

Toronto District School Board

Operational Procedure PR504

Title: **TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS**

Adopted: December 16, 1998

Revised: April 28, 1999, **May 25, 2009**

Authorization:

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To provide administrative processes for the transportation of students in accordance with policy P020, Transportation of Students

2.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Executive Superintendent, Business Services

3.0 PROCEDURES

3.1. Medical Condition

A medical certificate signed by a physician is required. The Board reserves the right, with signed parental consent, to discuss transportation issues with the physician.

3.2. Appeal Process

- (a) The appeal committee will be comprised of three of the following people:
 - Chairperson: Comptroller of Administrative Services
 - One of two designated Principals or Transportation Officers
 - One of two designated School Superintendents
- (b) Parents should first contact their local transportation office to discuss the situation and if they are not satisfied, they may file an appeal.
- (c) A standard appeal form will be provided for the convenience of the parent. A separate letter is not required and relevant information may be attached to the form.
- (d) The appeal committee will meet within 15 working days of receipt of an appeal.
- (e) Parent will be advised in writing of the decision of appeal committee.
- (f) A log will be kept of appeals to report to the Board annually.

- (g) Appeals will be made if there is a major difference of policy interpretation for eligibility regarding medical, distance or safety criteria.
- (h) An appropriate representation (e.g. preferably an out-of-school-area Transportation Officer or Principal) of appeal members should be made based on the nature of the appeal.
- (i) In order to ensure continuity, the Manager of Transportation will review all appeals for consistent application of policy.
- (j) Any exemptions outside the policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- (k) The pool of designated members for the appeal committee should be representative of all of the quadrants of the city.
- (l) A final appeal would be made to the Comptroller of Administrative Services.
- (m) A parent may appoint a fourth member to the appeal committee, someone who has no vested interest in the outcome of the appeal.

3.3. Summary Of Mandatory Performance Requirements

- (a) *Insurance Coverage* Each respondent will be required to carry a minimum \$20 million coverage, combined per vehicle, per accident, for passenger and road hazard liability insurance.
- (b) *Radio Communication* Each vehicle must be equipped with a two-way radio online to a base station at each division's Transportation Department.
- (c) *Pick-up Times* To be no earlier than 7:30 a.m.
- (d) *Drop-off Times* To be no earlier than thirty (30) minutes prior to school start time.
- (e) *Wait Time for Pick-Up* Drivers must wait a minimum of two minutes.
- (f) *Student Travel Time* To be 1.25 hours maximum under normal conditions (may be longer with Board approval).
- (g) *Seat-belts* All vehicles – 48-passenger or larger are not required to have seat-belts.
- (h) *Child Seating and Restraint Systems (Car Seat, Booster Seats)* Car seats may be used on 20-passenger buses for the daily home-to-school transportation of students where the parent provides the car seat. Trained staff from the bus company will install the child seating on the bus. The seating must remain on the bus until the end of the school year.

Child seating and restraint systems Update: June 2005

The Ontario government's Bill 73, *An Act to Enhance the Safety of Children and Youth on Ontario's Roads*, was passed on December 6, 2004. Police officers will begin charging individuals as of September 2005. The legislation applies to private vehicles. Therefore, school principals must ensure that if students are being transported in a private vehicle and meet the requirements in section J.4(c)(i), that the legislation is followed. The Ministry of Transportation has not yet clarified issues of funding for this initiative in school boards. Requirements for taxis and other commercial vehicles is also to be determined.

- (i) *Age of Vehicles* Twelve (12) years maximum for 72-passenger buses or larger and ten (10) years maximum for all other vehicles.
- (j) *Subcontracting* No subcontracting is permitted without written approval.
- (k) *Noon-hour Drop-off Times* Kindergarten students must not be dropped off earlier than ten (10) minutes prior to start time.
- (l) *First Aid Training* All drivers must have a current and valid certificate in first aid and receive Epipen training.
- (m) *Seat-belt Cutters* All vehicles must be equipped with an appropriate number of seat-belt cutters.
- (n) *Childproof Locks* All vehicles, up to but not including 16-passenger capacity, used on a regular basis, must be equipped with childproof locks.
- (o) *Harness or safety vest* Where required and approved by the parent/guardian, the Board will provide harness or safety vests. Drivers will be instructed as to how to properly install them by the carrier.

3.4. Staggered School Hours

Altering school start and end times can result in reducing the number of vehicles required to transport students. When implementing staggered school hours the following guidelines should be adhered to:

- (a) The Transportation Department will identify the participating school or groups of schools.
- (b) Consultation to implement staggered school hours would involve:
 - Superintendents
 - Principals
 - School staffs
 - School councils
 - Parents
 - SEAC, when appropriate
 - Trustees
- (c) The consultation process will be completed by the end of March for implementation the following September.
- (d) Once a school has been identified as a staggered-hours school, the school's start and end times can only be changed by the appropriate Superintendent of Schools.
- (e) School start times shall not be altered by more than 30 minutes.
- (f) School start times shall not be altered unless vehicle reduction can be achieved.

3.5. Empty Seat Procedure

- (a) The Transportation Department will determine the number of seats available by the last week of September.
- (b) The school principal or designate (at the receiving school) may choose to identify students who live in the attendance area to fill available seats. Cancellation will occur if an eligible student requires transportation.
- (c) A list of students identified under the Empty Seat procedure will be forwarded to the Transportation Department.
- (d) Accommodation for non-eligible students will be for the current school year only and will not carry over to the following school year.
- (e) Accommodated students may be removed by the school principal at any time due to policy or funding changes.
- (f) New routes will not be established to accommodate the students.
- (g) The Empty Seat procedure does not apply to students wishing to attend special programs at their request.
- (h) Mid-day routes are intended for kindergarten students and students attending half-day programs only.
- (i) The Empty Seat Procedure is not eligible for appeal.

