic area. Transit stops are the preferred stop locations as they are cleared in the winter, which increases student safety. Stops will not be changed once the school year has commenced.

Stop change requests will not be granted if your child's stop location is within the guidelines listed above or if road structures and neighbourhood design prohibits a closer stop. We make all efforts to ensure your child has the nearest and safest stop possible.

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 departure time on the bus schedule.

## **BUS PASSES**

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 data. Each card has a unique ID number which is located on the back of the card. The Bus pass 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.

- Please take care of the bus pass. If your child breaks his or her bus pass and it no longer scans, there is a replacement cost of \$15.00.
- If your family moves and requires new bus passes, please contact the Division Office to inquire about availability from your future home location.
- Keep your bus pass each year, unless moving or changing schools



## **SCHEDULES**

Buses will attempt to arrive at school at least ten minutes but not more than twenty minutes before school start time. Buses will depart school on schedule (generally ten minutes after dismissal time) or should problems arise, at the discretion of the bus driver.

- High School Exam Week Busing:  
Schools are to forward bus schedule requirements to Transportation Services two weeks in advance of exam week. Schools are required to list expected dismissal times, and buses will depart ten minutes after dismissal time.
- Last Day Of School Transportation:  
There is no transportation provided to pick up report cards.
- Early Dismissal Busing:  
School buses will depart schools at the following times:
  - Junior High: 12:10 p.m.
  - Elementary: 12:40 p.m.
  - High School: 1:40 p.m.
- Summer School:  
Transportation will not be available for summer school sessions.



## **COLD WEATHER**

Please note, should we experience extreme winter temperatures or road conditions, school buses may be delayed. Student safety is our priority. However, parents are responsible for students getting to and from the bus stop.

**If this happens, we will notify parents via our transportation portal as soon as we become aware of any delays.** Parents are also encouraged to track their children's bus(es) through the transportation portal, subscribe to text message notifications and use the BusPlanner Delays App. As well, follow us on Twitter and Facebook for regular updates.

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 beyond their designated pick up time. Please have a back-up plan in place for getting your children to and from school.

\*An adult is not required to release students in grades 1-12.

## **NOTIFICATIONS**

- Text message notifications are sent out by Transportation Services staff to those who have subscribed through the Transportation Portal online.
- BusPlanner Delays App is available for both Android and iPhone devices. The App is free; however, standard cell and data rates still apply.
- Any delayed routes are posted on the Division website: [www.spschools.org](http://www.spschools.org)
- In the event of a collision, division notification procedures apply regardless of severity. Parents will be notified via our Transportation Portal. Following the initial notification, we will notify parents via division email with more details regarding the collision itself.

*\*Note: All notifications are sent manually from Division Office.*



## **KINDERGARTEN TRANSPORTATION**

- Kindergarten students that reside more than 1.6 km from their designated school are eligible for a bus pass. Kindergarten students living inside the 1.6 km walk boundary may be accommodated dependent on the proximity of bus routes in the area and the feasibility of providing service. Those students accessing transportation that reside less than 1.6 km from their designated school may have a greater walk distance to the established bus stop than those students living outside the walk boundary.
- A minimum of five (5) students are required at a specific school for noon-hour transportation to be provided, and this applies to each AM and PM programs.
- Transportation Services must receive application forms on or before June 30<sup>th</sup> to have transportation in place for the first full day of Kindergarten. Application forms received after this date will not be processed until October, and parents will have to find alternate means of getting students to and from school.
- Students **must** be met at the bus stop by an adult or older designated sibling (with prior authorization from Transportation Services). Those students who are not met at the bus stop will be returned to the school. Individuals meeting students should be at the bus stop five minutes before the scheduled bus arrival time.
- Students will be provided with a maximum of two transportation service addresses and one-noon bus stop.
- Bus passes will be available for pick up in the middle of August at Division Office. Schedules are available through the transportation portal.
- Kindergarten busing will begin on the first full day of Kindergarten classes (after staggering start sessions).
- Kindergarten students do not attend school on early dismissal days; therefore, there will not be any transportation service for kindergarten students on those days.
- Transportation is available to and from daycare if it is located within the school attendance area.
- Drivers are not authorized to move or add bus stops without prior permission from Transportation Services.
- Kindergarten busing is not a door-to-door service.

