



Governance and Planning Transportation

Policy Number GP-13

The Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board (SMCDSB) recognizes the positive impact that home-to-school student transportation can have on student achievement and well-being by providing access to the Board's schools and programs. It is the policy of the SMCDSB to provide safe, equitable, efficient, and cost effective transportation to eligible students within the allocated funding.

Procedural Guidelines Follow

Statement Number T 1-98-00 "Transportation"

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Procedures and Guidelines Supporting Transportation

Policy Number GP-13

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1. **Attendance area** means the area within a school's attendance boundary.
- 1.2. **Alternate transportation** means transportation requests that clearly define one (1) alternate pick-up location and one (1) alternate drop-off location based on five days per week
- 1.3. **Alternating transportation** means transportation requests that clearly define one (1) alternate pick-up location and one (1) alternate drop-off location based on a recurring schedule (for example: Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week)
- 1.4. **Bus** includes all school purpose vehicles.
- 1.5. **Home school** means the school which the student would attend based on school boundaries and primary residence.
- 1.6. **Primary residence** is a student's legal and/or permanent residence. This address determines a student's home school. A student may have only one primary address. In the case of joint-custody arrangements, it is the decision of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to determine the primary residence, and to provide that information to the school upon request.
- 1.7. **Operator** means an individual, individuals, or firm owning and/or operating vehicles under contract with the Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium.
- 1.8. **Out-of-boundary student** is a student who does not attend their home school and is not otherwise eligible for transportation services to the school they attend.
- 1.9. **Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium (SCSTC)** is a consortium formed through an agreement between the SMCDSB and the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) for the purpose of providing a common administration of student transportation services throughout Simcoe County. The SCSTC administers each of the Board's transportation policies and procedures and implements all aspects of home-to-school transportation services.
- 1.10. **Urban area** means an area located within the municipal limits of the cities, towns, and villages in Simcoe County and the Districts of Muskoka and Parry Sound.



2. GUIDELINES

2.1. Provision of Transportation Service

- 2.1.1. Home-to-school transportation and transportation between schools shall be provided on buses and other vehicles owned by operators under contract with the SCSTC.
- 2.1.2. Students are expected to attend their home school, unless otherwise approved through the office of the Superintendent of Student Achievement.
- 2.1.3. The Board is not responsible for the transportation of out-of-boundary students.
- 2.1.4. The Board provides transportation to eligible students between home and school.

2.2. Walk Zones

- 2.2.1. The Board will establish walk zones for each school based on the following distances from the school property:

Elementary Schools	1.6 km
Secondary Schools	3.2 km
- 2.2.2. Distance measuring will be done by the SCSTC using a digitized map, and/or measuring wheel. Measurements are taken from the student's primary residential property line nearest to the closest entrance of the school property.
- 2.2.3. The boundary of each walk zone will reflect the most direct and practical walking route from the home school to the primary residence. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may choose to have their student utilize an alternate walk path, however, this will not change the walk zone measurement.
- 2.2.4. Students who reside within a designated walk zone for their home school are not eligible for transportation.
- 2.2.5. Responsibility for getting to and from school rests with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s).

2.3. Bus Routes

- 2.3.1. The Director of Education, or designate, is authorized to provide transportation to and from home schools for students residing outside of designated walk zones, and to make all decisions related to the implementation of the Board's transportation policy, supporting procedural guidelines, and administrative practices supporting the provision of student transportation.

