



# **TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK**

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## OBJECTIVE

The main objective for the Wild Rose School Division (WRSD) Transportation Services is to ensure that students are transported to and from school safely. The safety of students is contingent, in large part, upon student behavior. It is necessary to establish general rules to set a standard to judge acceptability of behavior on the bus and to enforce those rules in the interests of the safety of students. The school bus is considered an extension of the classroom and, therefore, classroom conduct is to be observed at all times. The bus driver is responsible for the students on his/her bus and must, therefore, receive the respect, consideration and co-operation of each student. The bus driver is required to implement the rules established by the Wild Rose School Division, the School Act and the transportation laws set by federal and provincial governments. Students riding on a school bus are under the immediate supervision and authority of the driver from the time they are loading until they are discharged at the school and, similarly, on the afternoon return trip. The following paragraphs highlight some of the issues that pertain to the safe transportation of students. Your cooperation in reviewing these issues with your student(s) will be appreciated.

This Student Transportation Parent/Guardian Handbook was developed to assist in understanding Wild Rose School Division busing system.

The School Act (Act) provides that a school board shall, in accordance with the regulation, transport a student who:

- Resides within the attendance area of the school in which the student is enrolled;
- Resides within the division boundary; and
- Resides at a distance greater than 2.4 km from that school.

The Act allows the Board to levy a fee for transportation services over and above what has been mentioned.

## **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREAS**

### **Background**

The Division supports open school attendance areas within the Division. However, the Division reserves its right to direct students to attend a specific school when this appears to be in the best interest of the student, is necessary for programming reasons, or is required to ensure the viability of certain schools.

### **Procedures**

1. Transportation will normally be provided to the school closest to where the student resides, which offers an appropriate program.
2. Transportation shall be provided or arranged for where the Superintendent of Schools directs a student to attend a particular program or school within the Division. Transportation may be provided for students directed to another school within a town and more than 2.4 kilometres from their home.
3. Where parents/guardians choose to send their children to a school other than the one(s) to which transportation would normally be provided, it shall be the responsibility of the parents/guardians to provide for transportation to and from school, at their own expense.

## **BASIC TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES**

### **Pick-up times**

For rural busing, at the start of the school year, the driver will contact each family and inform them of their morning pick-up times. The bus routes will be reviewed for efficiencies throughout the month of September. The pick-up times will be finalized by the drivers in conjunction with the Transportation department as soon as possible. However, adjustments can occur throughout the year if there are changes in the route or riders. The driver will notify the parents/guardians of any changes to the pick-up times.

### **Being late for the assigned pick-up time**

Students are expected to be at the stop, ready to board the bus 5 minutes before their assigned pickup time. If students are late, parents/guardians must have a contingency plan to get them to school. The driver will leave the stop at the assigned time. If everyone on the bus were late by even one minute, the bus would arrive at school approximately 30 minutes late. Please be on time. Have a contingency plan in place in case the bus does not arrive. For example, sometimes

a bus may have a mechanical difficulty mid-route and cannot complete its pickups. Students should have a plan on what to do if the bus does not arrive.

### **Drop-off times**

Generally speaking, drop-off times need to be flexible. The routes can be shortened due to student absences in the afternoon. This may result in your student arriving home early. Make arrangements or establish a contingency plan for this situation.

## **SCHOOL BOUNDARIES**

School attendance boundaries are established by the Board as required under the School Act. Students are transported to their designated school within the attendance boundaries.

