



## *Rainy River District & Northwest Catholic District School Boards*



The Northwest Catholic  
District School Board  
SCHOOLS OF HOPE

### ***JOINT TRANSPORTATION POLICY***

#### **POLICY**

The Rainy River and Northwest Catholic District School Boards will provide transportation, to and from school in the Rainy River District in accordance with Section 190 of the *Education Act*, through the Rainy River District Transportation Services Consortium (RRDTS).

#### **RATIONALE**

The Boards recognize the need to provide a safe, equitable, consistent, and cost-effective transportation service in accordance with those acts and regulations that govern transportation of pupils. The Boards recognize that bus service is a privilege and not a right, and as such it may be revoked at the RRDTS Consortium Management Committee's discretion.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

RRDTS Consortium procedures will be developed from this Joint Transportation Policy for the safe, efficient functioning of the transportation system. Every consideration shall be given to minimize student travel time.

#### **GUIDELINES**

##### **1.0 Eligibility for Transportation Purposes**

- 1.1 A student who lives within the jurisdiction of the Rainy River and Northwest Catholic District School Boards, is eligible for transportation within the school attendance zone in which they permanently reside.
- 1.2 Transportation may normally be provided in the following situations:
  - a) Secondary students living a greater distance than 3.2 kilometres on route travelled to the attended school.
  - b) Elementary students in Grades 1 to 3, living a greater distance than 1.0 kilometres on route travelled to the attended school.
  - c) Elementary students in Grades 4 to 8, living a greater distance than 1.60 kilometres on route travelled to the attended school.
  - d) Early Years (JK/SK) pick-up and drop-off shall be arranged to and from primary residence with consideration to safety, accessibility and traffic patterns.

- 1.3 Exceptional students identified by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee of the Board will be eligible for special consideration. Transportation will be provided according to need. Exceptional students will be transported on the same buses as other students whenever feasible. The feasibility of regular buses will take into consideration:
- a) safety of exceptional student;
  - b) safety of other students and the driver;
  - c) space availability on bus (if outside school jurisdiction).

In those situations where exceptional students cannot be accommodated on a conventional school bus for home to school transportation, the following methods may be used to support the student:

- a) Handi-Transit or like vehicle equipped to be accessible for the student;
- b) If transportation cannot be accessed under above, transportation may be provided by taxicab;
- c) Where it is not practical to transport the student under the above two methods, the parent/guardian shall be offered mileage reimbursement up to the daily board and lodging rate set by RRDTS procedure.

Transportation may be provided for exceptional students to a school outside home jurisdiction upon the approval of the RRDTS Management Committee. The transportation provided in this situation will be using the most feasible means taking into consideration student safety and cost.

A harness will not be used unless the harness is certified to be installed and used on a school bus, and is specifically designed/fitted for an individual student.

- 1.4 Other Pupils of the Board – Those students covered by an agreement with another Board or First Nation, whether a Transportation or Tuition Agreement, shall be considered eligible for transportation and shall receive transportation in accordance with the written agreement signed by the Rainy River and Northwest Catholic District School Boards and the contracting party.
- 1.5 Exceptions to eligibility may be made by the RRDTS Management Committee where a health or safety hazard or special circumstance exists (e.g. exceptional students, as outlined in 1.3 above, or a human-rights related accommodation as outlined in 1.7 below).
- 1.6 Persons, other than eligible students enrolled in school, shall not be allowed to ride on any school bus, except as follows:
- a) Board members;
  - b) Employees of the Board involved in the supervision of Transportation Services;
  - c) Adults acting as supervisors;

- d) Persons who are specifically authorized by the RRDTS Management Committee to ride under special circumstances.
- 1.7 The RRDTS will consider requests that a bus stop be changed or implemented if the student and/or their parent(s)/guardian(s) require accommodation of validated needs because of their identification with a ground or grounds under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. The RRDTS will grant these validated requests unless to do so would cause “undue hardship” to RRDTS (that is, it will be prohibitively expensive or it will create serious health and safety risks.) If a student and/or their parents/guardian(s) require accommodation of a human-rights related need because of their identification with a ground or grounds under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, the parent/guardian should contact the RRDTS.

