



SUN WEST
SCHOOL DIVISION
Success for all

School Bus Safety Handbook

**For Students
Parents/Guardians**

Bus Driver Name	
Phone Number	
Cell Phone	

Sun West School Division

Transportation Department

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to use the Transportation Department cell phone and email address below with transportation questions or concerns. Both the cell phone and email are monitored daily.

Transportation Department Direct Contact

Transportation Department Cell: 1 (306) 831-4335
Transportation Department Email: transportation@sunwestsd.ca

Transportation Manager

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Transportation Supervisor

Darcy Freistadt
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Other inquiries can be forwarded to the Sun West School Division Office.

Sun West School Division Office

Sun West School Division Office Phone: 1 (306) 882-2677
Sun West School Division Office Toll Free: 1 (306) 378-2677
Sun West School Division Office Email: info@sunwestsd.ca

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School Bus Transportation

This handbook was developed to assist in understanding the school bus transportation system throughout Sun West School Division. It provides an overview of specific responsibilities within that system.

Within broad guidelines established by the Sun West School Division Board of Education, the responsibility for the school bus transportation system is delegated to the Transportation Manager. The Board has also adopted several specific policies related to school bus discipline, emergency procedures and the like, but it is stressed that a safe and successful school bus transportation operation requires the cooperation and understanding of students, parents, bus drivers, school administration and Division administration.

This handbook is published so that students, parents and all others concerned with safe operation of the bussing system have the opportunity to become aware of the major factors and interlocking responsibilities which combine to provide a safe and adequate school bus service.

For a more detailed description of Division policies and administrative procedures, refer to the Sun West School Division website at www.sunwestsd.ca.

General Administration and Operation of Transportation Services

Day-to-day administration of all school bus services is the responsibility of the Sun West School Division Transportation Department. School buses in the Division are managed by the Transportation Manager.

The Division has established attendance areas for effective use of school facilities and for transportation purposes.

Questions or concerns relating to specific bus routes should first be asked of the appropriate bus driver. If the matter cannot be satisfactorily answered at that level, it should be referred to the Transportation Manager.

1. Parents/guardians shall provide the school with the legal land description or address of their residence.
2. Students may be directed to attend a school other than a student's designated school, outside the attendance area, where the educational needs of a student with special needs cannot be met in the designated school and the prospective and receiving school has appropriate and available accommodation.
3. Where a parent wishes to have a child attend a school other than their local school and outside the attendance area in which they reside a request shall be made by written application to Transportation Manager describing their situation and reason(s) for the request. The Boundary Committee will review the request, give consideration to the reasons for the request and the ability to meet the program needs for the child.
4. Direction to attend an out-of-attendance area school shall continue from year to year provided that the conditions under which the direction was granted continue to exist.
5. Where the conditions under which direction was granted cease to exist, the decision to attend an out-of-attendance school is immediately revoked.
6. Principals are responsible for advising the Transportation Manager whenever an out-of-area student ceases to meet the conditions for continued enrollment.

Responsibility of the Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians play the key role in influencing their children in all aspects of safety at home, at play, and going to and from school. This is particularly true of younger children.

Parents/guardians are responsible for the supervision of their child prior to the student boarding the bus in the morning. Once students board the bus (entering and exiting included), they become the responsibility of the Division. Such responsibility shall end when the student is delivered to the regular bus stop at the close of the school day or when the student chooses an alternate mode of transportation.

Parents/guardians can promote school bus safety in the following ways:

1. Review and discuss with student the contents of this booklet, particularly the area regarding their responsibilities.
2. Provide extra help and guidance during the first several weeks of school, especially for kindergarten and grade one students. The student must have a good understanding of the location of stops, behavior while waiting for buses, behavior while on board, what to do when buses are late, etc. Safety is of the utmost importance and should be emphasized by the parents.
3. Report in writing any safety concerns to the Transportation Department giving specific details as to bus number, date, time, place, etc.
4. Remind students that even though all vehicles are required by law to stop when flashers are in operation on a school bus, vehicle drivers are sometimes negligent in stopping when they should. Students are to proceed across the road with the utmost caution.
5. Promote awareness in other drivers that it is a traffic offence to pass a school bus with its red lights flashing (IN EITHER DIRECTION).