- 2.3.2. Bus routes will be organized efficiently and economically and will correspond to the following criteria, unless exceptional circumstances exist, as determined by the Director of Education, or designate, in their sole discretion:
- 2.3.2.1. Maximum travel time for elementary students is 60 minutes one way;
 - 2.3.2.2. Maximum travel time for secondary students is 75 minutes one way;
 - 2.3.2.3. Scheduled pick-up time for elementary students will occur no earlier than 7:30 a.m. and drop-off time for elementary students will occur no later than 5:15 p.m. except under exceptional circumstances as determined by the SCSTC;
 - 2.3.2.4. Scheduled pick-up time for secondary students will occur no earlier than 6:45 a.m. and drop-off time for secondary students will occur no later than 5:45 p.m. except under exceptional circumstances as determined by the SCSTC;
 - 2.3.2.5. Maximum walking distance to a bus stop is 0.8 km;
 - 2.3.2.6. Maximum walking distance to a bus stop may exceed 0.8 km where the SCSTC determines the roadway is unsafe for a school vehicle to manoeuvre;
 - 2.3.2.7. Unless exceptional safety conditions exist, bus stop locations shall be a minimum of 0.2 km apart;
 - 2.3.2.8. Students will ride on assigned buses and will be picked up and dropped off at designated bus stops.
- 2.3.3. If a student must ride on more than one bus one-way, bus routes will be organized so a transfer point is located at a school where it is practical to do so.

2.4. Bell Times

- 2.4.1. Bell times for elementary schools will be no earlier than 8:30 a.m. and no later than 4:15 p.m.
- 2.4.2. Bell times for secondary schools will be no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and no later than 4:30 p.m.
- 2.4.3. Bell times described in 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 may be altered to minimize travel time on a bus and achieve efficiencies in the organization of bus routes by following the process outlined below:

- 2.4.3.1. Proposed bell time changes as determined by the SCSTC will be communicated to the SCSTC Executive Committee;
- 2.4.3.2. Proposed bell time changes initiated by school Principals will be communicated to the office of the Superintendent of Student Achievement and the office of the Education Leadership Council (ELC) member overseeing the Transportation portfolio;
- 2.4.3.3. All proposed bell time changes will be reviewed for anticipated savings / cost impact and feasibility by the SCSTC;
- 2.4.3.4. Following the initial feasibility and cost impact review by the SCSTC, bell time changes will be reviewed by the Board's Education Leadership Council. A consultation and communication plan for bell time changes will be considered if possible;
- 2.4.3.5. A draft proposal identifying all proposed bell time changes will be reviewed with the Board's Education Leadership Council;
- The draft proposal will include feedback from school staff / school communities (where available), rationale for the change, and cost implications.
- 2.4.3.6. All bell time changes will be approved by the Director of Education, or designate;
- 2.4.3.7. Approved changes will be communicated to affected schools / school communities with as much notice as possible.
- 2.4.4. Bell times described in 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 will not be altered more than once within a three-year period.
- 2.5. Supervision Times
- 2.5.1. Planned supervision time for elementary and secondary schools for the purposes of school bus scheduling only, are no more than 15 minutes before the morning school bell and no more than 15 minutes following the dismissal school bell.
- 2.6. Alternate Transportation
- 2.6.1. Alternative transportation arrangements may be made for students residing beyond the designated walk zone of their home school upon the written request of a parent/guardian to the home school Principal provided that:



