

Policies

Westerly Public Schools School Bus No Idling – Breathe Better RI

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Applicability:

This policy applies to the operation of every diesel-powered school bus operating in the district and owned by Westerly Public Schools and to all vehicles operating on school grounds.

Rationale:

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), exposure to diesel exhaust, even at low levels, is a serious health hazard and can cause respiratory problems such as asthma and bronchitis. Diesel emissions are well-documented asthma triggers and may increase the severity of asthma attacks.

Westerly Public Schools agrees to undertake the following steps immediately in accordance with RIGL 31-47.3, RIGL 31-16.1, RIGL 23-23-29.2 and DEM Air Pollution Control Regulation No. 45 “Rhode Island Diesel Engine Anti-Idling Program”:

- School bus drivers will shut off bus engines immediately upon reaching destination, and buses will not idle while waiting for passengers. This rule applies to all bus use, including daily route travel, field trips, and transportation to and from athletic events. School buses will not be restarted until they are ready to depart and there is a clear path to exit the pick-up area.
- School bus companies and drivers will limit idling time during early morning warm-up at the bus garage to manufacturers’ recommendations-generally 3-5 minutes in all but the coldest weather. Below are the guidelines for idling in cold weather.

If the temperature is:	Above 20 degrees F:	5 minute maximum
	Between –10 and 20 degrees F:	15 minute maximum
	Below –10 degrees F:	as necessary

- Westerly Public Schools will provide an indoor warming space for drivers who arrive early and need to keep warm. This reduces the need for bus idling. No bus will remain idling without a driver in the bus.
- Transportation operations staff will evaluate and shorten bus routes whenever possible, particularly for older buses with the least effective emissions control. Our district will review bus purchasing schedules and routing to further improve emission performance.
- School district bus drivers will complete a “no idling” training session. All bus drivers will receive a copy of this “No Idling” policy at the beginning of every school year.
- The construction of new schools will incorporate measures to minimize children’s exposure to diesel emissions. All schools will design bus parking zones to limit diesel exhaust inside the bus and in the school, including avoiding proximate school air intake vents, and parking buses

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on the diagonal to prevent front-to-back passing of emissions and to reduce diesel fumes in each bus. The direction of the prevailing winds should be considered.

- Additionally, new school construction will post signage expressly prohibiting the idling of all vehicles for more than five minutes in the school zone.

Adopted: January 2, 2005

Revised: January 3, 2007

Revised: March 19, 2014

Revised: May 1, 2024