

## **Transportation of Students**

The goal of Yakima School District's transportation department is to provide safe and timely bus service for the students of the district. School bus routes and stops are planned to provide the safest, most efficient, and most cost-effective service under all weather and road conditions. Students and parents' are expected to cooperate with bus drivers to promote bus safety.

### **1. Authorization**

Student bus riding privileges and eligibility for transportation to and/or from school constitutes a privilege, not a right. Eligibility is based on a student's legal residence.

The district has authorized transportation to and from school for a student:

- 1.1 whose legal residence is beyond the sidewalk boundary from the school to which the student is assigned;
- 1.2 whose walking route to school is determined to be hazardous, regardless of distance;
- 1.3 whose handicapping condition prevents him/her from walking, or if he/she would not be able to provide for his/her own welfare while walking to school; or
- 1.4 who has any other compelling and legally sufficient reason to receive transportation services.

The director of transportation shall be responsible for overseeing the transportation program, as well as for scheduling bus transportation, including the determination of routes and bus stops.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student whose assigned bus stop is beyond the minimum walking distance may receive reimbursement for private transportation at the state mileage reimbursement rate when sufficient district equipment is not available or when unusual disabling problems exist.

### **2. Private School Transportation**

The superintendent or designee may authorize children who are attending an approved private school to ride a school bus, provided that the bus route and its stops are not altered, space is available, and a fee to cover the per-seat cost for such transportation is collected.

The seat cost fee will be calculated annually to reflect actual costs. Any staff member may request denial of transportation to any such student who violates the district's written rules and regulations.

### **3. Student Walking Distance**

A student may be provided transportation when his/her residence is beyond the state-established one (1) radius mile of the school to which the student is assigned. Students may be required to walk up to one (1) radius mile from their home to their bus stop, provided that the walking route is safe as described in the state's publication *Guidelines for Determining the Existence of Hazardous Walking Conditions*, OSPI. The district will apply and review the state rules annually. The school district is required to establish walking route plans for each elementary school which enrolls students who walk to and from school.

A student with disabilities who is unable to walk or would not be able to provide for his/her own welfare while walking to school shall be provided transportation services regardless of the distance from home to school.

#### 4. Bus Routes and Schedules

The purpose of bus scheduling and routing is to achieve maximum service with a minimum fleet of buses, insofar as this is consistent with rendering safe and equitable service to all students entitled to such service. School bus drivers are not authorized to change bus routes or student stops. All requests must come through the transportation office.

In order to operate the transportation system as safely and efficiently as possible, the following factors shall be considered in establishing bus routes:

- Where an alternate route may be considered without sacrifice of efficiency or economy, preference shall be given to that route more directly serving the largest number of students.
- Location of bus stops may be determined by such factors as student safety, economy, and efficiency.
- Students may be required to walk up to one (1) radius mile from their home to their bus stop, provided that the walking route is safe.
- School schedules may be adjusted to allow maximum utilization of each bus in the system by alternating elementary and secondary trips.
- Buses are not allowed to travel down cul-de-sacs or to enter apartment building parking lots. (Buses are not allowed on private roads.
- Public or private transit may be used where it is deemed safe and economically feasible.

#### 5. Bus Driver

To ensure a safe bus ride for students, each bus driver is an authorized Washington State School Bus Driver who has completed an extensive training program which consists of classroom training, on the road training, and annual bus training safety and emergency exit drills. Each driver completes a drug screen test and has undergone an extensive background check, including state and federal finger printing clearance.

The bus driver is responsible for the safety of his/her passengers. In order to assure the safety of all, the bus driver will hold students accountable for their conduct during the course of transportation and may recommend progressive, corrective action for a student. Bus drivers are expressly prohibited from using corporal punishment.

The district will educate students on safety, particularly for those who cross a roadway after leaving the bus.

#### 6. Emergencies

In the event of an accident or other emergency, the bus driver shall follow emergency procedures in accordance with the *School Bus Driver Handbook* of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). To ensure the success of such emergency procedures, each bus driver conducts an emergency evacuation drill within the first six (6) weeks of each school semester as required by WAC 392-145-045.

In the event of a student's experiencing a health emergency, the bus will be pulled to the side of the road, and 911 will be called. A report will be transmitted to transportation dispatch while emergency care is rendered to the student.

## 7. Traffic Accidents

If a bus is involved in a major traffic accident, the district will notify the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) using the emergency contact number on file with the district's central registration department; it is essential and the parents responsibility to keep these numbers updated and accurate.

