



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

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MEMO TO: School Administrators
(cc: School Bus Contractors)

FROM: Darrin Feehan

SUBJECT: Student Transportation - Courtesy Seating Protocol (Official Version)

DATE: January 29, 2014

PURPOSE

To outline expectations and responsibilities for schools regarding the administration of student transportation courtesy seating.

SCOPE

This protocol applies to all regular student transportation within the Eastern School District, including:

- Contracted student transportation
- District operated student transportation

RELATED GUIDANCE

This courtesy seating protocol shall be read and applied in conjunction with the:

- Eastern School District Student Transportation Handbook and guidelines
- Department of Education School Bus Transportation Policies
- Individual contracts entered into between the Eastern School District and a given contractor

DEFINITIONS

Walk Zone: Less than 1.6 kilometres (1 mile) from 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 entrance to school property.

ELIGIBILITY

A student is eligible for transportation if his/her civic address is:

1. outside of the walk zone; and
2. within the boundary of the school's catchment area

Bus routes are determined by the District based on the geographic location of all eligible students' civic addresses. Eligible students are then assigned to a specific route, as determined by the District, based on their civic address. A student is therefore only eligible for transportation on their assigned route.

Note: proof of address may be required at the discretion of the school administrator

COURTESY SEATING

A courtesy seat is a seat on a bus route for a student who has **not** been assigned to this route based on his/her civic address i.e. not eligible for student transportation on that route.

Approval of courtesy seat requests is the school administrator's responsibility.

Schools are encouraged to accommodate students where possible by approving courtesy seat requests after all students who are eligible for transportation have been assigned to the appropriate route based on their civic address.

Regardless of whether or not an eligible student avails of the seat assigned to them, that seat is earmarked unless a courtesy seat request for that student is approved (seat on another bus route) for the remainder of the school year. The originally assigned seat then becomes vacant and available to be filled via a courtesy seat.

A parent/legal guardian seeking a courtesy seat or a change in bus stop along a student's assigned bus route is required to complete a Courtesy Seat Request Form (Appendix A) and submit it to the school.

The school administrator should wait until October 1st before approving courtesy seats as the 1st month of the school year is filled with numerous late registrations and student transfers. However, if it is clearly evident that all courtesy seat requests can be accommodated, the school administrator can approve requests prior to this date.

Courtesy seats should be provided in the following priority:

1. a student who is eligible for transportation on Route "X" but has requested a courtesy seat on Route "Y" (youngest to oldest)
2. a student who resides within the Walk Zone (youngest to oldest) (required to avail of a bus stop outside of the walk zone)

Note: Other exceptions will be examined on a case by case basis in consultation with the District/Regional Manager

The following criteria must be considered prior to authorizing a courtesy seat:

1. There must be capacity on the bus. Capacities are as follows:
 - i. K – 6 70 passengers
 - ii. K – 12 (mixed load) 70 passengers
 - iii. 7 – 12 63 passengers

Note: This assumes a 70/72 passenger school bus

2. An existing bus stop should be used as the pickup/drop-off location

Note: An additional stop is permissible to accommodate a courtesy seat student as long as it:

- i. does not alter the route;

- ii. consistent with District bus stop guidelines noted herein; and
- iii. is a safe location for a bus to stop (consult the Contractor/Regional Manager and the District as necessary)

If a courtesy seat is approved by the school administrator, the seat may be taken away (1 weeks notice provided) if the seat is required for another student who is eligible for transportation on that route. Therefore, a courtesy seat cannot be taken away from a student for another courtesy rider, even if that student is higher on the priority list noted above.

If a seat which has been approved for a courtesy rider is needed for an eligible student on that route, then the priority when removing a courtesy rider is the reverse order of the listing noted above.

If a school shares busing with another school, courtesy seating must be coordinated between both schools in accordance with the procedures herein.