### **School of Choice**

Under the School Act, parents/guardians have the ability to choose a school other than the designated school of attendance for their students. If a family decides to attend a school other than their WRSD designated school, the Board is not required to provide transportation for the student to the school of choice. Students can still access WRSD buses; however, the following will apply:

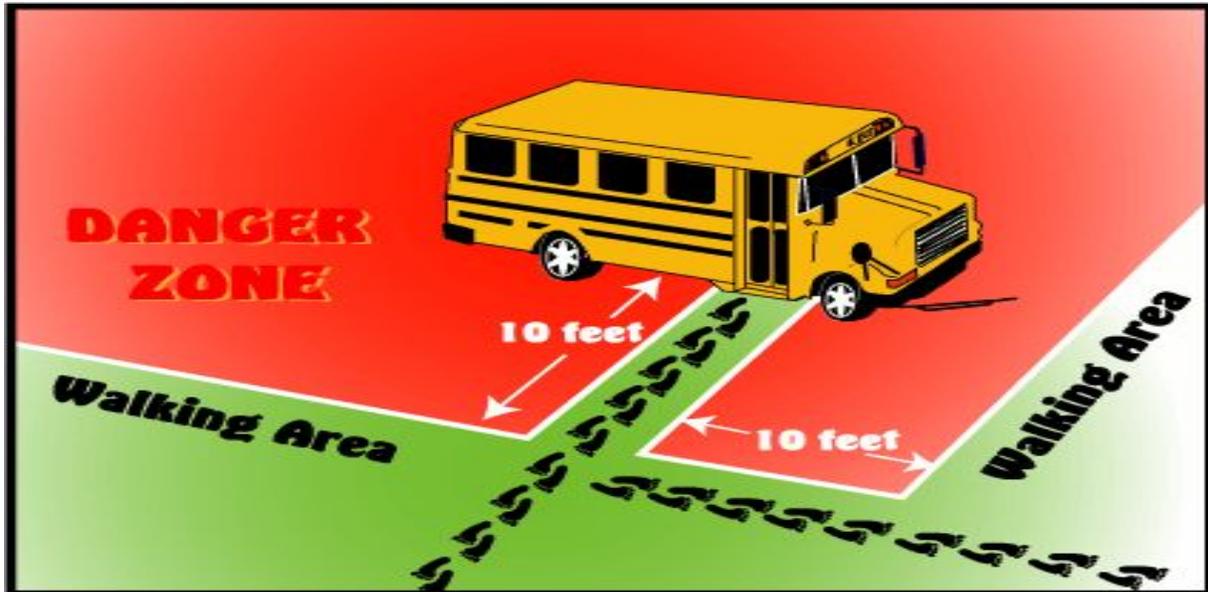
1. The student must be accepted at their school of choice.
2. Parent/Guardian must complete an online Rural Busing Registration Form. The form can be found on the Division's website.
3. Parent/Guardian must agree to transport their child/children to and from an existing meeting location determined by WRSD Transportation Services within the attendance area for the chosen school. This location may change at any time should the routes change.
4. There must be room on the bus.

## **SCHOOL BUS LOADING AND UNLOADING**

The most dangerous part of the school bus ride is getting on and off the school bus. The loading and unloading area is called the Danger Zone.

The **Danger Zone** is the area on all sides of the bus where children are in the most danger of not being seen by the driver (three meters in front, three meters on either side of the bus, and three meters behind are all areas where a child may be in the driver's blind spot). **It only takes**

a second to lose sight of a student if a driver becomes distracted by students on board the bus.



When training our bus drivers, we stress the importance of safe loading and unloading procedures. This is where our drivers need to be fully focused and cannot be distracted by students or parents/guardians. This is not the time to have a conversation with the driver. If parents/guardians need to communicate with the driver, please do so at a different time.

It is important to have parents/guardians understand that drivers need their cooperation to be fully focused at this time, by not parking in and staying away from the loading and unloading zones. **Please park well away from the loading zones at all times.**

**It is also important that driver along with parents/guardians instruct students on the proper procedure for loading and unloading.**

1. Be cautious when carrying loose papers or books which might drop near the bus - we encourage students to use a book bag.
2. Be aware of the dangers of clothing, book bag, backpack, and jacket strings/straps that could become entangled in the doorway of the school bus.
3. Wait in an orderly fashion safely back from the roadway or pick-up zone. Students need to be at their stop **five minutes** early. The time you have been given for pick-up is the time the bus departs from your stop.
4. Board the bus in single file; use the handrail so you do not trip on the steps.
5. Sit down right way.
6. Sit back in your seat, face forward and keep your feet to the front.
7. Keep the aisle clear of feet, backpacks, books, etc.