What parents/guardians should be aware of regarding school bus service:

1. Form 550-1 Student Bus Transportation Request must be completed and submitted to the Transportation Department in order to obtain transportation services. Upon approval the Transportation Department will inform the bus driver to contact the parent/guardian to make arrangements for pick-up and drop-off. Please allow adequate time for these arrangements to be made. This process may take up to, or exceed a week.
2. Yard service will be provided to homes along provincial highways and major roads.
3. The above service will be provided only if roads are in suitable condition for such services. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian living on a bus route to have driveways in a suitable condition.
4. Students must be ready to board 5 minutes prior to their designated pickup time when the bus arrives at their home or immediately when it arrives at the school bus loading zone. Failure to comply with this expectation may result in the student being left at the loading place.
5. Parents/guardians with concerns regarding bus routes or pick-up points should first contact the bus driver. If the matter cannot be resolved with the driver, it should be referred to the Transportation Department.
6. Be aware that the Board may have surveillance cameras installed on school buses as they deem necessary (Refer to Administrative Procedures 181 Video Surveillance).
7. Parents/guardians will be responsible for willful damages to school buses caused by their children.

8. When the bus transportation privileges of a student are suspended, under the provisions of Administrative Procedures 350 Student Conduct, school attendance is still mandatory and the parents/guardians must make their own alternative transportation arrangements. *Allowance in Lieu of Bus Services* will not be paid in these circumstances.
9. Be aware of Division procedures relating to general suspension of transportation services due to emergencies such as severe weather (Refer to Administrative Procedures 125 Severe Weather).
10. Provide a written note or phone call notifying the driver when your child is not going to be on the bus. The bus driver is to be advised the evening before or in the morning prior to the driver leaving home.
11. Students will not be allowed off at other stops without written consent of the parents/guardians and approval of the Transportation Department. Under extreme conditions where this cannot be assured, the students will remain on the bus until released to responsible adult care. A confirmed text message to the driver may be suitable.
12. Children under the age of 12 years will not be dropped off where there is no one at the residence. If there is no one at the drop off point an alternate location must be arranged well in advance with the school bus driver. Any alternate pick up/drop off point must be on the regular designated bus route.
13. In the event that a student will not be riding the bus in the morning due to illness, parents/guardians are asked to contact the school bus driver. If you are not able to contact the school bus driver, please call ahead to the previous stop and request the student to give the bus driver the message.
14. Students, other than regular passengers, must obtain permission from the school bus driver prior to riding a school bus.
15. On bus routes with a centralized designated drop-off point (villages and hamlets for example), parents/guardians will be made aware of pick up/drop off times and locations. Parents/guardians shall be responsible for ensuring the student's safe arrival home from the designated location.
16. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to ensure that their children are properly dressed for severe weather conditions. In order to board school buses during winter, students must have a winter jacket, footwear that is considered as winter wear, and head and hand protection. Bus drivers may refuse admittance of students not adequately dressed for winter conditions.
17. Parents/guardians should inform the bus driver and the Transportation Department of any medical conditions or needs of a student.
18. Assure that billet arrangements have been made and submitted to the school no later than October 15th of each school year.

