

School Transportation Policies

**Department of Education
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION POLICIES**

This directive is issued by the Minister of Education under the authority of *Section 117(b) (ii) and (iii) of the Schools Act, 1997* for the purpose of setting the conditions under which funding is provided to School Boards and for the general operating parameters for school bus transportation services to students attending Primary, Elementary and Secondary schools.

FUNDING

1. (1) The Minister may allocate funds to a School Board each year in such instalments and at such times as he/she may determine:
 - (a) to cover the cost to a School Board for the transportation to and from the zoned, neighbourhood school of pupils who reside 1.6 kilometres or greater from that school. The distance to a school is defined as the shortest route by a publicly maintained roadway from the driveway of the student's residence to the nearest accessible access to the zoned school property. In the case of French Immersion students who are attending a school other than the zoned neighbourhood school, funding will not be provided to the school board to cover the cost of transportation. In these instances, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide transportation;
 - (b) to cover the cost to the Labrador School Board for costs associated with winter busing of pupils to and from a school located in Labrador City, Wabush, or Upper Lake Melville Area during the period from the 15th day of November to the 15th day of April of each school year
 - (c) to cover the cost to a School Board for the transportation to and from a school of a pupil who is certified by a qualified medical practitioner and in compliance with the Alternate Transportation Policy as being unable to use a public transportation system or the regular transportation facilities provided by the School Board because of a cognitive or physical disability;
 - (d) to cover the cost, where required, for the transportation of students (K-6) who reside within 1.6 kilometers of the neighbourhood school whose parent(s)/guardian(s) has a physical disability which prevents them from accompanying their child to school. Each particular case must be reviewed and recommended by the Student Support Services Division of the Department of Education.

Board Owned System

2. In cases where School Boards purchase and operate their own buses:
 - (a) the Minister may allocate to a School Board an annual grant to enable the School Board to operate a school bus transportation system;
 - (b) any grant made pursuant to subsection (a) shall provide for the amortization of loans obtained by the School Board to purchase buses and to construct related facilities, provided that such equipment and facilities are approved by the Minister and in accordance with an approved amortization period;
 - (c) the amount of the grant provided for in subsection (a) shall be determined on the basis of a budget submitted by the School Board, normally on or before the 30th day of June of each year, for the approval of the Minister and showing the estimated expenditures related to the school bus transportation system for the next school year;
 - (d) a School Board that receives a grant under subsection (a) shall enter into an agreement with the Minister covering the operation of the school bus transportation system;
 - (e) the School Board maintains at its office separate accounts pertaining to the cost of operating its buses, which shall be open for inspection by any official of the Department upon reasonable request;
 - (f) the School Board provides to the Minister audited financial statements, showing the previous year's operations; these statements are to be provided by October 30 of each year;
 - (g) In any year that pupil transportation costs intended to be covered by a grant made under subsection (a) actually exceed the amount of the grant approved for any school year, such additional costs shall be absorbed by the School Board unless approved by the Minister.

Contracted System

3. The Minister may make allocations to a School Board, each year, for contracted services provided:
 - (a) an application, as prescribed by the department, has been made to the department and approved by the Manager of School Transportation; the application will normally be received not later than the 30th day of June preceding the school year to which the application relates;

- (b) the Minister is of the opinion that the transportation proposed to be provided by the School Board is necessary;
- (c) where a School Board proposes to introduce a pupil transportation service for the first time, the Minister is of the opinion that such a service cannot reasonably be provided by an existing service for which financial assistance is provided under this policy;
- (d) when required to do so by the Minister, the School Board has submitted audited financial statements showing pupil transportation costs for any school year and any other relevant information specified by the Minister;
- (e) before entering into a contract for the transportation of pupils, the School Board has invited public tenders for the contract in accordance with *The Public Tendering Act*.
- (f) any transportation services for which an allocation cannot be made under this policy and which form part of a tender or contract are shown separately in the tender or the contract as the case may be.

GENERAL OPERATIONAL

4. For the purpose of providing the transportation of pupils at the most economical cost, School Boards shall, where feasible,
 - (a) cooperate in staggering opening and closing hours of their schools;
 - (b) cooperate in the development of school bus routes to minimize distance and time students have to travel to the nearest accessible school;
 - (c) cooperate in ensuring that buses are operated at capacities as indicated by the departmental policies. These capacities shall be, in relation to a 72 passenger bus: K-6 or a mixed load K-12 - 72 students and for grades 7-12 - 63 students. These capacities must not be exceeded;
 - (d) the School Board limits the number of stops to not more than four in 1.6 kilometres for the purpose of taking on or discharging pupils, unless otherwise authorized by the Department;
5. Except from a community where there is no school or where, in the opinion of the Minister, the school facilities are inadequate, the Department shall not approve the provision of transportation:

- (a) for fewer than twelve pupils; or
 - (b) for fewer than six additional pupils as a result of altering an existing bus route for the transportation of pupils,
6. (1) It shall be the responsibility of School Boards in consultation with the department to introduce a school bus safety program including, but not limited to the following:
- (a) classroom instruction related to school bus safety;
 - (b) school bus boarding and unloading drills;
 - (c) where necessary, instruction of drivers in good driving habits and first aid; and,
 - (d) where necessary, through the use of students, supervision of loading and unloading school buses.
- (2) For the more effective use of available seating capacity on school buses, Boards may designate seating for each pupil.
- (3) It shall be mandatory that front crossing control arms, in a form approved by the Department, be installed on all school buses.
- (4) Unless otherwise approved by the Minister, the maximum age of a bus used for the transportation of school children shall not exceed twelve (12) model years in age as at the first day of September for each school year.
- (5) All vehicles used in the delivery of school transportation must conform to *The Highway Traffic Act, Canadian Standards Association Standards D-250 and D-409*, where applicable.
- (6) Unless authorized by the Minister, no alterations can be made to the standard contract template or other contractual documents that are issued in the delivery of school transportation.
- (7) Buses used for the transportation of pupils shall be equipped with a device of sufficient power to sustain two-way communication between the most distant point along the route of the bus and the garage at which the bus is based.

- (8) The Department may issue general guidelines for the delivery of school transportation services on such items as:
- Alternate Transportation
 - Standardized Tender Specifications and Contracts
 - Budget Documents
 - Applications
 - Extra Curricular Use of Vehicles
 - Lunch Hour Transportation
 - Any other related items