

Administrative Procedure 512 – Transportation



AP 512 – Transportation

PURPOSE

The Board of Education of Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools (NLPS) is committed to providing safe, caring and inclusive learning environments and school sponsored activities. To this end, the Board takes responsibility for communicating such expectations to staff, students and parents on a regular basis. Such expectations are clearly outlined in each school's Code of Conduct which governs student behaviour at school, school sponsored activities and events, and while in transit. The District's Administrative Procedures for Code of Conduct is [AP 344](#).

The Board has also determined that the most effective way to support student transportation is to educate, promote and support Active Transportation within NLPS. Active Transportation establishes healthy and active lifestyles while reducing the need to emit greenhouse gas emissions, shifting towards a sustainable future.

PROCEDURE:

Active Transportation for Students

The Board of Education believes that the school has an important role to play in promoting the health and fitness of students, their families and the wider community by implementing active transportation initiatives. Active transportation is any form of human-powered transportation (walking, jogging, cycling, inline skating, etc.). Active transportation provides students the opportunity to be physically active on a regular basis and help them to achieve the recommended 60 minutes of daily, moderate to vigorous physical activity. Regular physical activity can reduce the growing rate of childhood obesity, type II diabetes, and chronic health conditions in later life.

Physical activity prior to the school day helps prepare students for learning by increasing their ability to concentrate on academic pursuits, decreasing anxiety and stress, and increasing socialization. It has similar benefits at the end of the school day. Active transportation also promotes several societal benefits including social, environmental, transportation and economic.

Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools will promote active transportation for students through a variety of initiatives such as but not limited to:

- Partnerships with the Ministry of Transportation, the City of Nanaimo, Town of Ladysmith, Regional District of Nanaimo, Cowichan Valley Regional District, and the RCMP to increase road safety and create safe routes to schools
- Active Transportation Planners
- Participation in Walk to School Month
- Educating students, parents, and the community in road safety
- Creating no-stopping zones around schools
- Establishing “walking school bus” type initiatives
- Reducing barriers to walking
- Safe Walk to School program (district initiative – maps/routes etc.)
 - The district will assist schools in the Safer School Travel Program.
- Crossing guards
- Greater Nanaimo Cycling Coalition
- Hub for Active School Travel (HASTe)

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION

Regular transportation will be provided by school bus, which is considered to be an extension of the school; therefore, students are expected to behave accordingly as stipulated in their school’s code of conduct. Bus stops shall be established by the Transportation Department who shall take into account factors such as safety, time and distance to school. It is understood, that to minimize the number of stops students may be required to travel a considerable distance to and from their bus stop. In the interest of efficiency, the Board’s objective is to provide, within the limitations of this administrative procedure, maximum service with a minimum fleet of buses.

To ensure the district allocates its transportation funds most efficiently, each bus route will be reviewed annually. In the event that eligible ridership falls below 50% capacity of the bus, the route will be automatically considered for review.

The District will collaborate with local transit authorities to minimize service duplication.

A school bus transportation brochure is available online or from the Transportation Department and covers details related to student discipline, inclement weather, and miscellaneous ridership.

ELIGIBILITY & WALK LIMITS

In this section, the term “passable road” shall be defined as a street, road, highway, lane or walkway that has been established as a pedestrian or vehicular route by the municipality or the province.

NLPS will perform a reasonable assessment of hazard concerns, the District does not control road or roadside improvements and it is therefore the responsibility of local authorities such as the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to provide safety improvements. The District will work with the City of Nanaimo, Regional District of Nanaimo, Township of Ladysmith, the District of Lantzville or Ministry of Transportation to assess issues which may affect the safety of students in order to help mitigate hazards. Students who are residents of NLPS and meet the following criteria will be considered eligible for school bus transportation to and from their designated catchment school:

- Kindergarten to Grade 3 students who live in a residence that is located more than 4 km from their school, measured by the nearest passable road
- Grades 4 to 12 students who live in a residence that is located more than 4.8 km from their school, measured by the nearest passable road

All Kindergarten to Grade 12 students may be required to travel up to 3.2 kilometers to the nearest bus stop.