Transporting Items on the School Bus

***ONLY ITEMS REQUIRED FOR CURRICULUM ARE TO BE TRANSPORTED**

***The school bus driver shall determine where items are to be stored.**

Allowed	
• Lunch Containers	– students take care of their own
• Books	
• Book Bags	
• Skates	– blades must be properly covered and placed on the floor at the student's feet
• Musical Instruments	– small instruments may be held by the students, large instruments are to be left in an empty seat, not on the floor by the driver.
Not Allowed	
• Hockey Sticks	– are considered projectiles and <u>cannot</u> be transported on the school bus
• Curling Brooms	
• Golf Clubs	
• Toboggans	
• Skate boards	
• Skis/ski poles	

NOTHING IS ALLOWED IN THE AISLES

NO FIREARMS OR LIVE ANIMALS

Permission to transport anything not mentioned above must be obtained from the Transportation Manager.

Transportation of Special Needs Students

The Division recognizes that special needs students may require special transportation considerations. On the recommendation of the Superintendent of Education with responsibilities for school operations, urban special needs students may be provided with transportation to and from school. The type of transportation provided will be determined by a representative from Student Support Services in consultation with the Transportation Manager. Such transportation shall be subject to approval by the Superintendent of Student Support Services.

1. Before a decision is made to provide bus service to special needs students, an assessment shall be made of the student's ability to ride the bus.
2. Form 550-1 Student Bus Transportation Request shall be completed.
3. The parent/guardian and bus driver shall be made aware of their respective responsibilities.
4. The bus driver shall be informed of any special medical or physical needs of the student.
5. The student shall be properly supervised (if necessary) so the driver can concentrate on driving safely. If a student with special needs requires additional supervision when being transported on a school bus the Superintendent of Student Support Services will make the necessary arrangements.
6. If bus service is provided, there will be a review of the decision after a one-month trial period. This review will include consultation with the parents.
7. In the case of a lift being used in a bus, the parent/guardian shall provide any assistance the special needs student requires outside the bus either for loading or unloading.

Responsibilities of the Student

Students require a safe, clean, well-regulated bus. Because the driver must give his/her full attention to driving, students should comply with a driver's reasonable requests. If a student feels that he/she is being unfairly treated and he/she cannot resolve the problem with the driver, the student is to report the situation with all the details to the Principal of their attending school. The Principal will investigate and try to settle the difference.

Students shall:

1. sit in assigned seats if applicable.
2. remain seated and not extend parts of their bodies out of the windows, attempt to get on or off the bus, or move within it while the bus is in motion.
3. keep aisles clear of obstructions (feet, books, lunch boxes, gym bags, back packs musical instruments, etc.).
4. refrain from throwing paper or other material on the floor or out of the bus window.
5. conduct themselves in a quiet and courteous manner, showing consideration for the comfort and safety of others.
6. refrain from roughhousing, fighting, smoking, chewing tobacco, drinking alcoholic beverages, using drugs and using obscene language on the school bus.
7. understand that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated and that all instances will be reported to the appropriate authorities and consequences applied.
8. understand that eating on the bus is at the driver's discretion and the privilege may be revoked if the driver chooses to do so.
9. understand that they will be held fully accountable for causing willful damage to the bus..
10. pay attention to the bus driver's instructions when leaving the bus and only cross the road when there is a clear view in all directions.
11. remain a safe distance from the bus until it comes to a complete stop before approaching for loading.
12. dress properly in extreme cold or severe weather by wearing a winter jacket, footwear that is considered as winter wear, head and hand protection.
13. ensure all personal belongings such as lunches, clothing or books are taken with them when they leave the school bus.
14. participate annually or as requested in emergency bus evacuation drills.
15. only use the rear exit door in case of emergency.

Student Conduct on School Buses

The Division believes that bus drivers are an integral part of the school staff. They serve not only as drivers of school buses for the conveyance of students, but are responsible for safety and conduct of the students while they are on the bus. Students riding on a bus are expected to give the bus driver the same due respect, consideration and co-operation they give their teachers and always immediately carry out his/her reasonable demands and instructions.

If a student chooses to break a rule, the following consequences will be applied:

1st incident	Student warned by driver.
2nd incident	Student assigned designated seat, parents contacted and Form 360-5 School Bus Student Conduct Report filed with the principal.
3rd incident	Principal, parent/guardian, student and driver conference.
4th incident	Suspension of bus privileges for a designated period of time; parents notified by letter and made responsible for transportation.

