



# OPERATING REGULATIONS HANDBOOK



[psd.ca](http://psd.ca)





## Operating Regulations Handbook Sign Off

This is to confirm that I have received Parkland School Division's Operating Regulations Handbook. Furthermore, I understand that it is my responsibility to read the handbook, learn its content and abide by the requirements it sets forth.

Operator's full name (please print clearly):

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Operator's signature:

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Date signed:

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**Please submit your signed form to Transportation Services.**

**In-person or by mail:** 4603 48 Street, Stony Plain, AB T7Z 2A8

**Email:** [dispatch@psd.ca](mailto:dispatch@psd.ca)



# Important Contacts

## Driver Hotline

This line is exclusively for drivers and contractors who need to speak with Transportation Services staff.

**phone:** 780-591-5668

## After-hours Emergency

To report a bus-related emergency after-hours, call 780-217-4460.

## Transportation Services

**reception:** 780-963-8452

**email:** [dispatch@psd.ca](mailto:dispatch@psd.ca)

The office of Transportation Services is located in the Centre for Education (4603 48 St., Stony Plain) and can be accessed by turning left directly upon entering the front/main door.







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## A. Operator Conduct

Parkland School Division's (PSD) Transportation Services expects its school bus operators to conduct themselves with integrity and professionalism at all times. The job of a bus operator is one that requires constant attention to safety procedures. Traits of a professional school bus operator include:

- Being compassionate and good-hearted;
- Using proper communication skills with students, parents, school staff and others;
- Possessing quick awareness, to notice when something is wrong or about to go wrong, by being familiar with both passengers and surroundings;
- Demonstrating adequate knowledge of policies, vehicle equipment and traffic laws;
- Driving safely and keeping an eye on the changing environment;
- Being reliable and consistent;
- Displaying excellent school bus management; and
- Having a patient disposition.

Every day, parents rely on bus operators to transport their children safely to and from school. Operators should be proud of that trust. To maintain it, PSD encourages all of its operators to continually develop their skills, apply their knowledge, maintain a positive attitude, establish positive relationships with students/parents and perform their daily tasks to the best of their abilities.

### A.1. Appearance

Professional operators shall be aware of the importance of personal cleanliness and dressing in a neat and appropriate attire. When at work, operators must dress in a way that is both safe and respectable. Clothing worn must provide adequate coverage (short-shorts and low-cut shirts are not allowed). Shoes worn during the job must comply with safety recommendations (closed-toe shoes are required; high heels are not allowed).

The appearance of an operator's bus is equally important. It is the responsibility of the operator to keep the bus clean at all times. The interior of the bus (floor, ceiling and seats) must be kept clean and free of debris, trash, bottles, clothing and other loose items. This will encourage a positive attitude among passengers, provide improved visibility for the operator and increase safety by reducing the possibility of injuries to passengers caused by slipping on objects on the floor. Ultimately, a clean bus gives the community a positive image of Transportation Services and the bus operator.

## A.2. Attitude

The school bus operator is a representative of PSD and must be positive, professional and alert at all times.

Operators must also be prepared to deal professionally with passengers/students, parents and school staff. Be polite and courteous, use an appropriate tone of voice and vocabulary when speaking and refrain from shouting, swearing or using offensive or aggressive language.

For the safety of all passengers, it is imperative that operators maintain their concentration on what they are doing.

## A.3. Alertness

The operator is also responsible to operate the school bus in a way that ensures the safety of all passengers at all times. Alertness and the ability to react quickly to emergencies is essential. Operators need to constantly watch for signs of fatigue such as slowed reaction time, yawning, the desire to close their eyes, forgetfulness, poor communication and the inability to pay attention. It is imperative all operators ensure they are always alert while operating a school bus.

Bus operators shall be medically fit to drive at all times and must inform their employer and the Alberta Ministry of Transportation Registrar if they have any medical conditions which may affect their ability to drive.

