

Business and Non-Instructional Operations

Transportation

A. Statement of Policy

Responsibility for the transportation and safety of children to and from school is a divided function. Local Boards of Education are charged with providing the service; the State Board of Education provides consulting service and hears appeals; the Motor Vehicle Department establishes rules and regulations on equipment and operation of buses; and makes annual inspections. Town officials are responsible for town roads and local police for crossing protection and enforcement of traffic regulations.

The Board of Education will provide transportation for students under provisions of state law and regulations. In determining the provision of transportation, the superintendent of schools shall consider the guidelines contained in this policy and shall administer the operation so as to:

1. provide for the safety of students, including consideration of hazardous conditions whether or not described in this policy;
2. provide for appropriate supervision for students while on school transportation, consistent with the Board's student discipline policy; and
3. assist disabled students by providing appropriate specialized transportation when require by law.

B. Standard Definitions

1. **"School transportation"** means the procedure, program, or implemented plan by which a pupil is conveyed to or from his/her residence or the bus stop to or from the school in which he/she is enrolled by the Board of Education at public expense, whether by use of publicly owned equipment or by contract. Such transportation shall be over public roads approved by the municipality or private roads approved pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-220c.
2. **"Walking distances"** means the linear measure of a prescribed or authorized pedestrian route between the pupil's residence and his/her school from a point at the curb or edge of a public or private road nearest the student's residence to a point at the entrance of the school or a safe entrance to the school grounds located within one hundred feet of the school building entrance or the bus pick-up area, or the route from the point on the public thoroughfare nearest the residence to the school bus, or vehicle embarkation point established by the Board of Education.

3. **“One mile walking distance”** means a reasonable measurement of a route to be traversed extending from the point of measurement at least 5,280 feet, but not more than 5,380 feet.
4. **“Grade Pre-K”** means the school program appropriate to a beginning student prior to entering kindergarten.
5. **“Grade K”** means kindergarten, or the school program appropriate to a beginning student prior to entering grade 1.
6. **“Hazard”** means a thing or condition, as prescribed in this policy under “Hazardous Conditions” that affects the safety of pupils walking to and from school, or a designated bus pick-up area.
7. **“Sidewalk”** means a portion of the landscape right of way approximately three feet wide, usually parallel to the traffic lanes which may be paved or unpaved, and marked by curbing, drainage ditch, grass area or fencing; apart from and independent of any white line safety markings along the street pavement.
8. **“Raised walk areas”** means a portion of the right of way approximately three feet wide, usually parallel to the traffic lanes, which may be paved or unpaved; distinguished by some elevation above the street pavement level and marked by curbing, drainage ditch, grass area, fencing; apart from and independent of any white line safety markings along the street pavement.
9. **“Pupil”** means any individual of school age who resides in Stafford and is enrolled in a public or nonprofit private school located within the school district or contiguous school district as the case may be, or an individual of school age who resides in Stafford and is enrolled in one of the State Technical Schools or the State Vo-Ag Program for which Stafford provides transportation.

C. **Provision of Transportation**

Transportation by private carrier may be provided whenever such practice is more economical than using school district-owned/leased facilities. If parents volunteer, and the administration permits, parents may be reimbursed for transportation of eligible pupils whenever such practice is more economical or convenient for the school district.

In determining the provision of transportation for resident public and eligible private school students, the following guidelines regarding walking distances will be considered. Distance measurements will be based on the most direct route from the pupil’s home beginning at a point at the curb or edge of a public road or highway nearest the home to the edge of the school property or bus pickup areas.

1. The limit for pupils enrolled in grades 4 through 12 shall be up to one and one-half miles.
2. The limit for pupils enrolled in Kindergarten and grades one through three shall be a 4/10 mile circumference of the pupil’s elementary school.

Students living within the stated distance limits will receive transportation when, in the opinion of the Superintendent of Schools, it is in the best interests of the district to provide transportation.

D. **Parent's/Guardian's Responsibility**

Pre-kindergarten – Grade 3: The Parent / Guardian / Responsible Adult Designee / Approved Parent Designated Sibling in Grade 6 or higher, hereinafter referred to as Parent/Designee, must be present and visible at the time of student drop-off. Permission from the Superintendent of Schools is required before pupils are permitted to be dropped off with an Approved Parent Designated Sibling, as described in detail below.

