



TRANSPORTATION POLICY

NWOSSC - 001

Policy Statement

The Northwestern Ontario Students Services Consortium, comprised of the Kenora Catholic District School Board, Northwest Catholic District School Board, Conseil Scolaire De District Catholique des Aurores boréales, and the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board provides harmonized student transportation services that are safe, efficient and effective.

Rationale

The Education Act states that School Boards may provide transportation for students enrolled in schools operated by the Boards. As such, transportation is considered a privilege and not a right. This policy sets out the terms and conditions under which the Northwestern Ontario Student Services Consortium will exercise its discretion to provide transportation service.

1.0 Eligibility

Transportation may be provided for students meeting the following conditions of eligibility:

- 1.1 Pupils of the Boards registered in and attending a school operated by the Boards.
- 1.2 Other Pupils of the Boards who attend a school operated by the Boards.
- 1.3 Eligible students who reside, or whose caregiver resides, more than the following distances by public road or publicly owned and maintained access route from the designated school may be provided transportation:

JK, SK	Over 500 metres
Grades 1,2,3	Over 1.0 km
Grades 4 -8	Over 1.6 km
Grades 9-12	Over 3.2 km

- 1.4 For eligible registered bus students, school bus transportation is intended to be the primary mode of transportation to and/or from school. As such, regular ridership is required as determined by the operational procedure.

2.0 School Boundaries

- 2.1 In cases where students have been granted permission to attend a school other than the designated school according to established school boundaries, parents or guardians are responsible for transportation. If the transportation address/stop is within the attending school boundary transportation may be provided.
- 2.2 Children and youth in care may be considered for cross school boundary transportation to remain in their attending school providing the following conditions are met:
 - the accommodation would involve existing school bus routes;
 - there is room on the bus;
 - there is no route extension;
 - there is no route deviation; and
 - there is no additional cost to the system;
 - if space is required by another eligible student, the student may lose his/her riding privileges if no other reasonable alternative can be found.

The Consortium may require documentation from the appropriate agency.

3.0 Safety

- 3.1 Students may be transported for reasons of safety rather than distance at the discretion of the General Manager.
- 3.2 Parents/Guardians are responsible for the safety and conduct of students to, from and at the bus stop.
- 3.3 School principals are responsible for ensuring that school bus safety practices are taught annually, including evacuation drills for all elementary students (Kindergarten to Grade 8).

4.0 Bus Stops

- 4.1 The Consortium has a responsibility to provide a bus stop at a location that is safe for students boarding/disembarking as well as for those already on the bus.
- 4.2 Bus stops will be located according to established operational procedures.

5.0 Route Changes/Designs

Student safety is the first priority of the Northwestern Ontario Student Services Consortium and all reasonable measures will be taken to ensure that routes are designed and maintained in a manner which is safe, effective, efficient and fiscally responsible.

- 5.1 All routes are designed to operate only on publicly owned roads that are adequately maintained year-round. The exceptions may be turnarounds which may be located on private property, subject to review and approval by the General Manager. The Consortium is not responsible for maintenance or snow clearance for any road infrastructure or turnarounds. Transportation will not be provided in any situation that does not provide adequate accommodation for the safe operation of buses.
- 5.2 Route extensions may be considered if the following conditions are met:
 - i) the route extension is over 1.0 km based on the address of the student making the request, and the extension distance is not excessive;
 - ii) the change, modification or extension shall not adversely affect the route;
 - iii) the road's conditions are adequate;
 - iv) an adequate turnaround is available and properly maintained and is within a reasonable distance from the stop;
 - v) the financial impact is deemed reasonable.
- 5.3 Where the requested route change meets all other criteria and the total change exceeds ten kilometres (10 km) one-way between the existing closest stop and the route change request, there must be a minimum of four (4) eligible students requesting service before a school bus route extension will be considered.
- 5.4 There may be occasions where parent contracted transportation would be the most appropriate mode of transportation. As such, financial assistance may be available as determined by Consortium procedure.
- 5.5 Route changes or modifications may be made at any time. However, every effort will be made to provide reasonable notice to parents.
- 5.6 In the event of any facility change (eg: school opening/closing) or in an immediate or extended emergency, the Consortium may make any necessary changes or modifications in routing.
- 5.7 Students may be required to transfer buses.

- 5.8 Routes are subject to review and students must continue to meet all criteria in order to maintain service levels.

6.0 One Destination/One Pickup

- 6.1 For reasons of safety and efficiency, students are permitted to have one pick-up and one destination point only. These points may be different, providing this is a daily occurrence and there is room on the bus to accommodate daily different a.m./p.m. arrangements.
- 6.2 Students in Grades 7 to 12 may occasionally use alternate stops, providing it is an active stop on their registered bus..

