



# Riverside School Board

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*The masculine gender is used throughout this document solely for purposes of readability. No discrimination is intended.*

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Appendix 1: The Transportation Department List of Forms **Note: These forms are not adopted by Council and are subject to modification as procedures evolve.**

- Complaint form
- Alternate address – bus stop request, distance verification
- Shared custody
- Behaviour report
- Transportation request 16+
- Accident report
- Available seat request
- Transportation request for pre-kindergarten



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Riverside School Board's ultimate mandate is to provide instructional Education and pedagogical services to its school population. Transportation is a complementary service that aims to facilitate accessibility to these programs. As a complementary service, the amount of resources allocated to the transportation budget must not compromise its primary objective.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Transportation Policy defines guidelines adopted by Riverside School Board for the administration and operation of its transportation system. This policy governs the transportation of students under its jurisdiction. This may also include students from private institutions who are governed by agreements, historical or otherwise, and subject to the present policy.

### 1.1 Definitions

<b>Board</b>	Riverside School Board
<b>Parent</b>	The parent or legal guardian identified as such on the student's registration form
<b>Transportation Department</b>	The Transportation Department of Riverside School Board
<b>RTL</b>	Réseau de Transport de Longueuil
<b>Dedicated Public Buses</b>	Public buses provided by RTL for students only
<b>Berline</b>	A vehicle, normally a minivan or car, dedicated to school transportation

## 2. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSPORTATION

### 2.1 In-Zone

A student is deemed in-zone to a school when his address is within a geographical attendance zone or has been granted special in-zone status by Council as defined in the Board's yearly "*Planning for Our Schools*" document.

#### 2.1.1 General case

Transportation will be provided to in-zone students who meet the following conditions of eligibility:

- a) kindergarten students who reside at a walking distance of 0.8 km or more from the school they attend;



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- b) elementary students who reside at a walking distance of 1.6 km or more from the school they attend;
- c) secondary students who reside at a walking distance of 2.0 km or more from the school they attend;
- d) students identified by the Board with a physical or intellectual handicap requiring specialized service. Parents must help the student to board the vehicle.

The walking distance is defined as the shortest distance by public road, or footpaths between the student's address and the closest entry to the school property.

## **2.1.2 Special cases (medical certificate, handicap)**

In special cases, the Board may provide transportation for students who have a certified medical reason that prevents them from walking to school. These exceptions will be examined in light of the student's capacity to participate in a physical education program as well as the permanence and severity of the medical condition described in the medical certificate provided annually by the parent to the school.

Parents of a child with a physical handicap must provide help in getting the child on and off the vehicle.

In the case of a child with a temporary medical condition, A student may be unable to use the regular transportation. The Board, in cooperation with the parent, will endeavour to provide transportation using available vehicles. If the student requires an adapted vehicle and none are available, other solutions may be considered (i.e. transportation provided by the parent, home-bound tutoring).

## **2.1.3 Available seats**

Available seats give students the opportunity to use yellow bus transportation even if they are not eligible for transportation. This applies to students who are in the walking zone as well as to those who are out-of-zone to a school.

A fee will be charged for an available seat for the school year, whether it is for part of or for a full school year.

The conditions are as follows:

- a) To obtain an available Seat, the form "Request for Available Seats" must be completed and signed by the parent and submitted to the school along with a cheque for the fee. The form is available on the Board website and also at the schools. The school will forward the completed form to the Transportation Department for evaluation. Not



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all requests can be granted. The request is only valid for the current school year.

- b) If the application is received by July 1<sup>st</sup>, the Transportation Department will have the available seat ready by the first day of the school year. If the application is received between July 1<sup>st</sup> and October 5<sup>th</sup>, it will be processed by October 15<sup>th</sup>. If the application is received after October 5<sup>th</sup>, the processing delay will be up to 10 days.
- c) In the event of a greater number of requests than available seats, the school will recommend to the Transportation Department which students are to be transported according to age and distance.
- d) The service is not guaranteed for the year and is subject to availability. In the unlikely event that seats are required for new registrations during the year or there is a change in bus routes, the Transportation Department will determine which students will no longer have an available Seat. The Transportation Department will advise the School and the parents and issue a pro-rata refund.
- e) There will be no bus stops added and the bus routes will not be extended or modified to accommodate these students. The arrival and departure time of the buses must be respected and will not be changed to accommodate these students.

## 2.1.4 Daycare

- a) Students registered in daycare do not relinquish their transportation eligibility if they require bussing later during the year.
- b) In the best interests of the child, if there is a change to the schedule of the child taking the bus, the parent must notify the school at least one week in advance.
- c) The school will not accept requests for changes to the daily schedule of the student except in the case of an emergency.