The bus contractor and District will make reasonable efforts to plan routes that minimize the necessity of pre-kindergarten through grade 3 students crossing the street. If the student is required to cross the street, the Parent/Designee must meet the bus at the bus door to supervise the student while crossing the street. If the Parent / Designee does not meet the student at the bus door, the student will be kept on the bus and brought back to the school, unless the driver, through radio contact with the school transportation coordinator, or bus company, is able to contact the Parent / Designee and arrange drop off.

Grades 4 through 12: Students will be dropped off without an adult present and visible at the drop-off point.

In order for a parent / guardian to request approval from the Superintendent of Schools for a designated sibling in grade 6 or higher to be responsible for taking a younger sibling off the bus, the parent / guardian must complete a **Request for Drop Off of PreK-3 Student Form**. Additionally, parents or guardians must list the name of any Responsible Adult Designee as an emergency contact with the school.

Sibling groups will be kept together (e.g. if a child in grades pre-kindergarten through grade 3 must be brought back to school because an adult is not present and visible, all siblings up to and including grade 5 will be brought back to the school as well).

Parents/guardians should abide by the following additional guidelines:

1. Keep at hand for ready reference the school schedule showing when the bus is due at their stop.
2. Ensure that children reach the school bus stop promptly according to schedule.
3. Parents/guardians who meet the school bus should wait on the side of the street.
4. Instruct children regarding bus stop and traffic safety.

5. At all times set a good example in observing traffic rules and regulations.

Notwithstanding any other provision in this Policy, parents and/or guardians are responsible for ensuring the safety of their children up until the point when students board the school bus or other school provided transportation, and after students get off the bus after school. This responsibility includes the selection of walking routes to/from any bus stop and/or the school building and the provision of supervision that is appropriate to the student's age, maturity and conditions along the walking route and/or at the bus stop at all times.

E. Transportation Time

Reasonable transportation or prescribed walking routes or the sum of both shall not exceed one hour each way from home or returning. An exception to this may include transportation to out of town school placements.

F. Hazardous Conditions

The administration shall consider the following guidelines for hazardous conditions when making decisions regarding the transportation of children:

1. 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 exists.
 - a. For students enrolled in grades K through 5:
 - (i) absence of pedestrian crossing light or crossing guard where three or more streets intersect, and a pupil is expected to cross the street;
OR
 - (ii) street crossings where there are no stop signs or crossing guards and the traffic count during the time that students are walking to or from school exceeds sixty vehicles per hour at the intersection, and a pupil is expected to cross the street;
 - b. For pupils enrolled in grades 6 through 12, the absence of a traffic light or stop signs or crossing guard where three or more streets intersect and there is a traffic count which exceeds ninety vehicles per hour during the time that pupils are walking to or from school, and such pupils are expected to cross the street;
 - c. For all pupils:
 - (i) any street, road, or highway with speed limits in excess of forty miles per hour which does not have pedestrian crossing lights or crossing guards or other safety provisions at points where pupils must cross when going to or from school or the bus stop; OR

- (ii) the usual or frequent presence of any nuisance such as open man-holes, construction, snow plowed or piled on the walk area 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, and the like, including such nuisance which is hazardous or attractive to children.
- 2. Any street, road, or highway which has no sidewalks or raised walk areas shall be deemed hazardous when any one of the following conditions exists:
 - a. For pupils enrolled in grades K through 5:
 - (i) any street, road or highway possessing a traffic count of sixty or more vehicles per hour at the time that students are walking to or from school; OR
 - (ii) any street, road, or highway possessing a speed limit in excess of thirty miles per hour.
 - b. For all pupils:
 - (i) the presence of man-made hazards including attractive nuisances, as stated in c.2, above; OR
 - (ii) any roadway available to vehicles that does not have a minimum width of twenty feet; OR
 - (iii) any roadway available to vehicles when plowed free of snow accumulations, does not have a minimum width of eighteen feet; OR
 - (iv) any street, road or highway where the line-of-sight visibility together with posted speed limits do not permit vehicular braking/stopping in accordance with the Connecticut Drivers Manual or Department of Transportation, Division of Design Standard, or other reasonable standard.
- 3. For all pupils, any walkway, path, or bridge in an area adjacent or parallel to railroad tracks shall be deemed hazardous unless a suitable physical barrier along the entire pedestrian route is present and fixed between pupils and the tracks; and any crossing of railroad tracks carrying moving trains during hours that pupils are walking to or from school or to and from a designated bus pick-up area shall be deemed hazardous unless:
 - (a) a crossing guard is present; OR
 - (b) for pupils under age ten, an automatic control bar is present at crossings; OR