Eligible Students beyond Established Walk Limits

Students desiring regular school bus transportation must register online for transportation privileges within two weeks of commencing school. Instructions to register online.

Once registered, students must use school bus transportation regularly; otherwise their seat will be re-allocated or service to that bus stop may be eliminated. If a student's ridership falls below 50% their case will be reviewed by the district with a possible outcome being termination of their ridership.

Students not registered as above will be considered to have elected to make their own way to and from school and must do so for the entire year.

ZPASS

Once eligible students are registered, they will be issued a ZPass card by the Transportation Department. The ZPass cards must be used by the student when boarding and exiting the bus. This procedure provides safety information for staff and parents as well as ridership statistics for route management.

Guidelines for the issue, use and replacement of ZPass cards are available online or by contacting the Transportation Department (250-741-5214). It must be noted that additional or replacement ZPass cards must be purchased.

OUT OF CATCHMENT AND DISTRICT PROGRAMS

Students who choose to attend a school outside their catchment area, or attend a District Program of Choice (e.g. French Immersion, Career Education, Academies, etc.) are not eligible for transportation services but may be allowed access to transportation services as a courtesy rider.

BUS STOPS

School bus stops will be established taking into account terrain, roads and population density. Efforts will be made so that students will not be required to walk more than 3.2 km along an established bus route.

Students wishing to leave the bus at a stop other than their regular one, must have a note from a parent or guardian.

SAFETY AND HAZARDOUS WALKING CONDITIONS

The district recognizes that the varied topography of areas within NLPS may present hazardous walking conditions. Narrow road shoulders, ditches lining roads, and the lack of sidewalks are considered to be normal in the rural areas of the district. Thus, students and parents or guardians in NLPS would be expected to assess the pedestrian conditions that affect them and take proper measures to ensure student safety travelling to and from school or bus stop.

The Board also recognizes that there may be a few abnormal temporary circumstances which may obstruct the way of students who travel to and from school (e.g. flooding). Such conditions will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

The transportation of students in areas of unusual hazards and bus stop locations requires continuous evaluation. The Bus Route & Hazard Evaluation form and information will be utilized to evaluate the feasibility and continuation of bus routes and to evaluate concerns brought forward regarding bus routes or the safe walk route of a student to and from school.

While the Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools will perform a reasonable assessment of local significant or non-significant hazard concerns, the Nanaimo Ladysmith School District does not control road or roadside improvements and it is the responsibility of local authorities such as the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to provide safety improvements.

For a detailed outline of the District's Bus Route and Hazard Evaluation Form refer to [Appendix A](#).

Adult Crossing Guard Program

An adult crossing guard is an adult person employed to supervise and expedite the crossing of school children at complex, hazardous or congested crossing locations. A discussion regarding the review of an Adult Crossing Guard Program is first initiated through the assistant superintendent. For a detailed outline of the District's procedures for training Adult Crossing Guards refer to [Appendix B](#).

ROUTE REVIEW PROCESS

The District has developed a matrix for establishing and maintaining bus routes. The district will review bus routes on an annual basis. The community may also request the addition of a bus route, at which time the district will complete a Bus Route and Hazard Evaluation form (Appendix A) and the Bus Route Transportation Criteria Matrix ([Appendix C](#)). The Matrix is a tool that will aid in the decision to create, maintain, alter or eliminate a bus route.

For a detailed outline of the District's guidelines for the Bus Route Evaluation and Recommendations Process refer to [Appendix D](#).

TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE

Transportation assistance is the partial funding towards the cost of student transportation.

The district may provide transportation assistance for students who live in NLPS and who reside further than 4 kilometers (K - 3), and 4.8 kilometers (4-12) from a school bus route or bus stop.

In order to qualify for assistance each year, the student's parents or guardian must apply to the Transportation Department via the [Transportation Assistance Allowance form](#). Download form and return to the district's Transportation Department, please call (250) 741-5214.

The continued payment of the Transportation Allowance is dependent upon the student's regular attendance at school and satisfactory behaviour. Irregular school attendance or unsatisfactory behaviour may result in a discontinuation of payment.