Operators shall not consume any alcohol before or during any route or journey (or at any time beforehand on the same day) including drinking without exceeding the legal alcohol limit for driving. It should be noted that alcohol from drinking the day before can remain in the bloodstream for up to 24 hours and that any amount of alcohol can affect concentration, reaction times and judgment.

Driving while under the influence of any drugs or medications, which may affect an operator's ability to drive, is strictly prohibited. This includes both prescription and nonprescription medication. If taking any medication, always check with your medical practitioner or pharmacist that it is safe to drive.

**Smoking or vaping of any kind is prohibited on all PSD-contracted buses, PSD vehicles and PSD properties (schools, transfer sites, etc.).**

#### A.4. Confidentiality

A school bus operator will often have access to confidential student information. It is essential that operators keep all student information confidential and not discuss it at work functions, coffee meetings or in public places. In general, operators are only allowed to share student information if it is necessary to complete their job and to protect student safety. Additionally, all paperwork containing student information must be stored in a safe and confidential place at all times.

#### A.5. Reliability

Operators must be consistent with pickup and drop-off times as a courtesy to families assigned to their bus route. To ensure timeliness, operators should set a morning alarm every night before going to bed. A backup alarm should also be set in case of a power outage. If an operator is more than 10 minutes late, the operator must notify Transportation Services as soon as possible. An automated SchoolMessenger phone and email will be sent to all affected families and schools. The bus status will also be updated on the PSD website.

**NOTE: In winter months, drivers are to ensure that buses are plugged in.**

#### A.6. Cell Phone Usage

The use of cell phones by school bus operators while driving is strictly prohibited. This includes using headphones, bluetooth devices, texting and video chat/FaceTime. If cell phone use is absolutely necessary, the school bus must be safely stopped, secured and off the road in a safe location. To learn more about cell phone usage while driving visit: [Distracted driving | Alberta.ca](https://www.alberta.ca/distracted-driving.aspx)

## A.7. Use of Social Media

- PSD staff are personally responsible for all comments/information they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time, so work to protect your privacy.
- Online behaviour should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect and consideration that face-to-face interactions require, and be in accordance with the highest professional standards. When using social media, think of the whole world as your bus—speak/type as if you were talking to students, parents or school staff.
- “Friending” students or parents on Facebook is not permitted. With that being said, using Facebook Groups or fan pages is a great way to connect with students in this space without having to “friend” them.
- By posting comments and having online conversations, you are broadcasting to the world. Be aware that, even with the strictest privacy settings, what you say/type online should be within the bounds of professional discretion. Comments expressed through social networking pages/sites/apps (even under the impression of a private conversation) may still end up being shared in the public domain, regardless of strict privacy settings having been selected.
- Comments related to the school/Division should always meet the highest standards of professional discretion. When posting, even when using the strictest privacy settings, you shall act under the assumption that all postings are in the public domain.
- Before posting photographs and videos, permission shall be sought from the subject(s) where possible. This is especially the case where photographs of professional colleagues are concerned.
- Before posting personal photographs, thought should be given as to whether the images negatively reflect on your professionalism.
- Photographs relating to alcohol or tobacco use may be deemed inappropriate. Remember, your social networking site is an extension of your personality and by that token an extension of your professional life and your bus. If it would seem inappropriate to put a certain photograph for display on the bus, is it appropriate to post online?
- Comments made using Twitter are public and are visible to those who do not have Twitter accounts, in most cases. Staff should be aware of the public and widespread nature of the site/app and ensure that they are not posting any items that would be deemed inappropriate.