- 2.6.1.1. The request clearly identifies one (1) alternate pick-up location for every morning and one (1) alternate drop-off location for every afternoon five days a week for the school year;
- 2.6.1.2. Both the requested pick-up and drop-off locations are within the attendance area boundaries and outside of the designated walk zone of the home school; and,
- 2.6.1.3. Both the requested pick-up and drop-off locations are served at an existing bus stop by existing bus routes on which there is available space.
- 2.6.2. Transportation requests that meet the criteria above but involve pick-up and/or drop-off locations in a reoccurring pattern (i.e. alternating transportation) require the approval of the Education Leadership Council (ELC) member overseeing the Transportation portfolio.
- 2.6.3. Approved requests for alternate or alternating transportation pick-up and/or drop-off locations are for the current school year only, and a request must be made annually.
- 2.6.4. The Board reserves the right to reverse previously approved alternate transportation approvals when safety, behaviour or capacity conditions warrant.
- 2.7. Out-of-Boundary Transportation
 - 2.7.1. The Board will assume no obligation to provide transportation for out-of-boundary students who have chosen to attend a school that is not their home school. In such circumstances, the responsibility of getting to and from a school will rest entirely with the student and their parent/guardian.
 - 2.7.2. A request in writing for consideration to access an existing bus stop on an existing bus route to attend a school that is not the student's home school, will only be approved if there is surplus space on the bus and there is no additional cost to the Board.
 - 2.7.3. Approved requests for out-of-boundary transportation are for the current school year only, and a request must be made annually.
 - 2.7.4. The Board reserves the right to reverse previously approved out-of-boundary transportation approvals when safety, behaviour or capacity conditions warrant.
- 2.8. Other Transportation Considerations
 - 2.8.1. The Director of Education, or designate, in their sole discretion is authorized to provide transportation:
 - 2.8.1.1. For students who attend any of the following: the Ontario school for the blind, an Ontario school for the deaf, a demonstration school, or other

facilities as provided for in the Education Act, supporting regulations, or policy/program memorandum;

- 2.8.1.2. For students with special needs requiring transportation to and from school as an accommodation as evidenced by a certificate or assessment from a medical doctor or other qualified professional (as determined by the Board) describing the student's needs, and the duration that the student is anticipated to require transportation, up to one school year; and,
- 2.8.1.3. For late buses for secondary co-curricular programs where sufficient numbers exist; and,
- 2.8.1.4. On compassionate grounds with a limited time of approval.

2.9. Student Behaviour

- 2.9.1. Conduct which is detrimental to the safe operation of the transportation vehicles or to the safety and/or well-being of others riding on the vehicle will not be permitted.
- 2.9.2. The driver of the vehicle is in charge of the operation, and the safety and/or well-being of riders, and must be given each rider's cooperation and support.
- 2.9.3. Every student is responsible to the Principal of the school that the student attends for the student's conduct while on a school bus. Administrative procedures provide further direction regarding the responsibilities of Principals for student behaviour in transportation situations.
- 2.9.4. An operator shall be entitled, upon giving not less than 24 hours' prior written notice to the Board, to refuse to transport a student who in the operator's reasonable opinion constitutes a threat or danger to the safe operation of the school vehicle or the safety and/or well-being of that student or any rider, pending investigation of the circumstances and decision by the Board.
- 2.9.5. Permanent or temporary loss of transportation services shall occur for a student whose behaviour while travelling on a bus is considered to endanger the safety and/or well-being of others.

2.10. Cancellation of Transportation or Changes in Times of Bus Runs

- 2.10.1. The Director of Education, or designate, is authorized to make special arrangements to cancel or alter transportation services to ensure the safety of students during inclement weather or emergency situations.



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- 2.10.2. Each Principal is responsible for ensuring that their school has a contingency plan for the safe care of students in the event of an early closure or when homeward transportation must be cancelled.

2.11. Student Safety

- 2.11.1. The Board's responsibility for supervision of students who are transported on a school vehicle will commence with the student's entrance to the vehicle and will terminate with the student's exit from the vehicle at the designated bus stop.
- 2.11.2. It is the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian to ensure their student's safety to/from designated bus stops and while at the designated bus stop.
- 2.11.3. The safety of each student transported shall be of prime importance in every aspect of transportation.
- 2.11.4. Safety of transportation by school vehicle shall be part of the program of studies in elementary schools.
- 2.11.5. Each school shall develop appropriate safety rules with regard to bus loading zones.

2.12. Dispute Resolution Process

- 2.12.1. All transportation disputes will first be received by the SCSTC for resolution or redirection.
- 2.12.2. Disputes outside the mandate of the SCSTC will be directed to the SMCDSD from SCSTC administration.
- 2.12.3. The Director of Education, or designate, will receive the dispute for resolution and communicate the decision to the parent/guardian/student.

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