



St. Albert

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION MANUAL

Updated: September 2024

TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES

BUS PASSES AND ELIGIBILITY

These students are eligible for a bus pass:

- Grade 7 - 12 students who live more than 2 km away from their school
- Kindergarten to Grade 6 students who live more than 1 km away from their school
- Students with severe inclusive education needs

Distances are measured by the most direct route on the street 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 identified by school year and bus route number.

Students are required to scan their bus pass when entering and exiting the bus. Students who lose/damage their bus pass will have three busing days to obtain a replacement pass. On the fourth day, the bus driver will not transport the student from school. It is the responsibility of the parent 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.

Drivers will not transport individuals not registered on the bus passenger list or those who 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 by Transportation Services.

ROUTES

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

All school boards within St. Albert require prior approval from the City of St. Albert to travel throughout the city. Buses are only permitted by the city to travel on main arterial and collector roads (transit routes).

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.
- Transportation will be provided to new neighbourhoods only if there is adequate access for 70-passenger buses to travel in and out of each community safely. This includes but is not limited to completed collector roads that have clear paths in and out of the development. In the absence of a clear and safe path the closest stop to the area will be assigned.

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

- Routes located within the designated school attendance area: 30 minutes or less one way.
- Routes that exist outside of school attendance areas (school of choice): 60 minutes or less one way.
- Ride into Edmonton for special education programs: 90 minutes or less one way.

All St. Albert contracted routes are equipped with Zonar GPS.

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) – 450 metres
- Junior high (Grades 7 – 9) – 600 metres
- High school (Grades 10 – 12) – 800 metres

These distances fall well within the 2.4 km [Provincial School Transportation Regulation](#).

Stop locations are based on applications before the June 1st 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. New school year stop changes will be implemented after September 30th.

Stop change requests will not be granted if your child's stop location is within the guidelines listed above, your bus application was received after June 1st, 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 five minutes before the listed departure time on the bus schedule.

While Kindergarten students are required to be met by an adult at the bus stop (see Kindergarten Transportation section on page XX), students in Grades 1-12 are not required to be met by an adult.

BUS PASSES

All riders are issued a bus pass, which they scan when entering and exiting the school bus. There is no personal information stored on the card itself. Each card has a unique ID number on the back of the card. This 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.
- If your family moves and requires new bus passes, please contact Transportation Services to inquire about availability from your future home location.
- A new bus pass will be issued each year.

COLD/INCLEMENT WEATHER

Student safety is our priority. Should we experience extreme winter temperatures or road conditions, school buses may be delayed or cancelled.

If this happens, we will notify parents via our transportation portal as soon as we become aware of any delays/cancellations. Parents are also encouraged to track their children's bus(es) through the Chipmunk App, subscribe to text message notifications and use the BusPlanner Delays App.

It is the parent's responsibility to get their children to and from 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 beyond their designated pick-up time. Please have a back-up plan in place for getting your children to and from school.

NOTIFICATIONS

- Text message notifications are sent out by Transportation Services 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.
- Chipmunk App is available for both Android and iPhone devices. The app is free, however, standard cell and data rates still apply.
- 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.

KINDERGARTEN TRANSPORTATION

- Kindergarten students who reside more than 1 km from their school are eligible for a bus pass. Kindergarten students living inside the 1 km walk boundary may be accommodated depending on the proximity of bus routes in the area and the feasibility of providing service. These students may have a greater walk distance to the established bus stop than those students living outside the walk boundary.
- A minimum of five students are required at a school for noon-hour transportation to be provided, and this applies to each AM and PM program.
- Transportation Services must receive application forms on or before June 1st to have transportation in place for the first full day of Kindergarten. Application forms received after this date may not be processed until October, and parents will have to find alternate means of getting students to and from school until then.
- 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 (e.g. home and daycare) and one noon bus stop.
- Bus passes will be mailed out in August. Schedules are available through the transportation portal.
- Kindergarten busing will begin on the first full day of Kindergarten classes (after staggered entry sessions).
- Transportation may be available to and from daycares and dayhomes.
- 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.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION

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

1. Phoned 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 an inclusive education program are eligible for transportation service provided they reside outside of the attended school's walk boundary.

PARENT-PROVIDED REIMBURSEMENT

- The division may reimburse transportation costs for parents of funded students with inclusive education needs when the student cannot, because of the severity of their needs, use regular or alternate transportation provided by the division.
- Parents must request this reimbursement in writing to 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 in consultation with the school and Student Services.
- The rate of daily reimbursement is established yearly based on funding received from Alberta Education minus a 5% administration fee. Payments for parent-provided transportation will be made on the 30th day of December, March and July based on the previous months' attendance.

STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Parental support and student cooperation are essential in ensuring that the school bus ride is a safe and enjoyable experience for all. Parents should ensure their children understand that the driver is in charge of the bus and driver instructions must be followed.

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 their 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 are strictly prohibited.
7. Animals (other than service animales) will not be transported on a bus.
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 at 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, skateboards and larger musical instruments 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 five 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, do not cross the street in front of the bus. Wait until the bus is six bus lengths away before crossing. Point, pause, and proceed. Always make eye contact with any 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 five 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 inclusive education students at the bus stop. Students in 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 case of a delay or bus breakdown.
5. Establish a plan for students to follow if they miss the bus or if the bus is 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 bus ride 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 is required, depending on the time of year.
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 is 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 follows 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 processing of the yearly transportation application form and receipt of outstanding transportation fees in full, or the processing of the Replacement Bus Pass Request form.
- Transportation fees will be pro-rated for those students who are new to St. Albert Public Schools during the school year, or those who change schools and home locations throughout the school year.
- Monthly payment plans are available through PowerSchool, or by providing post-dated cheques to Transportation Services, 60 Sir Winston Churchill Ave.
- 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 1st (semester break) in each school year.
- Replacement passes for students in all grades, including Kindergarten, are available for \$15.
- The maximum fee for a family must not exceed three times the fee for a single student.
- 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, guardian or independent student is required to submit the Fee Waiver application and supporting documents for consideration by Transportation Services. Transportation fees may be waived if the family qualifies. This waiver 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.
- Transportation fees are established yearly by the Board of Trustees.

TRANSPORTATION FEES

Designated School (funded) \$225

- Kindergarten to Grade 6 students who reside at least 1 km from their designated school.
- Grade 7 to 12 students who reside at least 2 km from their designated school.
- Access to a second bus is an additional \$112.50 per year.
- The family maximum is \$675 (family maximum based on three or more students).

School/program of choice (funded) \$250

- Kindergarten to Grade 6 students who reside at least 1 km from their school.
- Grade 7 to 12 students who reside at least 2 km from their school.
- Access to a second bus is an additional \$125 per year.
- The family maximum is \$750 (family maximum based on three or more students).

Not Funded/non-resident \$350

- Kindergarten to Grade 6 students who reside less than 1 km from their school.
- Grade 7 to 12 students who reside less than 2 km from their school.
- Students who reside outside the school division.
- Access to a second bus is an additional \$175 per pass.
- No family maximum.

Replacement bus pass \$15

Administration fee \$25

- For issuing temporary bus passes, refunds, returned cheques

CARRIER AND BUS DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Carriers and drivers 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 these 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 will determine the need for seating plans and are given authority to implement seating plans for the whole bus or individual students.
- 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.

- 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 inclusive 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 their 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 at each school 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.

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.

Communication 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.