

BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION

SECTION: 3000
CATEGORY: Business & Non-Instructional Operations
POLICY CODE: 3541/Transportation

Transportation

The Board of Education will provide transportation, under provisions of state law and regulation, under contract, for all students who qualify for such service, except in those instances wherein the services may be provided more economically by other means.

The Superintendent of Schools shall administer the operation so as to:

1. Provide for maximum safety of students.
2. Supplement and reinforce desirable student behavior patterns.
3. Assist handicapped students appropriately.
4. Enrich the instructional program through carefully planned field trips as recommended by the staff.

Transportation by private carrier may be provided whenever such practice is more economical than using school district-owned vehicles. Parents may be reimbursed for transportation of eligible students whenever such practice is more economical or convenient.

Federal Compliance

Transportation will be provided for homeless students to and from the school of origin as required by the No Child Left Behind Act. These services shall be provided throughout the regularly scheduled school year and day as determined by the Board.

Transportation will be provided for an eligible student who attends a district school out of the student's attendance area because his/her home school has been identified as in need of improvement, or the student is a victim of a violent criminal offense occurring in or on the grounds of the school the student attends or the student attends a school identified as persistently dangerous.

Transportation may be provided to eligible students who transfer from a district school to an out-of- district school under a cooperative agreement because their home school has been identified as in need of improvement under the No Child Left Behind Act.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes

10-186 Duties of local and regional boards of education 10-220 Duties of boards of education

14-275 Equipment and color of school buses

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14-275a Use of standard school bus required, when. 14-275b Transportation of handicapped students.
14-275c Regulations re school buses and motor vehicles used to transport special education students.
14-276a (c) Town/school district may require its school bus operators to have completed a safety training course.
14-280 Letters and signals to be concealed when not used in transporting children. Signs on other vehicles.
20 U.S.C. NCLB Act of 2001, P.L. 107-110, Title I, Section 1116
McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001, P.L. 107-110, 42 U.S.C., Sections 11431-11435

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Transportation Administrative Guidelines

I. Responsibilities:

Under Connecticut General Statutes, it is the responsibility of the Bridgeport Board of Education to provide for the transportation of children to and from school, within the criteria listed below.

- a. The Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles establishes rules and regulations about equipment, capacity and operation of buses; and inspects vehicles, which provide student transportation, services to school.
- b. The Bridgeport Police Department is responsible for crossing guard protection, physical security and enforcement of traffic regulations.
- c. The transportation contractor is responsible for providing student transportation within the laws and regulations established by the State of Connecticut, the Bridgeport Police Department and within the policies established by the Bridgeport Board of Education as listed below.
- d. School bus drivers shall be responsible for the safety of all pupils while they are on and about the bus. Drivers are required to report to the building principal and bus company supervisor violations of any rules and regulations concerning the conduct of pupils on the bus or at bus stops. Drivers are expected to maintain order among the students in their charge.
- e. The School Administration is responsible for managing and overseeing the adopted policy and administrative regulations of the Bridgeport Board of Education. At each school, the principal shall provide for the safe unloading and loading of buses at the beginning and end of the school day.
- f. The student is responsible for remaining seated during the ride to and from school, to be respectful of others, to not use foul language, to not throw items from the bus and to follow the instructions of the driver.
- g. The parents and guardians are responsible for the behavior of their children and for working with the school district to make student transportation as safe as possible.

II. Definitions:

- A. **“School transportation”** means the procedure, program, or fully effective and implemented plan by which student is conveyed to and /or from school from the student’s residence or the bus stop at public expense, whether by use of publicly owned equipment or by contract. Such Transportation shall be over

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public roads approved by the City or private roads approved pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-220c.

B. **“Walking distance” for elementary school students** means the linear measure of a prescribed or authorized pedestrian route between the student’s residence and the bus stop or school, measured from the center of the curb line or edge of the paved road in front of the student’s residence to the bus stop or bus pickup or drop-off area at the elementary school.

“Walking distance” for high school students means the linear measure of a prescribed or authorized pedestrian route between the student’s residence and his/her bus stop or school, measured from the center of the curb line or edge of the paved road in front of the student’s residence to the designated stop or nearest safe entrance to the school grounds. The Board may determine the maximum walking distance subject to budgetary constraints.

