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Policy EEA

Transportation of Students

I. INTENT

The intent of this policy is to provide the structure for the New Frontiers School Board (NFSB) to organize transportation for its elementary and secondary students (Youth Sector) in the safest manner possible in accordance with the Education Act, the directives of the Quebec Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Transport of Quebec (MTQ), and its capacity to provide these services within the financial resources available.

This policy establishes the limits for discretionary action that may be taken by the administrators of the Transportation Department in meeting the day-to-day responsibilities of student transportation.

II. DEFINITIONS

1. Permanent Address

A student's permanent address is deemed to be the civic address (domicile) that is declared on the student registration form.

2. Designated School

The designated school is deemed to be to the school that the School Board identifies as the school to which the student is eligible for transportation.

3. Walking Distance

Walking distance is defined as the shortest distance by public road, or municipal pedestrian pathway between the student's permanent address and the main entrance of the designated school.

III. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. A school board may, with the authorization of the Ministry of Education, organize the transportation for all or part of its student body.
2. NFSB organizes free bussing at the start and at the end of the school day for students who are eligible for transportation services in the youth sector.
3. Transportation on a school bus is a privilege, not a right.
4. The school bus shall be considered as an extension of the school at all times. All safety rules established by the school and the Transportation Department, in addition to School Board regulations, shall apply.
5. Transportation privileges may be revoked for any student who does not conform to the bus rules or places the safety of the other students in jeopardy. Loss of transportation privileges does not absolve compulsory school attendance.
6. Transportation services will be provided using vehicles that conform to the norms of the Ministry of Education, the MTQ, and the requirements of the NFSB, including the use of public transportation where available and/or necessary.
7. Students who are attending schools within the territory of the New Frontiers School Board can expect to spend a reasonable period of time on the school bus. However, the time traveled will be affected by the distance, the route, and the number of stops between the student's permanent address and their designated school.
8. Where possible, and economically viable, elementary and secondary students will be transported on the same vehicle.
9. Wherever possible, and economically viable, secondary students will be transported by public transportation. Upon presentation of receipts, parents/guardians will be reimbursed at a rate of 70% payable twice annually (i.e., December and June).

IV. CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSPORTATION

Eligibility for transportation is established based on the distance from the student's permanent address to the designated school.

1. Daily Transportation will be provided for:
 - i. All students in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten whose permanent address is further than 0.8 km from their designated school;
 - ii. All students in grade 1 to grade 6 inclusive whose permanent address is further than 1.6 km from their designated school;
 - iii. All students in secondary 1 to secondary 5 inclusive whose permanent address is further than 2.0 km from their designated school; and
 - iv. All students in grade 1 to grade 6 inclusive, whose permanent address is less than 1.6 km from their designated school who must cross a highway.

Daily Transportation may be provided for:

- v. Students identified by the NFSB Board as having a physical or intellectual handicap requiring specialized services, without limit to distance. However, daily transportation is not provided if parents/guardians choose a school for their child other than the student's designated school.
2. Temporary Transportation:

A student who is in a situation that is unforeseen and/or beyond his/her control may request transportation for the following reasons:

 - i. A temporary physical handicap (with a medical certificate from a specialist);
 - ii. Any other reason deemed reasonable by the administrators of the Transportation Department.

3. Payments to Parents/Guardians

In the event that the School Board's Transportation Department judges that due to particular circumstances (i.e., see 4. Limitations, below) where transportation cannot be provided, an allocation will be given to the parent/guardian based on an assessment of the student's particular situation.

4. Limitations

School bus routes and stops are established in consideration of the population density, student safety, the rules of the road, and the identification of zones that represent a danger to the students (i.e. railway tracks, rivers, highways). No transportation services are offered in case of:

- a dead-end street;
- a road that is too narrow;
- a private road;
- a road that is not maintained adequately for safe school bus travel;
- all locations judged unsafe or inaccessible by the Transportation Department

V. RELATED COMMITTEES

1. Transportation Advisory Committee

As per the Education Act, the Director General oversees a Transportation Advisory Committee. The role of this advisory committee is to develop and recommend various transportation programs, procedures and strategies.

2. Educational Services Standing Committee

The Educational Services Standing Committee makes recommendations to the Council of Commissioners with respect to the approval of bus contracts, policy, safety, and other related matters.

VI. PROCEDURES

1. Students with Special Needs

- i. In special cases, the NFSB Board may provide transportation for students who have a certified medical condition preventing them from walking to school. The medical certificate will be examined to determine eligibility. An updated medical certificate may be required anytime at the Board's request, and must be submitted at least annually.
- ii. The Transportation Department will work in collaboration with the office of the Director of Educational Services when establishing the appropriate transportation for special needs' student's in-zone and out-of-zone.
- iii. The Transportation Department assumes no responsibility to provide Attendants on any vehicle used for student transportation.