## 8. Medication on Buses

Students with a diagnosed high risk health condition, such as severe allergies, diabetes, or seizures, may need to have prescribed treatment supplies or medications when riding on a bus. In order to have this safety surrounding the student while the student is mobile, parent(s)/guardian(s) must supply extra kits for bus use, which do not compromise the integrity of the medical preparations at the home school site. Students who ride transfer buses must have two kits, one for each driver. School nurses work with families and with transportation staff to make the delivery of this safety process seamless for each child who needs the support.

- 8.1 Certain situations, such as school lockdowns in which the bus is unable to arrive at the school site and unload, because of police activity or an accident, road closure, or community or national emergency, may generate a circumstance in which treatment or medication must be on the bus in case it may be needed for administration to the student.
- 8.2 Fanny packs or plastic zip-lock containers are equipped with treatment supplies and/or medication provided by parent(s)/guardian(s) to be used in an emergency in order to provide assistance to the student until medical help arrives.
- 8.3 Students with asthma may have asthma medication on the bus, if provided by parent.

## 9. Student Behavior

Students provided with transportation are responsible for complying with the district's rules of conduct for students riding buses. Any misconduct by a student, which in the opinion of the bus driver or bus supervisor is detrimental to the safe operation of the bus or the safety of other passengers, shall be sufficient cause for the director of transportation or the building principal to suspend the transportation privilege. Failure to adhere to these rules or abusive behavior towards the public, the driver, fellow passengers or the vehicle constitutes justification of initiating progressive corrective action against a student.

Discipline will be imposed for violation of the following rules of conduct for students riding buses:

- 9.1 District transportation is a privilege, not a right. Students provided with transportation to or from school or attending field or extracurricular trips are responsible for complying with the district's rules. Students shall be courteous and obey the driver, teacher, coach or aide or other staff member assigned to the bus by the district. The driver is in full charge of the bus and its passengers and shall be obeyed. If an aide is assigned to the bus by the district, he/she shall also be responsible for safe behavior on the bus. When transporting classes or teams, the Coordinating Staff Member (CSM) or coach shall be primarily responsible for the behavior of the students; see operational procedure (OP) 2320.
- 9.2 For safety reasons, noise shall be kept at a minimum to avoid distracting the driver. At intersections and at railroad crossings, there is to be minimal talking in order to ensure safety.

Students may not sit in the driver's seat, sit to either the left or the right of the driver, or interfere with the driver in any manner. Students shall use seat (lap) belts on buses when available.

- 9.3 Students shall ride only on their assigned bus unless written permission to do otherwise has been received and approved by school officials. Students shall not be permitted to leave the bus except at their regular stop unless written permission to do otherwise is received and approved by school officials. School officials shall communicate their approval to the transportation office or the bus driver. All students must be picked up at the same location Monday through Friday and dropped off at the same location Monday through Friday. If it is an emergency, permission can be granted for a different stop for that day by the school official. The school official shall communicate their approval to the transportation office or the bus driver.
- 9.4 Students shall observe rules of classroom conduct and all district rules and regulations (see OP 3200) while riding on district buses. Students shall refrain from the use of obscene or demeaning language or gestures and harassment and bullying of any type. No tampering with property of other passengers will be allowed. Student misconduct on a bus will be sufficient reason to discontinue providing bus transportation to the student(s) involved.
- 9.5 Students shall go directly to their seat once inside the bus and remain seated at all times unless the bus driver instructs otherwise. Students are to remain seated while the bus is in motion and are not to stand up until the bus has come to a full stop. Students may be assigned seats in which they will be seated at all times, unless the driver provides permission to change.
- 9.6 Students shall see that books and personal belongings are kept out of the aisle and emergency exits.
- 9.7 Students shall not carry or have in their possession items that can cause injury to passengers on the bus. Such items include, but are not limited to, sticks, skateboards, laser pens; breakable containers; weapons, firearms or other instruments used as weapons; straps or pins protruding from clothing; large, bulky items which cannot be held or placed between legs; flammables; or other instruments or weapons which are intended or designed to cause bodily injury. Students shall not have animals on buses, except to provide assistance to a disabled student. No smoking, alcohol or use of tobacco products shall be allowed on the bus at any time.
- 9.8 Students shall not open a window on the bus without first getting permission from the bus driver. Students shall not at any time extend any part of their body out of the windows, whether the school bus is in motion or standing still. Students shall not tamper with emergency doors or equipment.
- 9.9 In the event of an actual emergency, the established emergency exit procedures shall be implemented. Students shall follow emergency exit drill procedures as prescribed by the driver.
- 9.10 Students shall leave the bus in an orderly manner. They must not cross the roadway until given a signal by the driver. When boarding or leaving the bus, pupils shall be in view of the driver at all times. There shall be no pushing or shoving when boarding or leaving the bus.