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8. Talk quietly in order to not distract the driver.
9. Keep you head, arms and hands inside the bus, not out the windows.
10. Never throw things in the bus or out the windows.
11. Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop and the doors are open before standing up and leaving your seat.
12. After leaving the bus, take five giant steps away from the bus so you are out of the Danger Zone and in a safe spot.
13. If you need to cross in front of the bus make sure you look at the driver for a signal that it is safe for you to cross the roadway.

### THE FAMILY PET

It is the responsibility of the family to ensure that the family pet is kept away and clear of where the bus pulls up to load students.

### BUS RULES

1. The driver is in full charge of the school bus at all times and students shall obey him/her promptly and respectfully.
2. The driver shall assign a seat for which the student shall be held responsible and he/she shall retain this seat until directed otherwise by the driver.
3. Students are responsible for being at the bus stop on time.
4. Unnecessary conversation with the driver is prohibited.
5. Classroom conduct is to be observed on the bus and any disturbance, which may take the driver's attention and endanger the safe operation of the bus, is prohibited.
6. There shall be no tobacco products, drugs/controlled substances, contraband or weapons on any school bus.
7. Students shall not litter on the bus or throw anything out the bus windows.
8. Students shall not extend any part of their body out the windows.
9. Students shall remain seated while the bus is in motion.
10. Students shall leave the bus at their regular stops unless a note from the parent/guardian is presented to the driver requesting a drop-off at another regular stop.
11. When leaving the bus, students shall observe the directions of the driver and watch for traffic before crossing the road.

***STUDENTS VIOLATING THESE RULES MAY BE REPORTED TO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND MAY BE SUSPENDED FROM RIDING THE BUS.***

## STUDENT CHECKLIST

Students - always listen to the school bus drivers - they're in charge. If you forget any of the school bus safety rules they can tell you what it takes to be a safe bus rider.

1. Stand in a group while waiting for the bus. Do not run around.
2. Stay out of the danger zone until the bus driver lets you know it's safe to get on. If you can touch the bus you're too close.
3. Once the bus arrives, line up single file with the smaller children at the front. Get on the bus one at a time.
4. Use the handrail when getting on and off the bus.
5. Take your seat right away and stay seated until your stop.
6. Face forward and do not throw things inside the bus or out the windows.
7. Keep the aisle clear.
8. Talk quietly and keep your head and arms inside the bus.
9. Wait until the bus stops before standing. Move away after leaving the bus.
10. Always cross roads safely. Look four ways before crossing - left, right, ahead and behind, and remember to "Point, Pause and Proceed".

## BAND/SPORTING EQUIPMENT ON SCHOOL BUS

The drivers "Shall not permit student program related band or sporting equipment to obstruct the aisle", subject to Section 16 of the School Bus Operation Regulation. "At the discretion of the bus driver, this equipment will be permitted only if transported in an appropriate bag/case, and only if it can be secured in a special storage area on the bus."

This Administrative Procedure means that the items that may not be transported on the bus include, but are not limited to the following:

- Hockey Sticks
- Skate Boards
- Snowboards
- Large Band Instruments
- Skates without blade protectors
- Skis and Ski poles
- Scooters
- Curling Brooms

*Instruments must be transported on the floor and under the set.*

- The instrument is not to be stood on end and/or protruding into the area above the bottom seat cushion nor is it to protrude into the aisle.
- Small instruments (ie. flute, clarinet) may be carried on the students lap.

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*Instruments that fit under the seat and can be transported include:*

- Alto Sax
- Trombone
- Tenor Sax
- Trumpet

*Instruments that will not fit under the seat and should not be transported include:*

- Bari Sax
- Bass Trombone
- French Horn
- Guitar
- Tuba

Also, because the safety of students is our main concern, parents/guardians must be aware that knives of any type are not permitted on school buses, this includes jackknives. Flashlights and lasers are not permitted on school buses.