DAYCARES

The District can accommodate daycare providers (add a bus stop) provided the following conditions are met:

- a. The daycare center must be a licensed facility in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Province
- b. The daycare must be on an established school bus route for the school
- c. There has to be capacity on the school bus and in accordance with Courtesy Seating Priority outlined herein
- d. The daycare has to be outside of the Walk Zone
- e. Courtesy seating will only be considered with a request from the parent/guardian of the student(s)

BUS STOPS

A student's designated bus stop is the stop closest to his/her civic address on his/her assigned route or otherwise approved in accordance with this protocol.

In order to administer this protocol, school administrators are encouraged to be familiar with their school's bus routes and know the general streets which each bus route services. School administrators are also encouraged to occasionally ride along their bus routes as this will help in the familiarization of the above route details.

A parent has the option to contact the school administrator and request to change their student's bus stop to another existing bus stop on the student's assigned route.

- 1. This change in bus stop must be on a continuous/regular basis (minimum one week)
- 2. Written notice must be provided by the parent to the school (minimum 3 working days notice)
- 3. Written notice must be provided by the school to the Contractor/Regional Manager for that route (minimum 2 working days notice)
- 4. Documentation of points 1, 2 and 3 must be kept on file

In **extenuating circumstances**, throughout the school year students can avail of a second/alternate stop on a bus route if it is on a continuous/regular basis. (i.e. switch in Kindergarten cycle from mornings to afternoons, parent works away for an extended period of time, split families). Written notice must be provided by the school to the Contractor/Regional Manager and kept on file.

There should be no bus stop located:

- a. Outside the boundary of the school's catchment area
- b. Inside the Walk Zone for the school

Exception example: The end of a cul-de-sac is outside of the Walk Zone and the beginning of the cul-de-sac (near the entrance) is located within it. In this situation, a stop at the entrance is acceptable.

Authorization may be provided for a stop inside the walk zone under extenuating circumstances. This authorization must be provided by the District/Regional Manager.

Information purposes:

The number of bus stops should be limited to not more than 4 stops within any given 1.6 kilometer distance along a route (excluding the walk zone – no stops) for the purpose of taking on or discharging students, unless otherwise authorized by the District.

Contracted student transportation:

Stops are generally determined by the Contractor with the District/Regional Manager having ultimate authority to change and/or add/remove a bus stop and in consultation with the Department of Transportation and Works as necessary

District operated student transportation:

Stops are determined by the Regional Manager and in consultation with the Department of Transportation and Works as necessary

APPENDIX A
(Courtesy Seat Request Form)

Courtesy Seat Request Form

FOR COMPLETION BY PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN:

School: _____ Date: _____

Student 1: _____ Grade: _____ DOB: _____ Homeroom: _____

Student 2: _____ Grade: _____ DOB: _____ Homeroom: _____

Student 3: _____ Grade: _____ DOB: _____ Homeroom: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian: 1. _____ 2. _____

CIVIC ADDRESS - Street #: _____ Street Name: _____ Community: _____

Current bus route assigned to: _____ (if applicable)

REQUEST OPTIONS:

A) Courtesy Seat on bus route (other than your assigned one) and bus stop: _____ / _____
OR (route request) (bus stop request)

B) Change in bus stop along your assigned route: _____
(bus stop request)

Duration for which you are requesting this Courtesy Seat or Bus Stop:

Start date: _____ End date: _____

Note: maximum - all of current school year, minimum - 1 week

Rational for Request:

I, _____ wish to have my custodial child(ren) (indicated above) avail of a courtesy seat(s) as defined by the Newfoundland Labrador English School District. I understand that, if approved by the school administrator, this approval can be rescinded at any time (1 weeks notice) if the seat(s) is required for an eligible student or in extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the District.

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature: _____

FOR SCHOOL COMPLETION ONLY:

School: _____ Contractor: _____

Student: _____ Approved: Not Approved:

Route: _____ Bus Stop: _____ Start/End Date: _____

Student: _____ Approved: Not Approved:

Route: _____ Bus Stop: _____ Start/End Date: _____

Student: _____ Approved: Not Approved:

Route: _____ Bus Stop: _____ Start/End Date: _____

School Administrator Signature: _____ Date: _____

If APPROVED, a copy of this section ONLY must be distributed to Contractor/Regional Manager with a minimum 2 working days notice