

5501 Transportation Policy and Guidelines

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

School transportation services will be provided within the limitations of available resources for transporting students to and from school and for transporting students to and from curricular and extracurricular activities sponsored by the schools. Home-to-school transportation will be provided for all resident students living outside a 1.5-mile radius of the Plattsmouth Middle School bus ramp. The transportation director will determine distances to residences and such measurements will be final. Transportation shall be provided for non-public students only at times when an established transportation route is being provided to public school students.

The District may transport students within city limits for extremely infrequent and unique circumstances such as emergency situations regarding safety. The District will comply with all state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to school bus transportation. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as well as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (PL 94-142) are mechanisms through which students with verified impairments or disabilities may be deemed eligible for transportation. As such, any parent inquiries regarding students with impairments or disabilities that may warrant consideration for transportation shall be directed to the students' respective education teams. The students' education teams will be responsible for determining students' eligibility for transportation in these situations. If students are deemed eligible for special education or 504 transportation, they will be provided transportation from their address of residence (that is on file) to school and from school back home to their address of residence, in addition to transportation that may be provided for learning experiences related to their education.

Buses carrying school children will be considered extensions of the school situation. All students using school bus transportation will abide by the code of conduct posted in each bus. Violations of the code, as well as other conduct that is improper or jeopardizes the safety of other students, will not be tolerated. The bus driver, using the appropriate procedure, will report such violations and violators may be denied use of school transportation.

The bus driver will be responsible for the bus at all times from departure until return. The driver will not participate in any activity that might impair their driving ability.

TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

The following transportation guidelines are provided to ensure safe, consistent home-to-school transportation for the students of Plattsmouth Community Schools. School bus transportation is a privilege and parents are encouraged to review proper conduct with their students.

General Guidelines

Whenever practical, bus routes should be planned so that students are not riding the bus more than one hour each trip. Additionally, whenever practical, bus routes should be planned so that no student will be required to walk more than 1.5 miles to board the school bus. Whenever practical, a bus stop location should not be established where visibility to other motorists is less than 500 feet.

A single address shall be used for both morning and afternoon transportation. No student may be picked up at one bus stop location and dropped off at a different bus stop location unless transportation staff members are notified in writing by parents or school administration.

Students are not permitted to use the school bus to ride home with friends without a note from parents. The school administration has the right to deny such a request. School buses are not to enter apartment complexes, cul-de-sacs, dead ends, mobile home courts, or private streets under any conditions. **Students not eligible for transportation are the parents' responsibility.** Parents must accompany early childhood students to an assigned location that is usually no more than 1-block from the home.

Parents of students who live where transportation by bus is impracticable or unavailable may be required to furnish transportation to and from the designated attendance center at the expense of the school district. It shall be within the discretion of the Board to determine such conditions. Parents, who transport their children at the expense of the school district, shall be reimbursed at the rate per mile set by the State. A student may be required at the Board's discretion to meet a school bus vehicle without reimbursement up to one-half mile.

Transportation arrangements made with a neighboring school district shall follow the terms of the agreement. Students who choose to attend a school in a school district other than their resident school district shall provide transportation to and from the school at their own expense.

Student Safety-A shared responsibility

The safety of students remains a shared responsibility. It is the responsibility of the parent to get students safely on the bus. The responsibility of transportation begins when students board the school bus. Parents must consider the prevailing climate and location of the neighborhood in which they live. If parents believe that certain aspects are "unsafe," they must take the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of their children while walking to and from bus stops and while waiting for the bus to arrive.

Transportation-Who is eligible?

All resident students who live more than 1.5 miles from the Plattsmouth Middle School bus ramp are eligible for home-to-school transportation. **Transportation for students who are not eligible is the responsibility of the parent.**

Early Childhood Students

All early childhood students must be accompanied to the bus. On the return trip, a responsible party must also be waiting at the curb to accept the student when the bus arrives.

Drivers and monitors are strictly prohibited from abandoning other students on the bus to get a student to the door in the evening. In the event that a responsible party is not at the stop to accept the early childhood student, the student will be returned to the school.