Certain items are prohibited on school buses by law. See the following excerpt:

No person shall, while transporting students on a school bus convey in or on the bus:

- Animals
- Firearms
- Explosives
- Flammable materials or substances
- Fuel other than in the fuel system and fuel tank of the bus
- Anything of a dangerous or objectionable nature
- Anything that may endanger the lives or safety of person in the bus.

Drivers have been directed to enforce the above rules regarding the student's carry-on items. Students attempting to board the bus with an article that does not conform to the above will be required to leave the item behind.

## PROPER WINTER ATTIRE

All students riding on a school bus during the winter months shall be required to be prepared for unexpected severe weather conditions. The student shall carry with them appropriate winter footwear, outerwear, headwear and gloves/mitts. If a student presents him/herself at a morning pick-up and is not properly dressed, the bus driver shall pickup the student and upon arrival at the school the driver will escort the student to the school office and ask the principal to have a discussion with the student.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

### Background

Schools in the Division will stay open all day on regularly scheduled school days regardless of the weather, providing that the building is deemed safe and comfortably heated. The primary consideration in the event of severe weather conditions shall be the health and safety of students. Parents/Guardians are expected to exercise good judgment and care when deciding whether or not to send their child(ren) to school when weather conditions are extreme. The following measures shall be taken to promote safe student transportation during cold and inclement weather conditions.

### Procedures

1. Area conditions shall dictate decision-making. The decision to cancel bus runs is made by the Director of Transportation Services and Superintendent of Schools after appropriate information is gathered from each of the school areas. Bus drivers also have the individual authority to cancel their route, or decide not to stop at a particular pick-up site if they feel the weather/road conditions warrant such action.
2. Any of the following factors, or combinations of them, shall serve as guidelines for considering the non-operation of buses: Temperature of -35 degrees or lower reported by the Weather Network, Extreme windchill of -40 degrees or lower reported by the Weather Network for the area in question. Visibility of less than 300 meters and/or road closures by the R.C.M.P, municipal, or other local road officials.
3. The Director of Transportation Services, in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools, may cancel bus routes for all or certain regions of the Division the night before or in the morning due to inclement weather. Cancellation decisions will be communicated to parents/guardians through a notice on the WRSD website.
4. In addition, individual drivers can make the decision whether or not to operate their bus based on weather or road conditions in their area. However, if weather conditions are questionable, and the driver wants another opinion, she/he may contact other drivers in that area, or the Director of Transportation Services, no later than 7:00 a.m.
5. Any driver who has made the decision not to run on that day shall contact the Director of Transportation Services, no later than 7:00 a.m., and shall make every reasonable effort to contact all parents/guardians of students normally transported on that route.
6. The Director of Transportation Services shall update Bus Route Status on the Transportation page of the Division Web site and accessible from [www.wrsd.ca](http://www.wrsd.ca) as well as updating the app.

## **VIDEO CAMERAS ON BUSES**

WRSD believes that the use of video cameras on school buses will help protect the safety of passengers, prevent vandalism, and be useful resource for school administrators when dealing with student discipline matters. Video monitoring of buses may either be conducted on a random basis or on selected routes at the discretion of the Director of Transportation Services.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Wild Rose School Division keeps parents/guardians informed with bus delays and cancellations through their website and also the Wild Rose School Division Transportation App, which is available in itunes and google play. The app and website are updated in the event a bus ends up being 15 minutes behind their time or a bus cancellation. In the event that the driver/WRSD cancels the run, the driver is expected to call all the parents/guardians. If in the event of a bus break down the driver is expected to radio into the Transportation office, where at that time the WRSD Web site and App will be updated to inform schools and parents/guardians of delays.

## **CONTACT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

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Rocky Mountain House, AB  
T4T 1P4**

**Phone: 403-845-4255**

**1-866-445-4255**

**Fax: 403-845-7211**

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