## 2.1.5 Passe-partout

Parents of these students must provide transportation.

## 2.2 Out-of-Zone

A student is deemed out-of-zone to a school when his address is outside the geographical attendance zone defined in the Board's yearly "Planning for Our Schools" document. If parents choose an out-of-zone school for their child, no transportation is provided. Exceptions to this rule are detailed as follows:



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## **2.2.1 Excess student enrolment in a school**

Due to a lack of space in a school at the grade level of a child, the Board may transfer a student to another school. Transportation is then provided for the rest of the school year, after which the student returns to the in-zone school, space permitting.

## **2.2.2 Rezoned students (The 'Grandfather' Clause)**

In the case where the Board redistributes the students among the schools and changes the geographical zone assigned to each school, a student's status may change to out-of-zone. A 'grandfather' clause is a provision in which an old rule continues to apply to some existing situations while a new rule will apply to all future cases. In this situation, the 'grandfather' clause will apply to continue transportation to certain students who began their studies at their in-zone school but, due to a zoning change, their status changed to out-of-zone.

## **2.2.3 Regional programs**

Students attending a regional program.

## **2.2.4 Interboard agreements**

For certain Riverside students, the Board cannot provide pedagogical services locally and must refer them to specialized schools. In most cases these schools are situated on the island of Montreal.

- a) Kindergarten and elementary students are transported by the Board, usually by berline or minibus.
- b) The Board will reimburse a percentage of the value of the bus pass to secondary students with access to public transportation
- c) In cases where there is no access to public transportation, or where a student is deemed to be incapable of using public transportation, the Board will provide transportation

## **2.2.5 Transferred student**

Under specific conditions as outlined in the 'Policy to Maintain a Safe, Respectful, and Drug-Free Environment in Schools', the Director General can enroll a student in another Riverside school. Neither transportation nor public transportation reimbursement is provided. Some situations are dealt with on a case by case basis by the Director General. The parent will assume additional costs for transportation. If the student was eligible for the public transportation reimbursement and is transferred during the year, the parent will receive the public transportation reimbursement for the period of time up to the time of transfer.

## **2.2.6 Available seats**

See Section 2.1.3



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## 3. TRANSPORTATION MODES

### 3.1 Public transportation

The Board, through an agreement with *Réseau de Transport de Longueuil*, will organize public transportation for as many of its students as possible.

All students assigned to public transportation must follow the rules of the transit corporation serving their area. The parent will buy the monthly pass and ID card.

#### 3.1.1 Reimbursement within RSB area

- A partial reimbursement of the public transportation pass is provided to cover the school day usage.
- All secondary students (either in- or out-of-zone) within the area served by RTL, excluding those who live within the 2 KM walking zone of any secondary school are reimbursed approximately 60% of the cost of the ten monthly passes required between September and June.
- The reimbursement will be made in one payment for the current year during the month of May.
- The cheque will be issued to the parent identified in the student's record as of mid-February of the reimbursement year.
- Amounts owed to schools will be deducted from this reimbursement.

#### 3.1.2 Reimbursements of public transportation for students who reside on the territory of RSB and who have interboard agreements

Reimbursements for Inter-Board secondary level Riverside students using public transportation are reviewed on a yearly basis. The reimbursement will be made in one payment for the current year during the month of May

### 3.2 School bus transportation

Regular yellow school buses are used in priority to serve kindergarten and elementary level students and in second priority, after public transportation, for secondary level.

### 3.3 Transportation by berline

Exceptionally, transportation by berline is used for students with special needs and where it is economically more feasible than the regular modes of transportation.

### 3.4 Transportation by other school boards

Given the limited financing available to operate a complex school transportation network, it is important that resources are used at an optimum efficiency level. To that end, school boards may enter into agreements to share transportation when it is of mutual interest.



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## **3.5 Transportation by parent**

In exceptional cases, when the regular transportation system cannot provide the service, particularly with regards to students with special needs, the Riverside Transportation Manager can make an agreement with the parent to transport his child.

## **4. SERVICE AND ORGANIZATION CRITERIA**

### **4.1 Bus stops**

#### **4.1.1 Bus stop location (public buses)**

Students using public transportation must use regular public bus stops, regardless of the walking distance to their stop.

#### **4.1.2 Bus stop location (yellow buses)**

Because the Board cannot pick up every child at their home, bus stops are normally placed at street intersections. It is the responsibility of the parent to supervise their child at the bus stop to ensure their safety.

