

Guidelines for the safe location of school bus stops

1. How are bus stops determined?

- Bus stops will be placed on public roadways and will avoid travel on private roads and/or driveways
- Bus routes are designed with buses traveling on main arterials with students picked up and dropped off at **central locations**.
- **Visibility** – Bus drivers need to have at least 500 feet of visible roadway to the bus stop. If there is not ample visibility (e.g. curve or hill) a “school bus stop ahead sign” is put in place before the stop in accordance with WAC 392-145-030
- Bus drivers activate their school bus warning lights 300-100 feet before arriving at the bus stop, where the posted speed limit is 35 mph and under, and 500-300 feet before arriving at the bus stop where the posted speed limit is 35 mph and over.

2. Why are bus stops located at corners?

- Bus stops may be located at **corners** or **intersections** whenever possible. Corner stops are much more visible to drivers than house numbers.
- Students are generally taught to cross at corners rather than in the middle of the street.
- Traffic controls, such as stoplights or signs, are located at corners. These tend to slow down motorists at corners, making them more cautious as they approach intersections. The motoring public generally expects school buses to stop at corners rather than individual houses. Impatient motorists are also less likely to pass buses at corners than along a street. Cars passing school buses create the greatest risk to students who are getting on or off the bus.
- Bus drivers activate their warning lights and stop arm when picking up and dropping off students. Corner stops allow ample time for the driver to activate the yellow warning lights before getting to the stop.
- Ride times for students are shorter if buses are kept on the main arterial and avoid traveling down side streets.

3. Efficiency:

- Minimizing stops also reduces costs for fuel, as well as wear and tear on the buses and enables each bus to get to the next school on time, facilitating efficient routing.

4. The length of the bus ride:

- The bus ride is determined by both the distance from school and the number of stops made. It would take a considerable amount of time to make thirty stops for 50-60 students. For this reason, every attempt is made to minimize the number of bus stops and to keep them at corners.

5. Crossing the roadway:

- We are not able to route buses so that all children can board the bus on the door side. Students are to wait on the side of the street where they reside. The driver will stop traffic in all directions to accommodate students who need to cross the street to board the bus. Students cross only by the direction of the bus driver (looking, listening, and waiting for the driver’s motions). Students will not cross the roadway if there are three lanes or more (including turn lanes, medians and planters). Buses will then service both sides of the road.

6. Distance from home to bus stop :

- Students may, depending on conditions, be required to walk up to 1 mile on public roadway to access a stop. (See exceptions in #9)

7. Distance to closest stop:

- Bus stops will be no closer than 300-600 feet apart with the exception of hazards, e.g. speeds over 40 MPH, ditches, railroads.

8. **Other considerations:**

- School bus stops are located for optimal visibility to motorists
- Students who live in a subdivision will walk out to the main entrance of their neighborhood even if the neighborhood is utilized routing.
- The safety of all school bus stops are evaluated with the understanding that the parent/guardian (or other adult) will provide age-appropriate supervision for their student(s) at the bus stop.

9. **Transportation exceptions for students who reside within 1 mile:**

- The students who need to cross a roadway with three or more lanes at an intersection that is not controlled by a crossing guard, stop sign or traffic light.
- Absence of appropriate walking path.
- Alternative routes, such as parks or community trails are not provided.

10. **Parent Responsibilities:**

- The parents/guardians or daycare provider of a child being transported on a school bus are responsible for the safety and conduct of their child prior to the arrival of the school bus at the child's designated bus stop.
- Parents are responsible for their children until they board the bus. Due to the large number of students who ride Northshore buses, we are unable to make bus stop changes to relieve parents of that responsibility.
- We must balance the need to be efficient and safe; we appreciate the partnership of parents in making sure that students are at their assigned stop safely five minutes prior to the scheduled bus arrival time.
- For the safety of our students, drivers are not authorized to drop off special-needs, pre-school, or kindergarten children without a parent/guardian or authorized adult to receive them at their bus stop. Students who are not met will be returned to their school. If the parent or guardian believes the student is capable of attending to his/her own needs, and may be dropped off without a responsible adult present, the Transportation Department is then required to receive that information in writing from the parent of guardian prior to dropping off the student.
- District waivers: parents will be responsible for student transportation to and from school.

11. **Criteria that are not considered requirements for adding a stop or making a house stop:**

- It is not possible to provide bus stops that are within sight of all student's homes or daycares unless house stops are made for all students. We encourage parents to be present at bus stops to promote proper pedestrian and bus stop behavior.
- Bus stops are not added solely due to the bus routed past the home. The higher frequency of stops made by the bus creates impatient motorists, increasing the risk of the public driving around the bus and creating a safety concern for students who walk to the bus stop.
- Bus stops are not modified to accommodate a single student stop. Other students may be assigned to the stop, but ride infrequently. Stops are made at corners for efficiency and to accommodate other students who may move into the neighborhood and other students using the stop due to an inadequate walk path.

After reviewing the guidelines and you meet the bus stop change request criteria, please continue to complete the Bus Stop Change Request form (www.nsd.org/nsdtransportation) and email it to: transportation@nsd.org. Requests are for current school year only; please allow two-four weeks for processing. Complete one form per student, duplicate forms are discouraged. If you are a waiver student the applicable form is the Transportation Request Form also found at www.nsd.org/nsdtransportation. Please note that **school bus drivers are not allowed to make bus stop changes** without approval from the Transportation Office. Bus stop changes are not made during the first three weeks of school.