2. Students with a Temporary Medical Condition:
 - i. A temporary medical condition may prevent a student from using the regular transportation system. The NFSB Board will try to accommodate the student using available vehicles. However, should the Transportation Department be unable to make accommodations, it will be the parent/guardian's responsibility to transport their child to and from school on a daily basis until the student is able to resume regular transportation.
3. Transportation Resulting from Inter School/Board Agreements:
 - i. When the NFSB designates a student to a school in another school board by Inter School/Board Agreement, the NFSB will provide transportation.
 - ii. When parents/guardians choose to have their child(ren) placed in a school other than the school designated by the NFSB through an Inter School/Board Agreement, they assume the responsibility for the transportation of their child(ren).
4. Alternate Address / Shared Custody:
 - i. Transportation may be provided to or from an address other than the *permanent address* under the following conditions:
 - The second address must be that of a parent/guardian with shared custody of the student and must meet the eligibility requirements for transportation;
 - The request for service must be made in writing, by the parent/guardian, to the school and approved by the Transportation Department; and
 - Bus stops will not be added nor will bus routes be extended to accommodate these students.
5. Available Seats:
 - i. Available seats may be assigned to students who are not normally eligible for transportation.
 - ii. A "Special Accommodation Request Form" must be completed by the parent/guardian, signed by the school principal, and approved by the Transportation Department. The request must be made annually.
 - iii. The request must respect:
 - existing bus routes;
 - the number of seats available; and
 - existing bus stops.
 - iv. All "Special Accommodation Requests" must be accompanied by payment.
 - v. The fee structure is as follows:
 - For one child, the fee is \$200. The second child from the same family is charged \$150; other children from the same family are charged \$100.
 - For "short-term" accommodations, i.e. a parent is planning a business trip or vacation and their child(ren) will require the use of a different bus to go to a babysitter's address, a fee of \$50 per child applies.
 - For pre-Kindergarten students who attend school two days per week and require a special accommodation, the rate is \$50 per student.
 - For parents, who both reside out-of-zone at different addresses, both must complete separate special accommodation requests with a fee of \$200 for the first request and \$150 for the second request for one student.
 - vi. Requests received and approved by June 23 will take effect on the first day of school. Parents will be notified of the Board's ability to accommodate the request on or before July 15. Requests received and approved between June 23 and the September 30 deadline will take effect after October 15. Parents will be notified of the Board's ability to accommodate the request on or before October 15 of each school year.
 - vii. Any student benefiting from this measure must give up their seat to any new student who is eligible for transportation, in the event of overcrowding on the bus. The parent/guardian will be issued a pro-rated refund.

VII. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The administrators responsible for Transportation will:
 - be responsible for the overall operation of the school bus network, and will work with the school administration, the parents / guardians to address daily transportation problems or concerns that arise during the school year.
 - recommend contracts related to transportation to the appropriate committees of the School Board, for approval by the Council of Commissioners, where applicable;
 - coordinate closely with Board-level services in the creation of the bus route/student address database;
 - be responsible for transportation-related communications to students, parent/guardian, and stakeholders; and
 - in exceptional circumstances, assess and determine the need for transportation.
2. Parents / Guardians must:
 - be responsible for their children's welfare, helping their children to learn and follow all bus safety rules and regulations;
 - impress upon their children that bus transportation is a privilege and that students whose conduct is unacceptable will be denied transportation; and
 - be responsible for the supervision of their child(ren) at the bus stop, at the morning pickup and afternoon drop-off.
 - for those children in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and grade 1, ensure that an adult is present both at morning pick-up and afternoon drop-off.
3. Students must:
 - respect all the safety and security rules and regulations;
 - respect the authority of the bus driver; and
 - always take responsibility for their actions.
4. Bus Drivers must:
 - be an accredited bus driver, as per SAAQ requirements, who is in charge of all aspects of the operation of the bus; and
 - be responsible for the safety and security of all passengers.
5. School Bus Contractors are:
 - responsible to operate under the conditions of the law, directives of the Ministry of Education and the MTQ, and to respect the terms of their contract with the NFSB.
6. School administrators are responsible for:
 - the daily operation of the bussing network at the school level;
 - involving parents/guardians when addressing transportation problems or concerns that arise during the school year; and
 - implementing disciplinary measures, when necessary, as the school bus is considered to be an extension of the classroom and school.