- a) Elementary and secondary students may be required to walk up to a maximum of 0.8 km from the nearest point of access of their property to the bus stop.

Kindergarten students must use regular bus stops and may be required to walk up to a maximum of 0.4 km from the nearest point of access of their property to their bus stop.

- b) School bus stop locations are reviewed annually.
- c) The location of the bus stops will be established by the Transportation Department taking into consideration the safety and age of the students.
- d) When student enrolment changes during the school year, bus routes and bus stops may be added, moved, modified or eliminated.
- e) When the parent would like a bus stop changed, the form "Request for Change in Bus Stop" must be completed and handed in to the school. The school will send the completed form to the Transportation Department for consideration. The Transportation Department will review the request and send the answer to the school within a reasonable delay. Not all requests are granted.

#### **4.1.3 Medical condition (Temporary)**

In the case of a temporary medical situation, parents are responsible for their child's transportation. However, service closer to the door may be provided to students who cannot walk to a street corner because of a





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documented medical condition. The medical condition of the student will be evaluated on the basis of his attending physical education courses and the specific needs of the student.

## **4.2 Alternate address / shared custody**

Transportation may be provided to or from an address other than the home address under the following conditions:

- a) The second address remains the same for the major portion of the school year
- b) The request for such a service must be made in writing using the form available from the school secretary and the board website. The parent must hand in the completed form to the school and the request must be approved by the Transportation Department.
- c) The second address must also meet the eligibility requirements for transportation.
- d) No change will be made on a day-to-day basis.
- e) No bus stops will be added nor will bus routes be extended to accommodate alternate addresses or shared custody.

## **4.3 Capacity**

The maximum legal capacity is as follows:

Regular (yellow) school bus:	72 passengers (elementary level)
Minibus:	18 passengers
Berline (Minivan or car):	4 to 7 passengers depending on design.
	All passengers must have and wear a seat belt.

On a regular school bus the maximum capacity means that there will be 3 students per bench on all 24 benches. Taking into account the size of the students, whenever possible the Board will try not to exceed 60 elementary level students per bus and 48 secondary students per bus.

## **4.4 Disciplinary guidelines**

- Students are expected to behave in a responsible manner at all times. Common courtesy, good manners and mutual respect, as well as accountability and responsibility, are an integral part of youth education.
- Student behaviour on the bus is addressed by the school administration. A disciplinary guideline is provided to the schools for their consideration.
- The Board must ensure safe and secure transportation for all students.



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- The students must comply with the behaviour code stated in Roles & Responsibilities (Section 6.5) and any rules included in the school's code of conduct.
- The bus driver and/or transport company will report a student's problematic behaviour to the school using the standard bus report form.
- The school administrator has the authority to deal with student behaviour in the manner that he deems necessary. When appropriate, the principle of progressive disciplinary action is applied.
- The school deals with the student according to its code of conduct and the particular needs of the student.
- Students should be made aware that their inappropriate behaviour might lead to a suspension of transportation services. The following steps are recommended:
  - The driver asks the student to correct his behaviour.
  - If the behaviour persists, the driver makes a *first* written report that is sent to the school. A school administrator discusses the report with the student. The date should be logged for future reference.
  - If the behaviour persists, the driver makes a *second* written report. The school administrator notifies the parents either by phone or letter. In the case of a verbal notice, the date and name of the parent spoken to should be logged for future reference.
  - If the behaviour still persists, the driver makes a *third* written report. The school administrator normally notifies the parents of a suspension from the bus for a few days and if required holds a meeting with the parents.
  - Subsequent events reported by the driver should entail progressively longer suspensions, which could include an indefinite suspension. Parents should be met prior to a long-term or indefinite suspension.
- Certain serious inappropriate behaviour can lead directly to a suspension.
- Riverside School Board's "*Policy to Maintain a Safe, Respectful and Drug-Free Environment in Schools*" applies to all transportation.
- Students transported by Réseau de transport de Longueuil (RTL) are subject to the RTL code of conduct.
- The school should contact the Transportation Department or the RTL supervisor when issues are related to the bus driver.
- The school administrator may discuss specific student problems with the Transportation Manager in order to arrive at a fair resolution.



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## 4.5 Concerns

### 4.5.1 From the parent

Concerns regarding a driver's behaviour and/or transportation organization are addressed to the school administration. If required, this information is forwarded to the Transportation Department. Depending on the nature of the concern, the parent may be requested to provide it in writing.

### 4.5.2 From the school administration

The Transportation Department's role is to support the schools and will work cooperatively with them to find solutions to the transportation problems.