## 2.0 Provision of Transportation

Transportation may be provided for eligible students in accordance with the following:

- 2.1 Pick-up and drop-off shall be arranged on Municipal or Provincial roadways, or roads under the authority of the Ministry of Transportation and a Local Roads Board. Stops will be arranged within 500 metres of the student's residence whenever local conditions will permit. Where feasible, preference will be given to designated group stops except under other circumstances as approved by the RRDS Management Committee.
- 2.2 Ride Times – Where feasible, except in special circumstances, the RRDTS will plan student transportation services based on a preferred travel time of 60 minutes or less for elementary students, and 90 minutes or less for secondary students, per one-way trip for the majority of students serviced.
- 2.3 Regular and Fixed Pattern - Parents are encouraged to work with the RRDTS to establish a regular and manageable weekly schedule for bussing for the school year. Schedules are to be submitted to the Transportation Department well in advance of the start of the school year.

Requests for changes under one week (1 to 4 days) do not constitute a regular and fixed pattern, and therefore, will not be considered.

The RRDTS will work with parents and principals well in advance to establish a regular manageable weekly schedule for the school year to accommodate custodial arrangements while maintaining student safety.

The RRDTS Procedure will provide guidance in determining regular and fixed weekly pattern.

- 2.4 Alternative Address – The RRDTS will consider all requests to determine if they fall within this policy and process them as expeditiously as possible. To ensure that

arrangements for alternative address requests are in place when needed, whether to a private or licensed child care provider, two weeks' notice is requested. However, requests may be accepted with a minimum of three days' notice. Requests may be granted when the following are met:

- a) the alternative address must be on the student's present route;
- b) the alternative address must not result in a route extension or an additional stop;
- c) if another bus is required for an alternative address, this may be provided if there is room on the other bus;
- d) for cases of emergency, two weeks' notice is not required.

Requests for changes under one week (1 to 4 days) do not constitute a regular and fixed pattern, and, therefore will not be considered.

Emergency implies a death or severe illness with the student's immediate family and/or caregiver. Emergency is not:

- a) birthday parties;
- b) visiting school friends;
- c) transportation to parent/guardian's workplace or other personal commitments;
- d) parent/guardian must work later than expected or get called into work unexpectedly;
- e) parent/guardian will not arrive on time at bus stop;
- f) parent/guardian/caregiver will be away for a few days or few weeks;
- g) parent/guardian/caregiver will be away on holiday, and the children will be staying with someone else temporarily;
- h) parent/guardian will be away on a business trip and the children will be staying with someone else temporarily;
- i) student's after-school day care is closed for a few days, and he/she must go to another sitter.

Parents are responsible for transportation arrangements for birthday parties, visiting school friends, transportation to parent/guardian workplace or other personal commitments.

### 3.0 Courtesy

3.1 All students may receive courtesy bussing for academic programming and school extra-curricular activities. Secondary students may receive courtesy bussing for medical appointments and employment. Courtesy may be provided if the following criteria are met:

- a) the request is on an existing route;
- b) the request results in no additional stops or route extension;
- c) there is available space on the bus; and
- d) in the case of secondary students, the request is accompanied with written

information of employment and permission of parent/guardian.

To ensure courtesy transportation is in place when needed, requests are to be received within two weeks' notice. Requests may be accepted with a minimum of three days' notice.

- 3.2 The transportation system is designed for eligible students. Students who are not normally eligible for transportation may be accommodated when the criteria for courtesy ridership have been met.
- 3.3 When eligible students require transportation, those courtesy riders will be first to relinquish their occupancy.

#### 4.0 Obligation to Provide Transportation

- 4.1 Students may be subject to loss of privileges if a parent/guardian/student is found to be providing false or misleading information or is abusing the Joint Transportation Policy.
- 4.2 Notwithstanding the above, the Boards are not obligated to provide transportation and may refuse to do so in specific cases where the distance is deemed excessive, cost prohibitive, or where the pick-up/drop-off point is dangerous to the safety of those concerned.
- 4.3 Parents who choose to have their children attend a school outside of their home school attendance zone must assume responsibility for transportation to the chosen school.

#### 5.0 Parent Transportation

If transportation is denied per section 1.0 and 2.0, the RRDTS may reimburse a parent or guardian for private transportation to the nearest bus pickup point at the current RRDTS's metrage rate. The reimbursement will be up to the daily maximum rate set by RRDTS procedure.

#### 6.0 Board and Lodging

If transportation is denied to a student within the district, because of distance, the Boards may reimburse a parent for the cost of board and lodging and weekly transportation of the student for mileage up to maximum identified by RRDTS procedure.

#### 7.0 Employee and Private Individual Use of Private Cars

The Boards maintain that the safest transportation of students is on a school bus.