## **REGULAR TRANSPORTATION (GRADES 1-12)**

Students in grades 1-12 do not require an adult to be present to be released from the bus.

## **STANDBY TRANSPORTATION**

A standby bus pass may be issued to:

- students that reside within the walk boundary
- students attending a program or school of choice

Note: Logos/Cogito students residing outside of the regular English attendance boundary of the school providing the program are considered standby.

Access to transportation is provided to standby students if space is available on the bus routed to the school housing the program. Available space will be designated first to siblings of the students directed or recommended by the Division to attend a school outside of their home attendance area, students residing on the outer edge of the walk boundary and then to other students on a first-come, first-served basis.

Students must apply annually for a standby bus pass. Students using this type of transportation service will be required to access a bus stop that exists on the current bus route. Routes will not be modified or altered in any way for standby students. This type of transportation service is not guaranteed.





## **SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION**

Special education students are required to pay a transportation fee to be provided with transportation services. **Students with severe special needs must be met at the bus stop by an adult.** Parents of students not met at the bus stop will be:

1. Telephoned by the carrier
2. If no contact by telephone is made, the student will be returned to the school or social services if the school is already closed.

Students directed or recommended by the Division to attend a special education program are eligible for transportation service provided they reside outside of the attended school's walk boundary.

- Behaviour Improvement Classes – Bus passes are not issued, as this type of transportation is particular. Students are considered eligible for transportation regardless of distance residing from the school offering the program.
- All other Special Education Classes – Students will be served by either the regular or special education bus route. Bus passes are issued, and fees are based on distance residing from the designated neighbourhood school.
- Special Education Classes in Edmonton Schools – Bus passes are not issued, as this type of transportation is particular. Students are considered eligible for transportation regardless of distance residing from the school offering the program.
- Others – students that have disabilities that prevent them from riding the regular or special education bus may be provided with alternate arrangements (ex. request reimbursement for parent provided transportation).



## **PARENT PROVIDED REIMBURSEMENT**

- The Board of Trustees may agree to reimbursement of transportation with parents of funded students with disabilities when the student cannot, because of the severity of their disabilities, use regular or alternate transportation provided by the Division.
- Parents will not be contacted regarding parent provided reimbursement, and it is expected that the parent will request this reimbursement in writing from Transportation Services.
- Parent provided transportation eligibility will be reviewed annually in conjunction with Student Services and School Administration.
- Agreements will be for a one-year term, and parents must sign and return a parent provided transportation contract.
- Reimbursement will be calculated based on student attendance at school.
- Reimbursement for students attending a temporary school for an assessment to be completed will only be considered upon request and within a consultation with the school and Student Services.
- The rate of daily reimbursement will be established yearly relative to funding amounts received from Alberta Learning minus a 5% administration fee. Payments for parent provided transportation will be made on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of December, March, and July based on the previous months' attendance.
- Reimbursement rates will be as follows:
  - Exceptional Student Codes (41-44, 46) – Severe Condition: rate reimbursed will be based on the special education funding received from Alberta Learning less 5% administration charge.

## **STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

Parental support, along with student co-operation, is essential in ensuring that the school bus is a safe and enjoyable experience for all. Parental reinforcement of the driver's position of importance is very reflective of the environment within the school bus.

The primary objective of the school bus driver is to transport students safely to and from school. The driver's attention must be on the road and traffic conditions, not on student behaviour.

The school bus is considered an extension of the classroom; therefore, the driver should be treated like the teacher. Students are required to follow the rules and safety procedures at all times, including during transport and at bus stops. Students in violation of the code of conduct will be communicated to school administration. **All school buses are equipped with high-definition camera systems and are recording at all times.**

Seating plans are encouraged to assist in the event of:

- collisions
- student discipline issues
- vandalism

The details of the seating plan are left entirely to the driver's discretion.



## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. The driver is in charge of the bus at all times, and their rules must be followed.
2. Students must scan their bus pass when entering and exiting the bus.
3. The driver may assign specific seats at any time.
4. While on the bus, students must not extend any part of his/her body out of the window. Students must not move around while the bus is in motion.
5. Students must conduct themselves quietly and courteously, showing consideration for the comfort and safety of others. Students must not distract the driver with a loud noise of any kind.
6. Scuffling, fighting, eating, smoking, vaping, and the use of obscene language is strictly prohibited.
7. Animals will are not transported on a bus; an exception is given to service animals.
8. No firearms, knives or weapons of any kind are permitted on the bus.
9. Students will not run to or from the bus.
10. Students must respect the property of homeowners by walking and standing on the sidewalk and boulevard and not on residential lawns or driveways adjacent to bus stops.
11. Articles that cannot be stored in a book bag or items larger than 13" x 13" x 23", such as snow skis or skateboards will not be transported. Ice skates are acceptable as long as they are in a canvas bag with the blades covered.
12. Students must be at the bus stop 5 minutes before the time listed on the bus schedule. The bus will not wait in the morning past the scheduled departure time.
13. Buses will depart the school at the time listed on the bus schedule. The bus will not wait past the scheduled departure time.
14. Students will be held responsible for any willful damage they have inflicted on the school bus. They will make financial reimbursement for intentional damage.
15. Littering on the bus or residential property is prohibited.
16. When leaving the bus, students are not to cross in front of the bus, wait until the bus is Six (6) bus lengths away before crossing the street. POINT, PAUSE and PROCEED. Always make eye contact with drivers before crossing the street.



## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Parents are responsible for students getting to and from the bus stop.
2. Ensure students are at the bus stop 5 minutes before the designated pick up time.
3. Provide the necessary supervision for students while going to and from the bus stop, including meeting Kindergarten and severe special needs students at the bus stop. Grades 1-12 do not require an adult present to be released from the bus.
4. Make sure students are appropriately dressed for weather conditions in the event of an unavoidable delay of the school bus.
5. Have an established plan for students to follow if they miss the bus, or the bus is unavoidably delayed.
6. Instruct students to obey all bus rules and regulations as outlined by the bus driver.
7. Accept responsibility for the proper conduct of students before boarding a bus, during the daily trips, and upon discharge.
8. Instruct students not to cross the road until after the bus is six bus lengths away, and it is safe to do so.
9. Do not board a school bus unless as a volunteer/chaperone of a school field trip.
10. Do not smoke or vape while at the bus stop.
11. Inform Transportation Services when transportation requirements change or are no longer needed. A minimum of three to five business days' notice required, depending on volume
12. 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 oversize 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 requirement is following the Alberta Traffic Safety Act and National Safety Code Standards.
13. Parents will be held responsible for any willful damage their student has inflicted on the school bus; this will include financial reimbursement for damage requiring repair.



## **TRANSPORTATION FEES**

- Bus passes are issued upon receipt of the yearly transportation fees and application form to new students or those requiring a new bus pass.
- Transportation fees will be pro-rated for those students who are new to St. Albert Public Schools during the school year, or those that change schools and home locations throughout the school year.
- Monthly payment plans are available through PowerSchool.
- Upon request, pro-rated refunds will be issued to those students who complete high school during the school year, move out of the Division or to a home located within walking distance of the school.
- No refunds will be provided after February 1<sup>st</sup> (semester break) in each school year.
- Replacement passes for students in all grades, including Kindergarten, are available for a fee of \$15.
- The maximum fee for a family must not exceed three times the fee for a single student. There is no family maximum for students attending a program or school of choice (standby riders).
- Non-payment of fees will result in a referral to our Collection Agency, and the outstanding balance must be paid before future bus passes will be issued.
- When the payment of transportation fees cannot be made, the parent(s)/guardian(s) or independent student is required to make written application for special consideration by the Manager, Transportation Services. The Manager, Transportation Services, is authorized to rule on such requests for waiver of fees. Transportation fees may be waived if the family qualifies for an Alberta Works. Applicants will be asked to provide proof of the Alberta Works card. In place of Alberta Works, support from School Administration (Principal) regarding financial hardship will also be accepted. The waiver of transportation fees must be applied for annually.
- Returned cheques will result in a \$25 administration charge. Any remaining fees owed must be paid by cash, debit or credit in person.
- Transportation fees are established yearly by the Board of Trustees.



## **TRANSPORTATION FEE SCHEDULE**

**Funded – Eligible (Alberta Education Criteria)** **\$470.00**

- ◆ Kindergarten to Grade 12 students who reside at least 2.4km from their designated neighbourhood school.
- ◆ The family maximum is \$1,410 (family maximum based on three or more students).