The following procedures shall be carried out when it becomes desirable or necessary to suspend a student from riding a school bus:

1. Decisions to permanently suspend a student from riding a school bus shall be made by the Board. (Refer to Board Policy 13 Appeals and Hearing Regarding Student Matters)
2. The parents/guardians of the student must be personally informed by the Principal (or designate) of the suspension and the reasons for the suspension prior to the next pick-up time.
3. If the suspension becomes necessary during the evening run and the parents/guardians cannot be notified, the student shall be conveyed to the school the following morning at which time the student and the reasons for suspension shall be presented to the Principal. Under extreme circumstances, the student may be denied conveyance until such time as the parent/guardian and Principal have been so informed.
4. Re-instatement on the school bus may take place:
 - a) where the suspension is for five days or less, a meeting and/or communication with the parent(s)/guardian(s), student, Principal and bus driver whereby the situation is resolved; or
 - b) a meeting with the Superintendent of Education with responsibilities for school operations for problem resolution.

Duties and Responsibilities of School Bus Drivers

The primary responsibilities of the bus driver, at all times, shall be the care and safe conveyance of students to school and home and operating the school bus in a courteous manner.

The school bus driver shall:

- a) be thoroughly familiar with and adhere to transportation policies and procedures.
- b) ensure the bus and equipment is in safe mechanical condition.
- c) ensure the bus interior is clean and that the exterior lights are free of any obstacles.
- d) establish a schedule for his/her route within one week of the beginning of school and ensure that the bus arrives at the school based on the times specified by the Transportation Department.
- e) notify parents/guardians regarding time schedules and variations of time schedules.
- f) be at the first school pick-up five minutes before dismissal time.
- g) conduct a bus evacuation drill with the students before the second week in September;
- h) check the bus after dropping off the students at the school in the morning and after the last drop-off at the end of the day to ensure that all students have left the bus and where applicable change the rear "Bus Empty/Full" sign to empty;
- i) ensure, before leaving the school, that all students are accounted for to the best of their knowledge.
- j) not smoke on the bus loaded or unloaded.
- k) not drive a school bus while impaired by alcohol or drugs including impairment from all illegal, prescription or over the counter drugs;
- l) not use a cell phone while operating a school bus.
- m) not be obligated to wait for students if (s)he is on time of her/his bus route.

Responsibilities of the School Principal

The School Principal is responsible for daily supervision of students including while they are being transported on the school bus. This involves the supervision of arrivals and departures and dealing with disciplinary problems. From time to time, safety aspects should be brought to the attention of the students.

Arrival and departure of school buses:

The principal shall:

- arrange for alternate shelter and care if necessary.
- arrange for appropriate supervision of students during loading and unloading of school buses.
- restrict students not riding school buses from using the loading area.
- bring any bus scheduling problems to the attention of the Transportation Manager.
- have a clearly understood procedure for students to follow when a bus is missed.

Disciplinary Action

Based upon reports submitted by drivers or supervisors of the loading or unloading activities, school administration will deal with each case according to Division policy and procedures.

Distribution of information

The Principal shall:

- ensure that the regulations, responsibilities and disciplinary channels are made known to staff and students at the beginning of each school year and throughout the year as required.
- inform parents/guardians that a copy of this handbook is available on the Sun West School Division website at www.sunwestsd.ca.
- institute a year-round follow-up program to encourage and continue safety consciousness on the part of all students and teachers.
- make every effort to inform parents/guardians of younger children their responsibility to their children in respect to bus safety, expected behavior, and disciplinary measures which will be taken for breach of regulations.
- where it deems necessary, coordinate meetings with drivers, students, teachers, parents/guardians and the Transportation Department.
- consider the bus driver as an extension of school staff and ensure that any problems are discussed with the driver immediately.