- 7.1 Employees and private individuals are permitted to use their vehicles or rented vehicles with the appropriate licence, provided principals, in writing, authorize use of the vehicles for the transportation of small groups of students for curricular or co-curricular activities. Any such vehicles used must have adequate public liability insurance coverage and meet all requirements under *Ontario Highway Traffic Act*. It is the responsibility of the employee and private individual to notify the Board in writing of any changes in their public liability insurance coverage; refer to RRDTS procedure.
- 7.2 Under *Ontario Highway Traffic Act*, Bill 73 amended Regulation 613 requires drivers to properly secure passengers under 8 years of age who weigh more than 18 kg but less than 36 kg (40-80 lbs) and are less than 145 cm (4'9") tall in a booster seat that complies with the Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards 213.
- 7.3 No student shall ride in vehicles for curricular or co-curricular activities unless the vehicle has been authorized under 7.1 above.

## 8.0 Road Conditions

The Boards shall not under any circumstances undertake to repair, plow, gravel, sand, etc. any road, driveway or turnaround. This is the responsibility of the Ministry of Transportation, the Municipal Council or the Local Roads Board. A road or turnaround must be in a good, safe and passable condition, capable of sustained usage by heavy vehicles. When a road is judged to be poor or unsafe by the bus drivers and the RRDTS Management Committee, then bus service will not be provided.

## 9.0 Safety

- 9.1 During inclement weather, the safety of pupils is paramount. Transportation will be cancelled or modified if safety cannot be assured.
- 9.2 School Bus Safety/Annual Drill – School Bus Safety Practices shall be taught in the elementary schools of the Boards. It is recommended that the elementary schools in cooperation with the local police services, fire department and bus operators conduct an annual drill on school bus evacuation. This will be coordinated by the RRDTS.

## 10.0 Discipline

While travelling on a school bus that is under contract to the RRDTS, every pupil is responsible for his/her conduct to the principal of the school that the pupil attends. The Code of Behaviour developed by the school that the pupil attends shall govern the conduct of the student being transported by bus.

Principals or designates will notify the RRDTS of student suspensions. The RRDTS will notify the Operator of suspension of bus privileges for that student.

### 11.0 Cameras

In an effort to reduce student discipline problems, vandalism on school buses, and increase safety, the RRDTS shall allow the use of video camera surveillance systems on school buses within guidelines established by the RRDTS.

### 12.0 Cancellation of Bus Operations

If bus transportation is cancelled, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to provide transportation.

### 13.0 Procurement of Transportation Services

13.1 Transportation provided by the Boards by independent bus operators will be on the basis of a contract, negotiated or tendered by the Consortium under the RRDTS purchasing procedure.

13.2 Bus Operators may not, without prior Board approval, obtain new routes, or receive a transfer of existing routes where, as a result of the proposed actions, an existing or proposed Bus Operator would control, directly or indirectly, more than 49% of the transportation requirements.

### 14.0 Communication

Information regarding the RRDTS Management Committee and all procedures can be viewed at the following websites:

Northwest Catholic District School Board - [www.tncdsb.on.ca](http://www.tncdsb.on.ca)  
Rainy River District School Board – [www.rrdsb.com](http://www.rrdsb.com)

### 15.0 Appeal Process

Appeals to the Joint Transportation Policy may be made in writing to the RRDTS Management Committee. If the parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the response of the RRDTS Management Committee, he/she may in writing submit the appeal to the Joint Transportation Policy Committee for consideration.

The Joint Transportation Policy Committee will convene up to twice per year if there are appeals not resolved by the RRDTS Management Committee.

### 16.0 Responsibility of the RRDTS Joint Transportation Policy Committee

The Joint Transportation Policy Committee will meet annually to review the joint policy.

### 17.0 Responsibility of the RRDTS Management Committee

The RRDTS Management Committee will report to the Joint Transportation Committee on an annual basis on the performance and accomplishments of the RRDTS.

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| <u>CROSS REFERENCE</u><br><br>RRDTS Procedures | <u>Date Approved</u><br>June 3, 2014<br><br><u>Board Motion</u><br>468<br><br><u>Review Prior To</u><br>Annual | <u>LEGAL/MINISTRY OF<br/>EDUCATION REFERENCE</u><br><br><i>Education Act</i><br><br><i>Ontario Highway Traffic Act</i><br><br><i>Ontario Human Rights Code</i> |
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