- 9.11 Students going to and from their bus stops where there are no sidewalks shall walk on the left-hand side of the roadway facing oncoming traffic. Students shall go directly to their homes after leaving the bus.
- 9.12 Students shall never cross the roadway behind a school bus unless they use pedestrian crosswalks or traffic lights.
- 9.13 Students shall not stand or play in the roadway while waiting for the bus. Students should leave home early enough to arrive at the bus stop five (5) minutes before the bus is due. Students must stand at least six (6) feet from the road edge or behind the yellow line where provided.
- 9.14 Students shall not libel or slander, or knowingly make false allegations against students or district employees. Students will not be disciplined for making a report in good faith.

When waiting for a bus, or when going to and from a bus stop, students are responsible for conducting themselves according to positive and appropriate social customs and legal behaviors that apply to adults in public. Students shall not abuse or cause damage to private or public property; they must not use obscene language or gestures; and they must not engage in assault, threatening or other criminal activity. Failure to adhere to these social norms and which result in formal complaints by citizens shall cause a referral to be forwarded to principals for possible corrective action.

## **10. Electronic Devices on Buses**

Many students use electronic devices as part of their daily lives and using them can often make the ride to and from school more enjoyable. Unfortunately, misuse of these items can be detrimental to the safety and well-being of other students and bus drivers. Therefore, the transportation department will enforce the following bus rules pertaining to electronic devices on buses.

- 10.1 A student who brings an electronic device on to the bus does so at their own risk.
- 10.2 The school district will not be held responsible for the loss/theft/damage of portable electronic devices that are lost on school buses.
- 10.3 iPods, Walkman radios, MP3 Players, etc. may be used on school buses if equipped with headphones if the volume is maintained at a level that does not disrupt other students or the driver.
- 10.4 Cell phones and cameras are not allowed to be used on school buses unless in an emergency when immediate communication is necessary and with permission of the bus driver.
- 10.5 Laser pointers are not allowed to be used on school buses at any time.
- 10.6 Any electronic devices that are misused may be confiscated by the drivers and returned to the students when they depart the bus. If a student continues to violate these rules, the device may be confiscated and returned only to a parent/guardian. The district will not be held responsible for the loss/theft/damage of portable electronic devices that are confiscated if there was reasonable grounds for confiscating the device.
- 10.7 Failure to follow these and any bus rules may result in disciplinary action, see OP 3200.

## 11. Disciplinary Procedures

At the beginning of each school year, a copy of the rules of conduct for students riding buses shall be made available to each student who is scheduled to ride a school bus. A copy of the rules shall be available upon request at the district office; bus rules are available in OP 6600-6900 on the school district website.

It is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to maintain a current mailing address with the central registration department of the school district. All correspondence will be mailed to the address on file with the central registration department.

Principals, with the assistance of the director of transportation, are responsible for correcting students whose behavior results in a bus-incident report or violates the rules above. The principal shall provide supervision during bus arrival and departure times and shall ensure that students comply with specific regulations. Principals must maintain open lines of communication with the transportation department.

Video cameras are placed on buses to monitor student behavior and will be used to identify any misconduct. The video will be kept on file at the transportation office until all due process is completed. Parents may be allowed to view video if permitted by law.

Drivers shall be advised to file assault and battery charges against a student who physically assaults them. Under no circumstances shall the driver retaliate in kind and physically assault the student; this conduct may subject him/her to legal action as well as disciplinary action.

## 12. Progressive Corrective Steps for Infractions of Bus Rules:

All corrective action steps are subject to review by the Director of Transportation or designee. Consequences may vary depending on the severity of the problem. In the case of severe or risk-inducing behavior, progressive steps may be skipped, and a student's transportation privilege may be terminated. Students who are suspended from transportation service are suspended from all district transportation functions. Violations accumulate for the duration of one (1) calendar year. It shall be the driver's responsibility to communicate effectively with the student(s) and attempt to resolve discipline problems at the student and driver level. The following will be used as a guideline:

### **Oral Warning (non-reported violation):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Violation:** Students receive warning may be assigned seating. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by telephone, by school administrators or by mail.
- 2<sup>rd</sup> Violation:** Possible one (1) to three (3) school days' bus riding privileges will be suspended. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by telephone, by school administrators or by mail.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Violation:** Possible five (5) to nine (9) school days' bus riding privileges will be suspended. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by telephone, by school administrators or by mail.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Violation:** Possible ten (10) or more days, a semester or the rest of the year's transportation privileges will be denied. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by telephone, by school administrators or by mail.