C. The maximum walking distances from home to school or to a prescribed bus stop are as follows:

Students enrolled in elementary school, grades K through 8, one mile up to 1.5 miles

Students enrolled in grades 9 through 12, two miles up to 2.5 miles

Parents and guardians are encouraged to walk children to bus stops and monitor behavior until the students enter the bus.

D. **“Hazard”** means a thing or condition, as prescribed in these administrative procedures, affecting the safety of students walking to and from school. The Board of Education recognizes the City’s Department of Emergency Management & Homeland Security for the purposes of making judgments regarding safety.

E. **“Raised walk or sidewalk”** means a portion of the landscaped right-of-way at least three feet wide, usually parallel to the traffic lanes which may be paved or unpaved; and may be distinguished by some elevation above the street pavement level; and may be marked by curbing, drainage ditch, grass area, or fencing, apart from and independent of any white line safety markings along the street pavement.

F. **“Student”** means any individual of school age residing in Bridgeport and enrolled in a public or non-profit private school, located within the school district.

G. **“Grade K”** means a kindergarten student.

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H. **Elementary Student**” means a student in grades K through 8.

I. **“High School Student”** means a student in grade 9, 10, 11 or 12.

J. **“Bus Stop”** means a geographical location designated by the Bridgeport Board of Education or school administration where students can safely wait for purposes of boarding or debarking a school bus.

III. Guidelines for extending transportation to students for reasons of safety and/or health:

The following guidelines are established to assist the administration in making judgments relative to extending transportation privileges to students who must travel to and from school and whose safety and/or health may be affected by requiring such a student to walk.

A. Health Considerations

1. The Bridgeport Public Schools may provide transportation to students who have a disability or illness, which could be aggravated by requiring the student to walk the required distance set forth in the Policy.

2. Each request shall be filed with the Coordinator of School Transportation. The request shall be accompanied by any medical record, certificate, evaluation, recommendation, etc., deemed sufficient to review the medical status of the student annually.

3. The Coordinator of School Transportation will make his/her findings and recommendations within five working days of receipt of all documentation related to the case and previously requested.

4. Appeals For Health Considerations

If a parent is dissatisfied with the ruling of the school official the parent may make a request in writing for a hearing to appeal the decision.

Appeals resulting from decisions of the Coordinator of School Transportation shall be heard by the Transportation Committee of the Bridgeport Board of Education.

B. Safety Hazards

1. Bridgeport Public Schools may provide transportation to students where a

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hazardous condition exists according to the following standards:

(a) street or road having an adjacent or parallel sidewalk or raised walk area shall be deemed hazardous when any one of the following conditions exist:

For elementary students, absence of a pedestrian crossing light or crossing guard where three or more streets intersect, and at street crossings where there are no stop signs or crossing guards and the traffic count during the time that children are walking to or from school exceeds 60 vehicles per hour.

Any street, road or highway with speed limits in excess of forty miles per hour, which do not have pedestrian crossing lights or crossing guards or other safety provisions at points where students must cross while going to or from school.

The usual or frequent presence of any nuisance which is potentially dangerous to children including but not limited to open manholes; construction; snow plowed or piled on the walk areas making walkways unusable; loading zones where delivery trucks are permitted to park on walkways; commercial entrances and exits where cars are crossing walking areas at speeds in excess of five miles per hour.

(b) Any highway or main artery, which has no adjacent or parallel sidewalks or raised walk area and is used as an accepted or suggested route for non-residential vehicular traffic shall be deemed hazardous for elementary school students. Streets in residential sections in which the use primarily serves the needs of the people living in those areas shall not be considered hazardous unless otherwise determined by the Department of Emergency Management & Homeland Security of the City of Bridgeport.

(c) A lake, pond, stream, culvert or waterway may be deemed a hazard in the absence of a fence or other suitable barrier fixed between the student and the water.

(d) Any area adjacent to a roadway, walkway or bridge having a drop of three or more feet per four feet of travel length on either side of the established lanes, without a fence or other suitable barrier, shall be deemed hazardous for elementary school students.