## 4.6 Transportable items

- In order to ensure the safety and protection of passengers on school buses, drivers must control the transport of luggage and equipment, in conformity with certain rules. Article 519.8 of the "Code de la sécurité routière" states that only hand baggage is permitted on a school bus.
- As a school Board rule, acceptable hand baggage must measure no more than 65 cm x 40 cm x 35 cm (26" x 16" x 14").
- Students must hold their bags on their laps without obstructing normal access to the aisle or bench.
- A student may carry no more than two (2) bags on the school bus (one conventional schoolbag and one other).
- The following items are prohibited from being transported on the bus:
  - Golf bags and equipment
  - Musical instruments that exceed the measurements mentioned above.
  - Skateboards
  - Skates without a rigid case, or a sturdy bag and skate guards.
  - Hockey sticks and sports bags that exceed the measurements mentioned above.
  - Snowboards, alpine or cross-country ski equipment
  - Animals
  - Snowshoes, toboggans
  - Umbrellas unless they are collapsible
  - Construction paper that is not rolled
  - Items that pose a safety risk for students
- All bus drivers must strictly adhere to these guidelines. As well, students must be reminded of these regulations by the school.



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## 4.7 Video monitoring

Video monitoring equipment may be used by the Transportation Department, on board the bus, when deemed necessary, to ensure the safe transportation of students. All other forms of photography and video monitoring are prohibited.

## 4.8 Transportation organized by the school

### 4.8.1 Late bus

A school that wants to provide a late bus service to its students will do so at the school's expense.

### 4.8.2 Extracurricular activities

Transportation for extracurricular activities is the school's responsibility. The buses are ordered and paid by the school. On request, the Transportation Department will provide names of recommended transport companies to the school.

### 4.8.3 Field trip transportation

Public transportation or School buses are the recommended methods of transportation for field trips. Should car pools be organized, proof of registration, appropriate insurance coverage, and a valid drivers licence must be assured (reference: *Policy on Field Trips and Trips for Athletic Events*).

## 5. SCHOOL CLOSURES

Due to exceptional circumstances it may happen that some or all schools may be temporarily closed during a regular school day. Only the Director General or his delegate has the authority to close one or more schools when circumstances warrant it.

### 5.1 Before the beginning of the school day

The decision to close any or all schools is based on the safety and well-being of the students. When weather conditions jeopardize the operation of the transportation system and/or the safety of the students, the Riverside Transportation Manager evaluates the situation. Information is gathered from:

- Bus operators in different areas of the Board's territory
- Environment Canada weather office
- Other school boards within our territory
- Police services

From the information provided, the Director General, in consultation with the Transportation Manager, makes a decision to close some or all schools. In the case of a closure:

- The Director General initiates a telephone chain to advise all school administrators and selected radio stations for a public announcement of school closure.



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- The information will be posted on the Board's website and Facebook page. Parents who have registered with SMSPASDECOLE will receive the information by text message.
- The Transportation Department telephones the appropriate bus and taxi companies to cancel operations.

The following considerations are important:

- Where possible, the decision should be made before 6:15 AM
- It may be impossible to make an early decision if more accurate information is required.
- Once on the bus, kindergarten and elementary level students should be brought to school. In the case of kindergarten and elementary level students, all parents will be phoned to make sure someone is at home before sending the students back.

## 5.2 Early dismissal

- Occasionally through unforeseen events, a school may have to be closed and students returned home.
- The Director General or his delegate authorizes an early dismissal following a request by the school's principal.
- The Principal and Transportation Manager agree on a dismissal time for the children, whereupon the parents are contacted.
- It is the principal's responsibility to insure adequate supervision of the children until they are transported home. The school remains the parent's point of contact.

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 6.1 The Transportation Department shall:

- establish eligibility for transportation;
- ensure that all contractual obligations are fulfilled;
- establish all bus routes, bus stops and schedules;
- ensure adequate space on all buses for students travelling to and from schools;
- assist the school administration, bus drivers, parents and others with solutions to problems occurring on vehicles or at bus stops;
- promote student safety through student and parent awareness of transportation policies and procedures.

### 6.2 Transportation contractors shall:

- provide contracted services to the Board;
- ensure that each driver hired is qualified and properly licensed before allowing him or her to drive a vehicle under contract with the Board;
- follow through on all concerns received from the school or Transportation Department;
- advise the Transportation Department and the schools immediately of all accidents involving vehicles under contract;
- inform the drivers of the transportation policies and procedures of the Board;
- advise drivers to return a kindergarten or cycle 1 student to the school if there is nobody at the bus stop to meet him or her;



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- assist and co-operate fully with the Transportation Department in all matters pertaining to driver discipline;
- maintain vehicle cleanliness inside and out at all times;
- maintain and repair all vehicles as required by provincial regulation and as stipulated in the contract;
- forward recommendations from the drivers regarding matters of safety to the Transportation Department.