Where there are an insufficient number of eligible pupils to establish or maintain a bus route, and parents wish to provide transportation for their children, the District may pay, upon application from the parents/guardians, a transportation assistance allowance. The amount paid will be determined by the District. Full responsibility for safe transportation and insurance coverage rests with the vehicle owner.

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The District may elect to offer parents travel assistance in lieu of providing bus transportation and will provide parents or guardians with a minimum of one month notice.

From time to time, the Transportation Manager will review the amount provided and/or calculation for transportation assistance in doing so they will consider other Districts practices as well as the current mileage paid to staff for use of personal vehicles and make recommendations accordingly.

Protection Island Ferry

The District will reimburse parents or guardians for the actual use of the ferry for the purpose of attending school.

SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Gabriola secondary school students are provided school bus transportation, in accordance with this procedure, from their bus stop to the Gabriola ferry. Once on the Nanaimo side, transportation is provided by the district to the designated school of attendance. BC Ferries provides an assistance program which covers fares for school attendance.

The district offers an option area in the North Oyster catchment. This offers students the option of bus service to either École North Oyster School, Ladysmith Primary or Ladysmith Intermediate Schools. See catchment map for *North Oyster Option*.

SCHOOL CLOSURES OR BOUNDARY CHANGES

Please refer to School Closure Administrative Procedure AP 521

SCHOOL OPENINGS

It is recognized that when opening a school, transportation may be affected in that schools become more accessible and more students fall within walk limits. In this case staff will revise the bus routes in accordance with policy and adjust accordingly. The route(s) will then be included in the route review process of this AP the following year.

TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The district recognizes that students enrolled in district special education programs may require special transportation consideration. The extent of this service will take into account factors identified below. Fiscal and logistical constraints may have a bearing on whether the desired transportation service can be provided. All arrangements shall be

confirmed by the Transportation Department before they are finalized each year. Travel time and time at school will be given due consideration when routes are developed.

Considerations for Transportation of Students with Special Needs

The goal of the district is to foster independence in all students; however, there are several considerations which may have bearing on whether transportation is provided to students who have special needs. Considerations are as follows:

- The child has been placed by the district into a District Special Education Program;
- The child's disability is of a physical nature;
- The child's ability to make safety related decisions;
- The child's Individual Education Plan; (e.g. Learning to ride public transit independently may be part of the child's program);
- The families' circumstances (e.g. Availability, ability and/or desire to assist with their child's transportation to school);
- The child's behaviour; and/or
- The availability of district resources.

Eligibility for Transportation

Subject to other provisions in this administrative procedure, typically only students with a physical disability, or those who are enrolled in a District Special Education Program will be eligible for consideration for transportation under this section. Only the student eligible for transportation due to their special needs can be transported on the special needs bus, even though siblings may attend the same school. Transportation decisions concerning every student with special needs shall be subject to an annual review. To apply for special needs transportation please speak to your child's school principal.

Service for Students with Special Needs

It is recognized that some students who have special needs will require door-to-door service. Approval for the provision of door-to-door service will be based on needs as assessed by district staff on a case-by-case basis. Door-to-door service will typically be provided by a special needs school bus.

COURTESY RIDERSHIP

The district will provide school bus service to eligible riders as its main priority.

The provision of courtesy ridership will only be available when seats remain unfilled after routes have been fully maximized by eligible students.

Courtesy ridership applications can be completed at any time but will not be considered until October 1st of each school year. Courtesy seats may be granted for students who are *not* eligible for school bus transportation services, provided all of the following conditions are met and understood:

- A seat is available on the bus (as determined by the Transportation Department)
- The bus stop already exists (no new stops will be added)
- The parent or guardian accepts responsibility for accompanying the student to and from the existing bus stop
- The bus route and the length of the trip are not affected
- The need has been identified for the entire school year
- Permission is granted for the current school year only
- Students shall abide by their school's code of conduct and expected school bus behaviour
- Courtesy ridership may be canceled at any time with one week's notice

CURRICULAR AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR TRANSPORTATION

A healthy school program is supported by curricular and extra-curricular activities for students. Curricular and extra-curricular programs are an important part of student learning and school climate.