**Not Funded – Eligible (Division Policy)** **\$500.00**

- ◆ Kindergarten to Grade 12 students who reside between 1.6 and 2.4km from their designated neighbourhood elementary or junior high school and high school students attending IB or AP.
- ◆ Access to a second bus fee is an additional \$250/yearly pass.
- ◆ The family maximum is \$1,500 (family maximum based on three or more students).

**Not Funded – Not Eligible** **\$500.00**

- ◆ Students attending a school of choice or that live within the walk boundary for their designated school.
- ◆ Access to a second bus fee is an additional \$250/yearly pass.
- ◆ No family maximum.



## **CARRIER AND BUS DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Carriers must follow Division Policies and Procedures.
- The carrier shall yearly:
  - submit copies of semi-annual inspection certificates for all vehicles assigned to a regular route, and upon re-certification of pertaining vehicles
  - confirm their records showing applicable driver's licenses, S endorsement confirmation for new drivers, criminal record checks for new drivers, child welfare checks for all drivers, driver's abstracts for all drivers
  - submit evidence of insurance amounts and WCB coverage
  - submit bus evacuation confirmation
- The carrier shall monthly:
  - invoice the school board as outlined in their contract
  - submit headcount reports
  - submit roadside inspection certificates
- The carrier shall ensure that school bus drivers are qualified, properly trained and aware of Division Policies and Procedures.
- The carrier shall submit confirmation of criminal record checks completed every three years for long-term bus drivers.
- The carrier shall ensure, in the case of bus drivers bringing their children onto the school bus, that an application is submitted to Transportation Services.
- Bus drivers must adhere to Division Policies and Procedures.
- Bus drivers will determine the need for seating plans and are given authority to implement seating plans for the whole bus or individual students.
- School bus drivers will be permitted to bring their children on the school bus during the scheduled route if space permits and upon approval of Transportation Services.
- In extreme cases, should the bus driver experience difficulty with student behaviour to the extent that it is affecting the safety of all students aboard the bus, they are to request the school administration's assistance.
- In conjunction with school administration, the bus driver is responsible for maintaining an acceptable level of discipline on the bus to ensure the safe operation of the bus.



## *Student Transportation Manual*

- The Principal of each school is responsible for discipline on the bus as the bus is viewed as an extension of the classroom.
- The bus driver is to report unsafe bus stop locations to the carrier.
- The bus driver is to be familiar with Kindergarten and severe special education procedures.
- The bus driver is not authorized to add bus stops or make route changes without prior approval from Transportation Services.
- The Division expects that bus driver will not:
  - smoke on the school bus
  - be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs, or any medication which affects his/her ability to drive
  - use abusive and profane language
  - use a cellular phone while the bus is in motion
  - utilize physical contact when dealing with students

## **EVACUATIONS**

Carriers/Bus drivers will be required to perform a minimum of two school bus evacuations per school year.

Evacuations will be conducted at the school directly after the morning run. The carrier shall notify the school in advance of the date and time of the evacuation. The driver must complete a School Bus Evacuation Form, signed by the Principal or designate, which is submitted to Transportation Services within one week of the drill(s).



## **PROCEDURES FOR BUS COLLISIONS**

Whenever school buses are involved in a collision, the immediate welfare of the students and others on the bus is primary. School bus collision procedures shall be flexible due to the variability of collision situations. However, division notification procedures apply to all collisions, regardless of severity. An email is sent to all parents with information about the collision.

The board expects drivers/carriers to:

1. Check for injuries and administer or arrange for first aid as quickly as possible. Passenger needs are primary.
2. Call for an ambulance and the RCMP as required.
3. Notify Transportation Services and Principal(s). Even in minor collisions, the Manager, Transportation Services or Associate Superintendent, Finance must be notified.
4. If no medical attention is required for passengers, and no specific instructions in this regard are received, then passengers involved in the collision should be delivered as soon as possible.
5. Arrange for alternate transportation for the passengers if required.
6. Should the collision cause the bus to run more than ten minutes late, inform the school(s) in question and Transportation Services.
7. Submit a collision report to Transportation Services, providing the names of all passengers and, if applicable, a passenger seating arrangement.

Communications Services shall designate the media contact person.

It is the responsibility of the RCMP to notify families in the event of death.

Since it is not possible to foresee all circumstances that may occur in a collision, it may be necessary to deviate from some of these instructions. In any event, common sense and reasonable actions shall prevail.