Drivers are not to drive around the neighborhood or repeatedly double back to the stop looking for someone to accept the student. Drivers will notify dispatch and contact will be made with parents or school administration.

Undeliverable Students-Where do they go?

A responsible party must meet early childhood students at their p.m. bus stop. If no one meets the student, he/she is undeliverable. If the student has an emergency contact person on file (within the immediate vicinity of the student's home), that person will be asked to accept the student. If the person declines to accept the student, the student will be taken back to school.

Drivers will notify dispatch and contact will be made with parents or school administration. Parents who repeatedly use the emergency address or cause students to be taken to school risk losing transportation privileges for their students.

Monitors/escorts, for early childhood and some special education -

Early childhood buses must have monitors/escorts on board when transporting students. Monitors/escorts, in cooperation with bus drivers, are responsible for the comfort and safety of students on the school bus. Monitors/escorts are to assist students on and off the bus, however, they are not to come to the door to get the student, nor are they to escort the student to the door on the return trip. Parents or other responsible parties must deliver these students to the stop and acknowledge that the students have been delivered to the stop on the return trip.

Field Trips

Regular field trips are usually taken Monday through Friday as scheduled. In the event that students miss their p.m. bus, due to the late return of a field trip, the student should contact the parent who will be responsible for transporting the student home.

Special field trips include athletic, late night, overnight, weekend, etc. will begin and end at the school. For these special trips, parents are responsible for getting students to the school, prior to the departure time for the trip, as well as being at the school to pick students up at the conclusion of the trip.

Field trip buses must be loaded and unloaded promptly. Buses are only required to wait 15 minutes beyond the scheduled pickup time. Before leaving the pick-up point, drivers should notify their dispatcher that the passengers are late. The dispatcher should then call the school and inform them that the charter is overdue for pick-up. If students don't show, buses may return to their base or proceed on with their next route.

Under no circumstances is a field trip bus to move unless a teacher, chaperone, or other authorized district official is on board to monitor the students. Under no circumstances, is a field trip bus to move until the aisles are cleared.

If the trip is 90-minutes or less, or if valuables (luggage, instruments, etc.) are left on the bus, the driver must stay with the bus (lunches are not considered valuables and should not be left on the bus during these short trips) unless the bus is locked.

Students are allowed to consume approved drinks and snacks on the buses, prior to an athletic activity.

Adults not employed by the District or one of its contractors may ride buses as chaperones during field trips, if authorized to do so by school officials. Chaperones should complete the volunteer application process and be approved, prior to assisting with field trips.

Chaperones are expected to set an example for the students by following District rules and regulations regarding student conduct on the bus. Chaperones may assist as needed in maintaining order, but the driver is in charge of the activities on the bus during any field trip and is authorized to curb a bus when he/she determines that misconduct is creating a safety hazard on the bus. Under no circumstances are chaperones to involve themselves in a physical altercation with students.

The chaperone is responsible to walk through the bus immediately after the students have unloaded to ensure there is no trash left behind. It is the chaperone's responsibility to have the mess cleaned up. Chaperones are also expected to sign off on the charter sheet that they have inspected the vehicle.

Bus Stop Changes

Regular bus transportation shall be provided to designated stops on bus routes, outside city limits, within the school district. Occasional exceptions to regular bus schedules shall require prior administrative approval.

Those desiring a new regular stop designation shall complete a "Request for Bus Stop Designation" form, available from a school office or on the District website at www.pcsd.org. For the purpose of this policy, a "new bus stop designation" shall be defined as a new physical stop location or a change in a student's regular bus stop location (i.e. a stop other than the student's residence, whether new or existing).

Criteria for the addition of a bus stop designation shall be as follows:

1. The stop location must be along a current bus route. *Note:* A person may submit a "Request for Bus Stop Designation" form, even if the requested stop is not currently on an existing bus route. These requests will be taken into consideration prior to the start of each school year, when new bus routes are being developed.
2. The new stop must not cause the bus route time to exceed sixty (60) minutes. Any bus route that exceeds sixty (60) minutes in length will not be allowed additional stop designations.
3. The addition must not cause the bus to exceed its maximum desirable capacity. The maximum desirable capacity for all buses shall be 80% of the maximum capacity stated on the bus. Any bus that exceeds 80% of the maximum capacity stated on the bus will not be allowed additional stop designations.