3.6. Transported Special Education Students

- (a) Transportation should be discussed with parents when a special education placement is offered at another school to identify if special transportation arrangements are required. If the student is not eligible for transportation according to the Policy of the Board, parents should be so informed. If the sending school is unsure about the eligibility of the student for transportation, parents should be informed that transportation staff will determine eligibility and will inform the *receiving school*.
- (b) It is the responsibility of the *sending school* to have the parent complete a current student application form and forward it to the area transportation office once the school completes the school section. The area transportation office will forward a copy of the application, with the appropriate notations, to the *receiving school*.
- (c) The *receiving school* staff should check student application forms as they are returned to the *receiving school* by the area transportation office. The form will indicate whether a student has been approved to be transported. The *receiving school* should ensure that students requiring transportation are included on the list of transported students sent to the *receiving school* in late August.

- (d) The Transportation Policy of the Board applies to all students including special education students, except as noted in this document. JK-5 students living 1.6 km or more from their designated school are eligible for school bus transportation. Students living less than that distance who either have a physical disability that severely limits walking or who function at less than the JK level may be eligible for transportation. Parents who are required to walk students to different schools in different directions for more than 1.6km may have the special education student transported by school bus.
- (e) Depending on distance and traffic conditions, students travelling long distances may be on the bus for up to 1.25 hours as allowed by Board Policy.
- (f) Eligible students in DD (formerly DH), ME, Diagnostic Kindergarten, Physical Programs, KELI, KIP, Primary LD, Primary Gifted, Primary Behavioural, Primary Diagnostic, Primary Autism Transition will receive **automatic door-to-door services**. Other students, except at the specific request of the principal, will receive **school-to-school transportation**.
- (g) Students in grade 6-8 and living less than 3.2km from their designated school are not eligible for transportation unless they have a physical condition that severely limits walking, or their conditions are such that they would be at risk traveling to and from school. If a student functions at less than grade 6, the 1.6 km distance criteria may be applied and school bus transportation may continue. Students beyond 3.2km are required to use public transit unless the principal identifies these students as being unable to handle public transit. The cost of the tickets is covered by the Student Transportation budget. Please refer to operational procedure PR668 on how to order tickets.
- (h) Students in grades 9-12 and living less than 4.8km from their designated school are not eligible for transportation unless they have a physical or other condition that severely limits walking. Students beyond this distance would normally be required to use public transit unless they are attending programs that are clearly identified as serving students who are not capable of handling public transit on their own. The cost of the tickets is covered by the Student Transportation budget if the family has financial need.
- (i) There is no need to complete a new student application form for students who will remain in the same school for the following year. The area transportation office will send rollover lists including students on buses, wheelchair vehicles, mini-vans, taxis or TTC to principals. Included in the memo to principals will be instructions to cross off the names of students not returning, and to complete transportation forms for students transferring to new schools and requiring transportation. School staff should contact parents to confirm that the address information will be valid for the following September.
- (j) It is critical that the rollover lists returned to the area transportation office include a notation for students with special circumstance; i.e. a grade 5 student who is unable to use public transit for grade 6 or does not meet the 3.2km criteria and requires school bus transportation. Please check with your area trans-

portation office if in doubt about distances and eligibility. In the case where the student attends school A and is identified to attend a special program at school B, school A is the *sending school* and school B is the *receiving school*.

- (k) Only **new** students entering into a Special Education Program for the first time need to complete a Student Transportation Application form. The form can be obtained from your child's local school and submitted to Student Transportation Services no later than the end of May. Parents will be advised by the local school regarding a student's eligibility for bus service.

NOTE: Changes or additions received the last week in August may result in a waiting time of up to ten business days before students receive transportation. Please provide parents with Student Transportation Department contact numbers so parents can call to confirm their child's status during the summer.

3.7. Guidelines for the Transportation of Special Education Students to Section 27, Psychiatric and Day Treatment Centres

(a) Within Toronto

- (i) Transportation may be provided when the following criteria have been met:

- The student shall qualify by reason of residence and age for admission to a public elementary or secondary school within Toronto.
- The student shall have been recommended by a psychiatrist.
- The appropriate department within the Board shall recommend or concur with such placement.

- (ii) The provision of transportation shall be governed by the following:

- A student may be provided with up to two trips per day (home to program and program to home).
- A half-day entitlement (4- and 5-year-olds) does not preclude transportation to a Section 27, psychiatric or day treatment centre the other half-day.
- Transportation will be provided for full or half-day programs.
- In very special circumstances, deviations from these guidelines may be made if approved by the Special Education Committee of Superintendents.

(b) To and From Facilities Outside Toronto

Students attending a facility in a residential setting outside Toronto, such as an Ontario school for the blind or deaf, a developmental centre or a psychiatric facility designated as such under the Mental Health Act, and who qualify by reason of residence and age for admission to a public elementary or secondary

school within Toronto, will be transported to and from such facilities on weekends. Requests for such transportation shall be reviewed by the Special Education Committee of Superintendents and recommendations made to the Board.

4.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Policy P020, Transportation of Students

Forms

504A, Student Transportation Application

504B, Student Transportation Application (Developmental Disability)

504C, Safety Vest Permission Letter

504D, Appeal Form