- (c) for pupils over age ten, a bar or red flashing signal light is operational.
- 4. For pupils in grades K through 5, the following conditions shall be deemed hazardous:
 - (a) a lake, pond, stream, culvert, water-way, or bridge shall be deemed a hazard in the absence of a fence or other suitable barrier fixed between the student and the water; OR
 - (b) any area adjacent to a roadway, walkway, sidewalk, or bridge having a drop of three or more feet per four feet of travel length on either side of the established lanes, in the absence of a fence or other suitable barrier.
- 5. For all pupils, walking along any street, road, walkway, sidewalk, or path designated as a walking route which passes through an area which has a history of aggressive acts of molestation resulting in actual or threatened physical harm or moral degradation during the hours when pupils ordinarily walk to or from school shall be deemed hazardous.
- 6. For pupils in grade K through 8, walking to or from school or the bus stop at any time prior to one-half hour before sunrise or any time one-half hour after sunset shall be deemed hazardous.

G. Day Care Centers as Bus Stops

It is the policy of the Stafford Board of Education to establish day-care centers within the Town of Stafford as bus stops and to provide transportation to and from such facilities to Stafford's elementary schools if the parent/guardian resides within the school district where the day-care facility is located. The district for each elementary school will be determined on an annual basis depending on student enrollment patterns. Transportation may be provided to a day-care center outside of a student's attendance district provided there is no cost to the district. For the purpose of this policy, a day-care center is defined as one so licensed by the State of Connecticut. Student transportation pursuant to this policy will be provided upon written parental request which must be forwarded to the administrator of the school the child will be attending no later than August 1st of each school year.

H. Bus Transfers

Bus routes are carefully planned to ensure the timely arrival of students at school as well as to make full use of the available seating on each vehicle. With most buses running with seating at capacity, student transfers become increasingly difficult to accommodate. Therefore, only the following transfers will be permitted:

- 1. Transfer to a Day Care arrangement, in pupil's school attendance zone (a signed document must be on file).

2. Transfers due to legal agreement (copy of the legal document).
3. EMERGENCY transfers as authorized by the building administrator or his/her designee.

I. Applicability and Exceptions

1. This policy is applicable to private roads approved for passage of school transportation vehicles in accordance with C.G.S. Section 10-220c.
2. Special Education pupils and pupils eligible for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act shall be judged on an individual basis, and appropriate transportation provided.
3. Pre-kindergarten students (ages 3 and 4) will be provided transportation.
4. The Superintendent of Schools may grant an exception to any guideline set forth in this policy where a peculiar condition or combination of conditions renders such condition(s) a hazard based upon reasonable judgment; or where under the circumstances, other conditions exist under which the safety of students necessitates a variance in the guidelines within this policy.

J. Complaint Procedure

All complaints concerning school transportation safety will be made in writing to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee. The Superintendent or designee will maintain a written record of all such complaints, and shall conduct appropriate investigations of the allegations in a timely manner. The investigation shall include 1) the review of the complaint raised with appropriate personnel responsible for transportation of students and 2) the opportunity for the parent or other person making the complaint to meet with the Superintendent to discuss the complaint and any possible resolution thereof. If a complaint covered by Section 10-186 of the Connecticut General Statutes is not resolved by the Superintendent, the Superintendent or designee shall inform the parent or guardian, or an emancipated minor or a pupil eighteen years of age or older, of the right to request a hearing regarding the complaint. Such hearing, if requested, shall be held in accordance with Section 10-186 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as it may be amended from time to time.

Legal References: 10-186 Duties of local and regional boards of education re: school attendance. Hearings. Appeals to state board. Establishment of hearing board.
10-220 Duties of boards of education.
10-220c Transportation of children over private roads. Immunity from liability.
10-221 Development of policy for reporting complaints re school transportation safety. Reporting of accidents at school bus stops.
10-280a Transportation for students in non-profit private schools outside school district.
10-281 Transportation for students in non-profit private school within

school district.

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.

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STAFFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Stafford Springs, Connecticut