



## Bus Stop Process and Procedures

The Mankato Area Public School District #0077 is committed to providing safe and efficient school bus transportation to its students. We have a long tradition of providing this service safely to all students that are eligible under Minnesota State laws, rules and regulations.

Minnesota law states that transportation is a privilege, not a right for eligible students.

The State of Minnesota currently requires transportation services for students who reside more than 2 miles from school. Mankato Area Public Schools generally provides transportation to elementary students (K-5) who live more than 1 mile (5280 feet) walking distance from school, and middle school and senior high school students who live more than 2 miles walking distance from school. Students that attend a school other than their assigned school (Attendance Exception) are not eligible for transportation regardless of the distance. Students under the Enrollment Options program (Open Enrollment) should contact the Transportation Office regarding transportation availability.

The following will outline the services we provide and explain how we comply with laws and rules that pertain to school bus transportation:

### 1. Goal

Our goal is to provide safe, reliable and efficient transportation to the students that reside within the boundaries of the school district, within the constraints of a limited and regulated budget, so when students arrive at school they are ready to learn.

### 2. General Information

#### A. Walking Areas

Traffic safety factors and distance are two primary criteria used to establish walking areas to schools. The walking area is determined by measuring a distance (1 mile = 5,280 feet) starting in the roadway opposite the private entrance to the residence of the student and ending in the roadway opposite the entrance to the school grounds or designated point on the walking route, using the *most direct route* as determined by the Transportation Office. Walking area is not measured from the front door of the student to the front door of the school building.

#### B. Bus Passes

All students riding the bus must have a District-issued bus pass in order to ride; only students riding the special education buses are exempt from this requirement. Students who are eligible for the bus and will be riding on a regular, consistent basis must complete a Transportation Registration Form, available in the Central Registration Office, to apply for busing. Once the Transportation Registration Form is received in the Transportation Office, the form is processed and a bus pass is usually created within five (5) business days. The bus pass will be sent to the school the student is attending, and will be distributed by the school office. All information regarding bus stops, bus times, and transfers are located directly on the bus pass. Students may begin riding as soon as they receive their pass.

Students should expect to show their bus pass **every time** they get on the bus. Failure to present a valid bus pass can result in Pink Slip warnings, Incident Reports, and suspension from busing. If the student has been issued a Pink Slip for failure to produce a pass, they may not be allowed to ride the bus until they produce a valid bus pass.

If a student moves during the course of a school year, they must *immediately* surrender their bus pass to the school office or the Central Registration Office. If the new address is eligible for transportation, an address change form, proof of the address change, and new Transportation Registration Form must be completed in the Central Registration Office before an updated bus pass can be issued.

### **C. Bus Stops**

Bus stops will be located at corners or intersections, whenever possible. Stopping at corners or intersections is safer due to the expectations of traffic. When a bus stops mid-block, it can confuse motorists, whereas traffic anticipates the bus will stop or yield at intersections. It also provides the driver or substitute driver a landmark (intersection) to identify prior to making the stop so the eight-lamp system can be properly activated to warn the public. This allows the driver to scan the area for students when approaching the intersection. School Board Policy states students in city limits can walk up to one-half (0.5) mile to a bus stop, and rural students may be asked to walk up to three-quarters (0.75) of a mile to meet a bus.

### **D. Bus Stop Change Request**

Please read through the following information before making a route or stop change request. All requests must be in writing and mailed to the attention of the Transportation Advisory Committee, co: Transportation Office, PO Box 8741, Mankato, MN 56002. The Transportation Advisory Committee meets twice per year, once in the fall and once in the spring. All stop or route change requests must be received in the Transportation Office at least 5 business days before the Committee meets. After each request is reviewed by the Committee and a decision made regarding your request, you will be notified of the Committee's decision.