**Severe misbehavior or fighting:** Shall result in immediate loss of riding privileges. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by telephone, by school administrators or by mail.

Parents of students identified as causing damage to school buses shall be charged with the cost of the incurred damage, such as materials, repair, and extraordinary clean-up time of staff; see OP 3250 and 3250X. Students causing the damage may be suspended from transportation as well as subject to disciplinary action.

Suspension may begin at the end of the school day during which the rule violation occurred.

### 13. Appeal Process

The student or parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student who has been suspended from receiving transportation riding privileges may appeal the decision by submitting a written statement to the Associate Superintendent of Business Services. The Associate Superintendent shall render a decision, which is final, after evaluating the issues and facts involved.

### 14. Inclement Weather

During the winter, normal school day and regular school bus schedules are occasionally disrupted due to inclement weather. During these times, the district will notify the news media to announce the operational status of our school buildings to the public.

If the weather affects the normal operation of our schools or bus routes, the district will announce and/or publish the revised schedule by 6:00 a.m. (Pacific Standard Time), using area news media of radio and television, as well as the district website ([www.yakimaschools.org](http://www.yakimaschools.org)).

The options typically utilized by the district during inclement times include the following:

- Option #1:** Snow or ice that makes driving hazardous in hilly areas with the district informing students to use the alternative snow routes.
- Option #2:** Snow or ice that makes driving hazardous on streets and roads across the district.
- Option #3:** Snow or ice that makes driving extremely hazardous across the district.

### 15. Snow Route -

Alternate routes due to inclement weather will be posted on the District web site.

### 16. Use of Video Cameras on Buses

The transportation department is authorized to use video cameras on district operated school buses for the purpose of reducing discipline problems, thus providing a safer environment for the transportation of students. Discipline action will be in accordance with district OP 3200.

### 17. Miscellaneous Provisions

- 17.1 School buses may not be leased or loaned to individuals or organizations (RCW 28A.160.010).

- 17.2 For any extra-curricular uses, the transportation department is directed to charge an amount sufficient to reimburse its costs (RCW 28A.160.010).
- 17.3 School buses may be used to transport Yakima School District students to and from school. School in this sense is defined as a place for instruction and is not measured by the walls of a building (RCW 28A.160.010).
- 17.4 When buses are used to transport students to places other than school, *Transportation Request* form OP 2320.2X shall be completed to authorize such trip.
- 17.5 School bus drivers will transport only the students and persons designated by an authorized school district administrator.
- 17.6 Parents and patrons may not ride buses except in emergency or unusual circumstances. District employees and volunteer chaperones serving as adult supervisors, see OP 2320, are permitted to ride buses. The school principal or program administrator is responsible for the approval of forms 2320.2X, 2320.4X, and 2320.7X.

The rules for *Students Riding School Buses* and *Rules for School Bus Drivers* as prepared by OSPI, with the advice of the Director of the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Chief of the Washington State Patrol (WSP), are hereby adopted as the rules for the Yakima School District and made a part of these operational procedures.

Any staff member may request denial of transportation to any student who violates the district's written rules and regulations.

## 18 Emergency Bus Routes and Schedules

The director of transportation shall develop emergency bus routes and schedules to be used when weather or other emergency conditions make the usual routes impassable or, in his/her judgment, too hazardous; see OP 6604.

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### Cross References:

- (cf.: 2320 – Field Trips and Excursions)
- (cf.: 3131 – District Enrollment and Effects)
- (cf.: 3200 – Student Rules, Regulations and Conduct)
- (cf.: 3431 – Emergency Treatment)
- (cf.: 3434 – Bomb Threats and other Life Threatening Emergencies)
- (cf.: 3435 – Emergency Situation: Evacuation of Schools)
- (cf.: 6602 – Bus Routes and Schedules)
- (cf.: 6604 – Emergency Bus Routes and Schedules)

### Legal References:

- RCW 28A.160.100                      School buses, transportation of general public to interscholastic activities-limitations

RCW 28A.160.010	Operation of student transportation program –Responsibility of local district –Scope –Transportation of elderly – Insurance
RCW 28A.160.115	Bus Routes
WAC 392-141-175	Hazardous walking conditions
WAC 392-171-310	Definitions of "free, appropriate, public education"
WAC 392-171-706	Transportation ("student with disabilities")
WAC 392-151-025	Route plans
WAC 392-144	School Bus Driver Qualifications

*Guidelines for Determining the Existence of Hazardous Walking Conditions, OSPI.*

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