All such activities must have clear educational value, proper advance preparation, informed parental consent, adequate supervision and a high standard of care. If transportation is required by students to participate in these activities all requests for transportation must go through the District's Transportation Department. The provision of transportation for extracurricular activities is the responsibility of schools. In addition, staff and volunteers must adhere to the District Fieldtrip Administrative Procedure AP 333.

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE

Riding on a school bus, whether for transportation to and from school, on a school-related curricular or extra-curricular activity, is a privilege not a right. At all times, the school bus is an extension of the school, its code of conduct and all NLPS Board policies and administrative procedures. Likewise, all disciplinary alternatives, including the suspension of bus riding privileges, may apply to misbehaviour.

Student Misbehaviour

The school bus driver will address student misbehaviour on a bus according to the School Bus Ridership brochure. The school principal will be informed and provided opportunity to be involved in all such incidents and they will be addressed in an educative, preventative and restorative manner when possible. Student school bus misbehaviour may result in consequences by the school principal.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

Video surveillance on school buses is used to promote positive behaviour and the safety of students and school bus drivers. In the event of a reported or observed incident, the review of recorded information may be used to assist in the investigation of the incident.

All records created while delivering a video surveillance program are subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. All media will be deleted at regular intervals. The recording will be kept for a minimum of twelve months.

VOLUNTEERS AND VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

Volunteer drivers assist the school in providing curricular and extra-curricular school activities to its students.

The district values the involvement and commitment of volunteers. While welcoming volunteer participation, the district is responsible for establishing safety procedures related to school volunteers. Therefore, all volunteers must abide by AP 310 – Volunteers. In addition, the use of volunteers shall not result in the displacement of an employee.

In addition to AP 310 and to qualify as a volunteer driver, the following criteria must be met:

- A minimum third party liability insurance of \$3,000,000
- A maximum of nine passengers (plus driver)
- Meet all vehicle safety requirements, including a seat belt for each passenger.
- Motor Vehicle Act Regulations must be followed with regard to Child Seating and Restraint Systems:
http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/26_58_1_1

BUS SAFETY TRAINING

School bus safety is a shared responsibility. Parents or guardians are a child's first teacher and provide safety instructions and/or accompanies their child to the bus stop. This is very important if the child is young and must cross the street or highway, or if there is concern about their safety while waiting for the bus.

The district's Transportation Department presents a student bus safety program to all Kindergarten and Grades 1, 3, 5 and 7 students on an annual basis at schools that receive regular busing. NLPS bus drivers provide a one hour bus safety session once per year which includes:

- A thorough review of the bus rules,
- A short video for younger students,
- A short bus ride that includes an earthquake drill and emergency evacuation, and
- A question and answer period.

School staff then provide an evaluation of the session that is submitted to the district's Transportation Department.

CHANGES TO SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULES

School requests to change bell schedules will be initiated by the school in consultation with the assistant superintendent and must be in accordance with AP 217 Changes to School Organizations. The assistant superintendent will involve the Transportation Department for information purposes in the decision making process.

SEATBELTS

It is the goal of the district to provide the safest student transportation system available. Beginning September 2019, Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools began operating two school buses equipped with three point seat belts for the driver and all passengers.

School buses are considered to be one of the safest vehicles on the road, however, the district wants to keep its students and other passengers as safe as possible. **Seat belts for all passengers will add an extra layer of protection. For buses where seat belts have been provided it is mandatory that they be worn at all times.**

The buses will be used for providing daily bus service to and from school as well as field trip service. Please ensure that all staff who may be utilizing school bus service are made aware of the mandatory requirement of seat belt use on these buses.

On field trips and bus routes, students will receive disciplinary action up to refusal of riding privileges' if not utilizing the seat belts. Bus drivers will provide assistance as required to ensure students are using the seat belts properly.

Students who may require assistance in using the seatbelts may request help from the bus driver before the bus is in motion. Drivers will announce prior to the bus moving that each student needs to be in their seat and seatbelts fastened. Students refusing to wear seatbelts in a legal and safe manner will be subject to disciplinary action. Repeated refusal to wear seatbelts will result in suspended riding privileges.

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