**School bus drivers do not have the authority to change bus routes or student stops.**

### **E. Bus Stop Criteria**

1. School buses will use the eight-light system and stop arm at all stops in the Mankato Area Public School District unless the exception is made in policy or the stop is documented with an explanation. In order to properly operate the eight-light system, no bus stops will be made within 300 feet of one another.
2. Four-way flashers will be used in areas where there are two or more lanes of traffic in each direction. Students will not be allowed to cross the roadway to access the bus at these stops.
3. Buses serving students with disabilities may stop while using their 4-way hazard lights only at house stops where it takes an extended period of time to load/unload the student. At these stops, the bus will pull over to the curb at the driveway and student will not be allowed to cross the roadway. Buses will not go into the student's driveway, unless prior approval has been given due to the hazard of backing out. The bus horn will not be used to announce arrival.
4. Buses will not generally travel down cul-de-sacs unless the vehicle is picking up a child with a disability using a special education bus. Backing a school bus is a dangerous maneuver. A full-sized bus needs 115 feet to safely turn and most cul-de-sacs are only 90 feet wide.
5. Unless prior approval has been given and transportation has approved, no school bus will travel on private roads or stop at private driveways. Students are expected to walk out to meet the bus.
6. Bus stops should be located with clear visibility for 300 feet in both directions.
7. Stops in or out of residential areas may not be located within 300 feet of each other.
8. School Buses may load/unload in right-turn lanes using four-way flashers if pre-approval has been given. Eight-way lights will not be used and students must not cross the road.
9. There are not a fixed number of students that warrant adding or moving a stop. All stops are determined on an individual basis, using District Policy as the guideline.
10. Visibility from the home to the bus stop is not part of the criteria for establishing bus stops.
11. Stranger-Danger criteria are used only under documented persisting or current cases that public safety can verify.
12. The bus driving by a home does not warrant adding or changing a stop. The higher frequency of stops can make the motoring public "impatient" and cause drivers to drive around the bus, causing greater safety concern than the distance a student has to walk to the bus stop. It also delays the bus, making the overall student time on the bus longer.

## **F. Bus Routes**

Bus routes are arranged according to geographic area and stops are assigned up to 6 blocks from a student's home (in city limits) and up to three-fourths of a mile for rural students whenever possible. Students will be assigned to a neighborhood stop. Neighborhood stops are chosen based on the general layout of a subdivision, taking into consideration student and bus safety, and typically include 3-5 equally spaced stops within the subdivision, so the majority of students are walking an equal distance to access a bus stop. Neighborhood stops are important on the routes to keep the rider time at a minimum. The bus route and/or stops may change from year to year based on growth/sprawl in subdivisions, increased ridership, changes in road conditions/layout, changes in school attendance boundaries and/or budget changes.

## **G. Bus Ridership**

If a student has preregistered for a bus pass and they are eligible for busing, they will have a bus pass available at the school they will be attending prior to the start of the new school year. Students are only allowed to register for transportation to and from the same address; transportation to/from multiple addresses are not allowed. Students in middle school and high school may only ride to the residence of their parent/legal guardian, if the address meets eligibility requirements. Students are required to ride to and from the assigned bus stop that services their home address and the school the student attends. Students are not allowed to ride to or from an alternate address, with the exception of an eligible and approved daycare, as described below. In the interest of student safety, no student will be allowed to use a school building as their drop off or pick up address.

All busing information will be listed on a student's bus pass. Students must ride the bus that they are assigned. Bus route numbers are listed on the side of each bus next to the door. At the discretion of the bus driver or bus operator manager, students may be assigned seats at any time. Students will be expected to abide by all the school bus safety rules, which are posted in every bus. Students must also attend school bus safety training within the first 6 weeks of school every year. This is scheduled during the school day. The results of this training must be reported to the State of Minnesota. For a full list of expectations at the bus stop and bus riding rules and regulations, please see "Mankato Area School Transportation Rules and Regulations," which is given to all students each fall. Copies are also available in the Central Registration Office.

## **H. Nonpublic Students**

Minnesota Statute 123.79 requires the school district to provide equal services to nonpublic students who live within the Mankato Area Public Schools geographic boundaries. Students must follow the same requirements as public school students in regards to walking distance from school to determine eligibility; distance to a bus stop; and receiving transportation to and from only one address. Per Statute and School Board Policy, the District can enforce attendance boundaries for nonpublic schools, as public schools in the District have attendance boundaries.

## **I. Daycare Service**

The following daycare information will apply:

The Transportation Department will regard a student's daycare location as their residence for the purpose of transportation if requested by the parent/guardian. It is required that the daycare be located in the same school attendance area as the child is attending and more than 1 mile from school. Daycare transportation will only be considered for students in K-5th grade. If daycare transportation is requested via completion of the Daycare Transportation Form, transportation will only be provided to and from the student's daycare. The student will not be eligible for any transportation to or from their home address. The pickup and drop-off bus stop may not vary from day to day but must be the same location every morning and every afternoon. Parents must request daycare transportation each school year, so it is imperative that the parent/guardian complete the Daycare Transportation Form before July 1 of each year to make the request for daycare transportation for the upcoming school year. This allows the department to establish routes as accurately as possible.