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(e) Any street, road walkway or path designated as a walking route for school students which passes through an area which has a history of aggressive acts or molestation resulting in actual or threatened physical harm or moral degradation during the hours when students ordinarily walk to or from school shall be deemed hazardous. However, the school administration may designate alternate walking routes that students should travel.

(f) Any walkway, path or bridge in an area adjacent or parallel to railroad tracks shall be considered hazardous unless a suitable physical barrier along the entire pedestrian route is present and fixed between students and the track; and any crossing of railroad tracks that carry moving trains during hours that students are walking to or from school shall be deemed hazardous unless, (1) a crossing guard is present, or (2) an automatic control bar is present at crossings used by students under age ten, or, a bar or red flashing signal light is operational when the crossing is used by students over ten years of age.

2. The school administration, in consultation with the Department of Emergency Management & Homeland Security of the City of Bridgeport, may grant an exception to any provision of this guideline where in the judgment of the school administration a unique condition or combination of conditions renders such conditions(s) a hazard.

3. The Transportation Coordinator shall be responsible for administering the transportation program for students.

4. **Appeals for safety or denial of service:** If a parent is dissatisfied with the decision of the Transportation Coordinator, the parent may make a written appeal of the decision. Appeals resulting from decisions of the Director of Business shall be considered by the Transportation Committee of the Bridgeport Board of Education.

IV. Transportation for Magnet School, NCLB or Controlled Transfer:

To accommodate children selected to participate in the Bridgeport Magnet Programs or transportation provided as a result of No Child Left Behind, Bridgeport Public Schools offers transportation within the same guidelines that apply to other elementary students.

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Transportation is offered from a designated stop near the home, provided it is one mile or more from the school. Pickup and drop-off locations must be the same address.

V. Transportation for Day Care:

Bridgeport Public Schools provides transportation from the home to the school and back. The school district will not provide transportation services to baby sitters or relatives.

VI. Private, Charter Schools, Vocational Technical and Vocational Agricultural School Transportation:

Connecticut General Statutes require Bridgeport Public Schools to transport children, who reside in Bridgeport, to and from private non-profit schools and certain Vocational-Technical Schools in nearby communities. The guidelines for this transportation are the same as those for public school children of the appropriate grade level.

VII. Student Behavior:

Connecticut General Statutes allows school administration to take away transportation privileges to students engaging in improper behavior. The school administration will use due process procedures when removing privileges and must contact parents or guardians during the exclusion process. Video cameras may be used to monitor behavior.

VIII. Reporting Safety Complaints:

- a. The Superintendent shall maintain a written record of complaints regarding school transportation safety and report them to the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles within thirty days after the end of the school year.
- b. The Superintendent shall report to the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, within ten days of occurrence, any accident involving a motor vehicle and any student pedestrian at any bus stop or immediate vicinity thereof.

IX. Miscellaneous Regulations:

- a. The School administration shall establish suitable pickup and drop-off points for those students being transported.
- b. Buses, with or without students, will not be permitted to enter roads that end in cul-de-sacs that require buses to back up. Motor vehicle regulations prohibit backing up a school bus during the pickup and drop off process.

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c. Except for Magnet or NCLB, transportation across school attendance area lines is not permitted.

d. Bridgeport Public Schools reserves the right to use video cameras to monitor behavior on school transportation vehicles. Under Federal Law, these recordings are considered student records and not available to the general public for viewing.

e. Transportation is the responsibility of the parent when a controlled transfer is requested and granted.

XII. Appeals:

Parents may appeal a decision of a Transportation Committee created by the Bridgeport Board of Education to the State Board of Education pursuant to Section 10-186 of the Connecticut General Statutes and in accordance with Sections 4-177 through 4-180 inclusive.

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 10-221c Development of procedures for reporting complaints.
- 10-280a Transportation for students in non-profit private schools outside school district.
- 10-281 Transportation for students in non-profit private schools within school district.
- 14-275a Use of standard school bus required when.
- 14-275b Transportation of handicapped students.
- 14-275c Regulations - school buses and motor vehicles used to transport special education students.
- 14-280 Letters and signals to be concealed when not used in transporting children. Signs on other vehicles

Adopted: 9/8/25