Responsibilities of the Division

The Division has a responsibility to make arrangements for the safe conveyance of resident and other students approved by the Division to and from school.

1. Service will be provided in urban areas when approved by the Ministry of Education.
2. Door service is provided for students with special needs and other medical conditions upon application and approval of the Transportation Department.
3. In cases where it is not feasible to provide transportation the Board reserves the right to make payments to parents in lieu of transportation.
4. Yard service will be provided to homes along provincial highways and major roads. This will only be provided if roads are in suitable condition for such services. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians living on a bus route to have driveways in a suitable condition.

Severe Weather

Schools are expected to remain open and operational on all designated days of the school year. However, in order to ensure the health and safety of students and Division personnel during periods of severe weather conditions, a decision may be made to suspend the operation of school buses and/or schools.

The Director is authorized to dismiss students, discontinue transportation services, and close schools as emergencies arise. The following criteria may be used as a guideline:

- temperature at or lower than -40 degrees Celsius by no later than 7:00 a.m.
- severe wind chill at, or lower than -40 degrees by no later than 7:00 a.m.
- severely drifted or extremely icy roads.
- limited visibility because of fog or blowing snow.
- all the above conditions will be determined by key area drivers in consultation with the Transportation Manager.

Procedures for decision to alter/cancel bus transportation (following the above guidelines):

1. The Director or designate may cancel school buses either individually or collectively when weather conditions are so severe or road conditions are so hazardous as to constitute a safety risk to the students being transported.
2. In the absence of a decision by the Director or designate, the individual driver is granted discretionary power to cancel or alter his/her route to ensure the safety of students being transported.
3. Parents/guardians have the right to decide whether to send students to school in the event of severe weather; however, that school and their operations will be open and the students will be marked absent. Parents/guardians are urged to notify the school if their child/children will not be in attendance.
4. Where the individual driver makes the above decision(s), he/she will advise the parents/guardians and Principal of the respective school and the Transportation Department.
5. Normal operation of buses will be cancelled by the Director or designate when determined that it is in the interest of safety. This will be done by direct communication prior to 7:00 a.m.
6. Regarding severe weather, schools **WILL REMAIN OPEN TO STUDENTS** even if any or all school buses are not operating.
7. If extreme weather conditions exist when bus drivers are returning students from school to their homes, the bus driver shall ensure that each student is delivered to his/her home and enters the house. If circumstances make it impossible to deliver the student to his/her home, the driver shall keep the student in the vehicle and, in consultation with the principal, make appropriate arrangements for the safety and well-being of the student.
8. School buses are not to leave schools earlier than their usual times in circumstances of extreme weather.
9. Principals are responsible for ensuring parents have established billets in town for all bussed students. This should be done no later than October 15th of a school year. The principal is responsible for the safe care of all students and staff at the school until safe transportation is assured.
10. In the event school bus or buses are not operating, in-town students are expected to be in their regular appointed places.

Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

The Board has a responsibility to make arrangements for the safe conveyance of resident and other students approved by the Board to and from school.

The Board, as the final authority on all local aspects of school bussing and as elected officials of the community, must try to meet the needs of the community by:

1. providing adequate policy statements to give clear direction to all parties concerned with bus transportation.
2. delegating to staff members the authority necessary to carry out their responsibilities.
3. acting as a final authority when a problem cannot be resolved by the Director of Education or the Transportation Department.

General and Legal

The Board, in accordance with the Education Act, shall establish and maintain a system of student transportation that will be operated in accordance with this policy, procedures and handbooks. The Board, believing that students who are transported with school division vehicles are entitled to safe and efficient travel, expects that an efficient route system will be maintained using clean and safe vehicles operated by qualified drivers.

Sun West School Division requests that in order to confirm legitimacy all grievances regarding transportation employees be submitted in writing and mailed to the Transportation Manager.

These letters should include a signature and return address. Upon receipt of the letter and after follow up, our office will respond in writing.



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