The District does not provide temporary transportation while stop changes are being processed, and transportation during any waiting period is the responsibility of the parent.

Service complaints

Service complaints are to be called into the First Student Services at 296-0669. Upon receipt, the complaint is forwarded to the appropriate individual, who is then given 48-hours to respond.

No-shows

Parents of all students are required to contact First Student each day their student is not going to ride the bus, for any reason. If a student has three consecutive unreported absences, service is to be suspended until the parent contacts First Student to re-activate the stop.

School Bus Discipline

All District students are required to follow each of the bus rules that have been established to ensure safe transport to and from school. Failure of a student to obey these rules puts the driver, other students, the motoring public, and the problem child at risk and will not be tolerated. Statistically, the vast majority of school bus accidents occur when drivers are distracted from their driving duties by unruly students. If repeated verbal and written warnings, suspensions, and other remedies by the driver and school officials have no effect, the student may be denied transportation.

Student Conduct (including special education and early childhood)

See Policy 5507 Student Conduct on School Transportation, Policy 5507A Student Conduct on School Transportation Regulation, and 5507B Use of Video Cameras on School Buses Regulation.

School Bus Conduct Infractions (examples are provided; the list is not exhaustive)

1. Physically or verbally assaulting the driver in any manner.
2. Possession of firearms or weapons of any kind.
3. Possession of illegal drugs, smoking, or lighting fires.
4. Tampering with emergency exits.
5. Extending body parts or objects out the window.
6. Fighting or wrestling of any kind.
7. Repeated use of abusive and obscene language.
8. Vandalism or defacing school buses.
9. Throwing objects on or from the bus.
10. Playing radios, tape recorders, or CD/tape players out loud.
11. Eating food, drinking beverages or littering.
12. Failure of students to exit the bus at the assigned stop.
13. Disorderly and/or disruptive behavior of any kind that endangers the safety of others.
14. Students that continue a pattern of inappropriate behavior listed above, after repeated disciplinary actions, are subject to long-term loss of riding privileges.

Student Misconduct Notice-Processing

Whenever a child's behavior is disruptive to the point of creating a hazardous situation, the driver writes a misconduct notice. Documentation is required for all incidents.

In the event of disruptive conduct, the driver or supervisor will call the parents. A misconduct file will then be started; a second misconduct notice will be grounds for disciplinary action. Drivers must be advised of suspension days, as soon as possible, so the student will not be transported. If the driver or supervisor has difficulty getting school personnel to act on the misconduct notices in a timely manner, the supervisor will notify the Superintendent.

If repeated disciplinary action at the school level does not result in improved conduct on the bus, then school principals will be consulted to deny the student transportation privileges. During any period in which the transportation privilege is lost due to the misconduct of student, transportation to and from school becomes the sole responsibility of the parent.

Emergency Evacuation

Emergency evacuation drills will be conducted at least two times per year for each student regularly transported to and from school in accordance with Nebraska School Transportation Regulations.

1. All students should know proper evacuation procedures, with safety being the first and primary consideration. Students should be instructed in bus safety and drill procedures; they should know where and how to get help.
2. Students may be evacuated through the front door only, the rear emergency door only or the front and rear simultaneously. Students in the seat closest to the exit will be evacuated first.

At the time of evacuation, the bus driver will designate two to four students to assist in counting, helping to unload and/or keeping control of students in designated areas.

Students should be at least 100 feet from the bus upon exiting and remain there in a group, until given further instructions.

A school administrator, bus supervisor, or a designee should supervise the drills. The drills should be organized similar to fire drills and held on school property rather than on route. The drills should vary type of exit (front door, rear door, etc.).

Drivers should remain on the bus during the drill. Children are not permitted to take lunch boxes, books, etc. with them when exiting the bus. Getting students off safely, quickly and orderly is the objective of the drill.

Nebraska Safe Pupil Transportation Plan

Additional transportation guidelines are provided in Policy 5506 Nebraska Safe Pupil Transportation Plan. A copy of this plan should be available in each District vehicle.

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