7.0 Shared Custody

The Northwestern Ontario Student Services Consortium recognizes that special consideration may be required for families with shared custody of students. The following guidelines will be used when providing transportation in shared custody situations:

- 7.1 Parents must provide a Primary Transportation Address and Secondary Transportation Address, subject to the following conditions:
- i) Both addresses must be the place of residence of the parent/guardian or their appointed caregivers;
 - ii) Both addresses must be eligible for transportation as outlined in section 1.0 of this Policy;
 - iii) When either the primary or secondary transportation address is outside of the attending school boundary area, transportation may be provided to an existing stop within the attending school boundary area, as outlined in section 2.0;
 - iv) There must be room on the bus(es) servicing the secondary address;
 - v) No route extensions will be granted.
- 7.2 Where applicable, court documents will dictate which of the primary and secondary transportation address receives afternoon bus service. If this is not specified and parents/guardians cannot agree, the parent with the greater share custody (as per court documents) will make the determination. If the situation involves a 50/50 joint custody situation or no custody agreement is in place, and the parents cannot agree on either of the primary and/or secondary addresses, transportation may not be provided.

- 7.3 For students in JK to Grade 6:
- On a daily basis, morning pick-up may be provided at either the primary or secondary address.
 - The afternoon service will be provided to one of the primary or secondary address, and drop-off must be at the same location every day.
- 7.4 For students in Grades 7 to 12:
- On a daily basis, students can use the pick-up or drop-off location based on either the primary or secondary address, providing there is room to assign a student to two buses.
 - Families are not required to inform the Consortium of daily schedules regarding pick-up and drop off locations and the Consortium or bus operator/driver does not assume any responsibility in managing or tracking the student's daily schedule.
- 7.5 Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that school administration has an accurate and up to date custody schedule.
- 7.6 For students with special needs or exceptional circumstances where a visible parent is required to accompany and meet the student at the bus stop and/or if the student travels with an Education Assistant, the policy for students in JK to Grade 6 will apply due to the specialized transportation plan involved.

8.0 Accessibility

- 8.1 In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the Consortium will ensure that integrated accessible school transportation services are provided for all students with a disability or special need. Where integrated accessible transportation services are not possible or not the best option for a student with a disability because of the nature of the disability or safety concerns, the Consortium will ensure that alternative accessible transportation services are provided.
- 8.2 The Consortium will, in consultation with member school boards parents or guardians of students with disabilities or special needs, identify students with disabilities or special needs before the commencement of each school year or during the school year, and develop individual school transportation plans for each student with a disability that detail student assistance needs and include plans for individual student boarding, securement and deboarding.
- 8.3 Roles and responsibilities of the transportation service provider, parents or guardians or the student with a disability, the operator of the vehicle used to

transport the student, appropriate school staff and the student with a disability will be identified and communicated to the appropriate parties.

- 8.4 In circumstances where it is not possible for the Consortium to provide alternative accessible transportation services, financial assistance may be provided to parents/guardians.

9.0 General

- 9.1 The Consortium transportation policy and procedures shall be available on the Consortium website at www.nwobus.ca as well as through a link from Kenora Catholic, Northwest Catholic, Keewatin-Patricia and Conseil Scolaire de District Catholique des Aurores boréales.
- 9.2 All requests, concerns and complaints concerning school bus transportation and school bus drivers shall be referred to the General Manager for appropriate action.
- 9.3 In the interest of safety and to address instances of misconduct and vandalism, video camera surveillance may be used on school buses.
- 9.4 Every student is responsible for their conduct to the Principal of the school where the student attends. The school board and provincial Code of Conduct shall govern the conduct of the student. Consistent with transportation being a privilege and not a right, any breach of the Code of Conduct may result in the suspension or cancellation of bussing privileges.
- 9.5 The Consortium will not provide transportation other than home-to-school transportation. Any decision to fund transportation outside home-to-school transportation is the responsibility of the Board.
- 9.6 Bus Operators may not, without prior Board approval, obtain new routes, or receive a transfer of existing routes where, as a result of the proposed actions, an existing or proposed Bus Operator would control, directly or indirectly, more than 60 percent of the transportation requirements

10.0 Appeals

- 10.1 Parents/guardians may appeal to the Board of Directors with respect to home to school transportation services under the transportation policy and procedures.
- 10.2 Parents/guardians may request changes to the Transportation Policy following the established operational procedure.

11.0 Procedures

- 11.1 The Board of Directors, in conjunction with the General Manager, shall be responsible for the development of Transportation Procedures based on the Transportation Policy. The General Manager will be responsible for the implementation of the transportation policy and procedures.

12.0 Review of Policy

- 12.1 The Transportation Policy of the Northwestern Ontario Student Services Consortium will be reviewed on an annual basis. Consistent with 2.2.12 of the Consortium Agreement, the Policy Committee consists of one senior business official per Board and one trustee per Board. The Policy Committee may develop procedures to govern its operation.

Date Last Reviewed	March 2025
Date First Approved	2012
Associated Policies/Procedures	
References	