



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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1. Introduction

Riverside School Board's mandate is to provide educational 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 the primary objective of the school board.

This Transportation Policy is adopted by Riverside School Board to establish the rules and procedures for the administration and operation of its transportation system. This policy applies to the daily transportation, to and from school, of youth-sector students living on school board territory. This may also apply to students from private institutions who are governed by agreements, historical or otherwise, and subject to the present policy.

1.1. Legal Framework

The organization of the transportation of students is regulated by the following legislation: the Quebec Education Act, the Transport Act, the Regulation respecting road vehicles used for the transportation of school children, the Highway Safety Code, and the Riverside School Board Policy to Maintain a Safe, Respectful and Drug-free Environment in Schools

1.2. Definitions

Board	Riverside School Board
Parent	The parent or legal guardian identified as such on the student's registration form
Transportation Department	The Transportation Department of Riverside School Board
RTL	Réseau de Transport de Longueuil
Berline	A vehicle, normally a minivan or car, dedicated to school transportation
Walking Distance	The shortest distance from the student's residence to the closest access to school property, using public roads or pedestrian paths.
Kindergarten	For the purposes of this document, Kindergarten refers to four-year-old and five-year-old Kindergarten.

1.3 Principle Guidelines

Riverside School Board organizes transportation services for its youth-sector students who are eligible for transportation. The responsibility of the school board begins when the student gets on the school transport and ends when they disembark. The parents are



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responsible for the student outside of this period. Parents of students not eligible for transport are responsible for the safety of their child going to and from school.

The transportation network is organized to provide services for the regular daily needs of all students who are eligible for transportation. In consideration of the safety of students, transportation services are not for occasional, variable or personalized services.

The student's principal address is used to determine if the student is eligible for transportation. In the case of shared custody, the parents will determine the principal address that will be entered in the student's file.

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

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

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

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.

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

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSPORTATION

2.1 Criteria for Eligibility

A student is deemed in-zone to a school when his principal address is within a geographical attendance zone as defined in the Board's "*Planning for Our Schools*" document. A student is deemed out-of-zone to a school when his principal address is outside the attendance zone. If parents choose an out-of-zone school for their child, no transportation is provided.

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;
- 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.



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The walking distance is determined by the shortest distance, using public roads or footpaths, between the student's address and the closest access to the school property.

2.2. Medical Conditions

Transportation to school will be provided to students, designated by the school board, that need special services due to physical or intellectual handicaps.

In special cases, the Board may provide transportation for students who have a certified medical reason that prevents them from walking to school or to a bus stop. 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, the 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, homebound tutoring).

2.3 Regional Programs

Transportation is provided for students attending a regional program.

2.4 Excess Student Enrolment Resulting in Student Transfer

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.

2.5 Zoning Change ("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. The Grandfather Clause is described in the *Planning for Our Schools* document, produced annually.

2.6 Interboard Agreements

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



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of Montreal. If public transportation is not available or if a student is deemed incapable of using it, the school board provides transportation. If the student uses public transportation, the Board will reimburse a portion of the bus pass and identity card, using the current reimbursement terms.

3. SERVICE AND ORGANIZATION CRITERIA

3.1. Organization of Transportation and Travel Time

The school board will decide on the mode of transportation used to transport students, based on multiple criteria including school transportation contracts, availability of vehicles, delays, capacity, etc. This means that students may travel on yellow buses, Berlines, or use the RTL.

When possible and under normal conditions, the travel time for a student should not exceed 75 minutes. This remains an objective and should not be considered an obligation or commitment.

3.2. Bus Stops for School 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) Kindergarten students 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.

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.
- 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 a 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. Making a request does not guarantee its approval.



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3.3. RTL: Location of Bus Stops and Reimbursement to Parents

Location of Bus Stops

Students using public transportation must use bus stops that are already in place, regardless of the walking distance to the bus stop.

Buss Pass

Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, there is an agreement between RSB and RTL for a restricted student OPUS pass for eligible secondary students. Eligible secondary students are those who live where the RTL is the designated transportation from their residence to their in-zone school. This includes students attending an in-zone or out-of-zone school served by the RTL but excludes those who live within the 2 km walking zone of any secondary school. These students will receive a restricted student OPUS pass that is paid by the school board. This bus pass can only be used during RSB calendar school days, excluding holidays, from Monday to Friday, between 6:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Parents will continue to pay the fee for the production of the OPUS card issued by RTL. There will no longer be any reimbursement made by RSB to parents for bus passes.

3.4. Capacity

The maximum legal capacity is as follows:

Regular (yellow) school bus:	72 passengers
Minibus:	18-30 passengers
Berline (Minivan or car):	4 to 7 passengers depending on model of vehicle.

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 Kindergarten or elementary students per bus and 48 secondary students per bus.

3.5. Second Address – Shared Custody and Alternative Address

The principal address determines the status and eligibility of transportation of the student. Transportation may be provided to a second address other than the principal address under the following conditions:

- a) For a shared-custody address, the parents must inform the school secretary of the second address, who will then modify the information in the student's file.
- b) For an alternative address, a form is available from the school secretary or on the board website. The parent must hand in the completed form to the school and the request must be approved by the Transportation Department.



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- c) The second address must remain the same for the major portion of the school year.
- d) The second address must also meet the eligibility requirements for transportation.
- e) No change will be made on a day-to-day basis.
- f) No bus stops will be added nor will bus routes be extended to accommodate second addresses.

3.6. Available Seats

Available seats give students, whether they are deemed eligible or not eligible for transportation, the opportunity to use school transportation and 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. Details regarding the fees and terms are available on the application form.

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 or from the school secretary. The school will forward the completed form to the Transportation Department for evaluation. Making a request does not guarantee approval. The request is only valid for the current school year.
- b) If the application is received by July 1st, the available seat will be ready by the first day of the school year. If the application is received between July 1st and October 5th, it will be processed by October 15th. If the application is received after October 5th, the processing delay will be up to 10 days.
- c) If the number of requests exceeds the number of 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.



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3.7. 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*” (The Highway Safety Code) 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
 - Baseball bat
 - Musical instruments that exceed the measurements mentioned above.
 - Skateboards or scooters
 - 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.

3.8 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.

3.9 Daycare

- a) Students registered in daycare do not relinquish their transportation eligibility if they require bussing later during the year.



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- 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.

3.10 Passe-Partout

Parents of these students must provide transportation.

3.11 Student Transfers Resulting from Application of the *Policy to Maintain a Safe, Healthy and Drug-free School*

Under specific conditions as outlined in the “Policy to Maintain a Safe, Respectful, and Drug-Free Environment in Schools”, the Director General can transfer a student to 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.

3.12 SCHOOL CLOSURES

Due to exceptional circumstances, it may happen that some or all schools may be temporarily closed during a regular school day. (Bad weather conditions, poor driving conditions, or other). Only the Director General or his delegate has the authority to close one or more schools when circumstances warrant it.

When possible, the decision to close some or all schools will be made before 6:15 a.m. The information will be posted on the school board website and Facebook page.

4.0 Bus Safety Code of Conduct

- 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.
- The students must comply with the behaviour code stated in Roles & Responsibilities (Section 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.



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- 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.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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;



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- 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.

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 student to the school if there is nobody at the bus stop to meet him or her;
- 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.

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 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.

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;



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- supervise the arrival and the departure of school buses;
- advise parents that bus drivers will return a kindergarten 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.

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);
- 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 Section 3.7.
- not use any form of photography or video monitoring on or around the school bus.



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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.

The private schools 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 and procedures;
- not modify its school hours without an agreement with the Transportation Department;
- pay promptly all sums owed to the Board.