## 6.3 The driver shall:

- respect the scheduled times, routes, and stop locations determined by the Board;
- not arrive unnecessarily early at school;
- whenever feasible, turn engine off when waiting at school;
- report all accidents and injuries immediately and follow-up with a written report.
- keep a copy of the bus route on the bus at all times;
- respect all laws regulating the driving of a school bus as stipulated by the provincial highway code;
- drive in a manner that ensures the safety of all passengers;
- make recommendations regarding the safety of students to the bus contractor in conjunction with the school administration;
- maintain discipline on the school bus;
- report all behaviour problems to the school administrator using established procedures;
- return a kindergarten or cycle 1 student to the school if there is nobody at the bus stop to meet him or her;
- not refuse, on his own authority, to transport students identified by the Board.

## 6.4 The school administration shall:

- ensure that all information on students is current and that all new registrations, changes and/or deletions are promptly updated in the GPI system;
- supervise the arrival and the departure of school buses;
- advise parents that bus drivers will return a kindergarten or cycle 1 student to the school if there is nobody at the bus stop to meet him or her;
- discipline students who violate the rules;
- inform the Transportation Department of concerns and suggestions for improvement;
- forward to the Transportation Department all requests for transportation services;
- ensure that the Transportation Policy of the Board are communicated to students and parents;
- inform the parent of a 'transferred' student (transferred for reasons of overcrowding) that transportation to the other school is valid only for the period of time that the student is transferred. When the student is transferred back to their zoned school, transportation resumes to that school.

## 6.5 Students shall:

- use only the bus they are assigned;
- respect the authority of the driver;
- refrain from the use of profane or obscene language or discriminatory remarks;
- be at the bus stop ahead of time (10 minutes);



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- stay well clear of a moving bus and wait until it comes to a full stop before approaching;
- line up in single file when boarding a bus and then move to the rear and take a seat;
- remain seated, talk quietly, and not eat or drink on the bus;
- not engage in anti-social behaviour such as spitting, littering, fighting, etc.;
- avoid shoving, pushing, etc., especially when boarding or leaving the bus;
- never place head or arms out of bus windows;
- use the emergency exits in an emergency only;
- not tamper with any bus equipment or mechanism;
- not distract the driver by conversing with him or by misbehaving;
- not throw anything inside the bus or out of the windows;
- respect the no smoking rule on school buses;
- not use any alcohol or drugs;
- assume the cost of repairs for damages for which they have been deemed responsible;
- wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before leaving their seats and descend in a single file;
- walk a safe distance away from the bus, so that the driver can see them and know that they are safe;
- where applicable, always cross in front of the bus while lights are flashing and always proceed with utmost caution, in full view of the driver;
- use only assigned seat, if, for disciplinary or safety reasons, the bus driver deems this measure to be necessary;
- obey the driver's instructions at all times;
- identify themselves correctly, by name, upon the request of the driver;
- follow the rules concerning the carrying of equipment as stipulated in article 4.6.
- not use any form of photography or video monitoring on or around the school bus.

## **6.6** The parents shall:

- review with their children the safety procedures and rules of conduct contained in the information provided by the Board or in the school's code of conduct;
- inform the school of any changes in personal information i.e. home address, alternate address, telephone number, etc.;
- forward to the school administration all requests concerning transportation services;
- assume all costs for wilful damage done by their child to the school bus or property of others;
- be responsible for the supervision of their children at the bus stop, as well as between home and the bus stop;
- ensure that the child is at the bus stop 10 minutes before the bus is to arrive;
- have a back-up plan in the event that the child misses the bus or if the bus does not arrive.



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## 7. PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

The private institutions shall:

- in early May, provide the Board with an up to date list of students to be transported for the following year;
- update promptly all registrations, changes and deletions of the student list with the Transportation Department;
- inform parents of their child's bus route and rules of behaviour at the start of the year;
- deal with parental concerns;
- communicate any problems to the Transportation Department;
- support the Transportation Department in applying its policy;
- not modify its school hours without an agreement with the Transportation Department;
- pay promptly all sums owed to the Board.

## 8. COMING INTO FORCE

This Policy shall come into force on the date of its adoption by the Council of Commissioners of Riverside School Board.