## B. Standard Operations

### B.1. Guidelines

1. School bus transportation is to be provided for student passengers in Kindergarten through Grade 12 (K–12).
2. Adhere to the bus schedules that have been established by Transportation Services. All route times are departure times, not arrival times. **On regular routes, at the designated departure time, there is no need to wait for late children at the designated stop. However, before leaving the area, be sure that no children are at the stop or running towards it.** In the event of a delay exceeding 10 minutes, Transportation Services is to be contacted immediately.
3. Follow the routes that have been planned and approved by Transportation Services. Pick up and drop off students only at the bus stops designated by Transportation Services. Bus operators are not authorized to make changes in the routes, except in unavoidable situations. Route deviations must be reported to Transportation Services immediately.
4. Assist any student who may be having problems getting on and off the bus.
5. If a student, without a bus pass, is waiting at a designated stop in the morning to board the school bus:
  - The bus operator confirms the student's name is on the route's passenger list. If the student does not exist on the list, the bus operator is to notify Transportation Services immediately upon identifying the student;
  - The student is to be allowed to ride the school bus to their school of attendance; and
  - Transportation Services will advise the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) that a bus pass is required.
6. When passengers are loading from school, if an operator is uncertain if the student is a regular rider, they should ask to see their bus pass.
7. Guest riders are NOT permitted to ride the bus. All students are required to be registered and assigned to the bus route. The bus operator will contact dispatch for instructions if a guest rider is attempting to board their bus.
8. Ensure that students remain seated until the bus comes to a full stop at its destination. Never move the bus with a student out of their seat or standing.
9. Give students a signal to indicate when it is safe to cross the street and wait for the students to finish crossing before deactivating the crossing gate and stop arm. Check all mirrors and ensure that all areas are clear before moving the vehicle.
10. Never back the school bus on school grounds or at loading or unloading stops adjacent to school grounds. If you must back the school bus, be sure there is a responsible person at the rear of the school bus to assist you.

11. Post the Student Conduct posters at the front and back of the bus.
12. Capturing personal photographs or videos of students is strictly prohibited unless authorized by Parkland School Division.
13. Letters or information that has not been approved by Transportation Services are not permitted to be sent home.
14. Ensure that students are never left alone on a bus at any time, including when boarding in the afternoon.
15. Allow students aboard the vehicle to speak to each other in the language of their choice.
16. Drivers need to ensure all students getting off at a transfer site have done so before loading more students. Drivers should be walking to the back of the bus to ensure these students have gotten off.
17. Drivers are required to physically walk to the back of the bus looking for sleeping students or students who may have forgotten to get off the bus. The driver will place their empty sign in the back window indicating that their bus has been checked and is empty. **This check is required when the bus is at the last stop location such as at schools, transfer sites, and last student stop location on the route.**

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## B.2. School Bus Idling

To reduce emissions and noise at schools, please minimize bus idle times to reflect weather conditions, while taking into consideration vehicle safety and passenger comfort. The guidelines are:

- Upon arrival at school, bus engines shall be shut off after the five-minute manufacturer's recommended cool-down period. Please ensure the radio remains on.
- School buses may be allowed to idle at a school location when temperatures are –15 °C or colder.
- School buses may be allowed to idle at a school location when rain or snow conditions cause a humidity buildup that makes bus windows foggy—creating a safety concern.
- School buses equipped with wheelchair lifts may be allowed to idle to reduce the risk of battery failure.

## B.3. Mobile Radio Use

### B.3.1. Radio conduct

Transportation Services expects its operators to use professional courtesy when using the two-way radio. All radio transmissions should be related to student transportation and student transportation business only. The radio should only be used to assist operators in their job or assist someone else in need of help. Operators also need to be aware that other operators and students can hear what is being said over the radio. It is important to think carefully before discussing a topic over the radio.

#### **Communication guidelines for using the radio:**

- Listen first to ensure that other radio traffic is not in progress and/or other traffic is clear before keying the radio. If no one is talking, proceed with your message.
- For best results, hold the microphone about three centimeters away from your mouth and speak in a calm tone of voice. (Shouting into the radio makes it difficult to understand the message.)
- When trying to transmit a message, press and hold the microphone button for a second or two, then begin speaking. This delay is necessary to avoid the first thing(s) you say being cut off or not clearly heard by those on the other end.
- Always identify who you are and who the message is intended for. Transportation Services has several contractors and some have their own dispatches assisting their



bus operators. For example, say, “Route 980 to Golden Arrow Base” or “Route 108 to Parkland Base.”

- Keep the message as brief as possible, especially during peak busing times.

Transportation Services will facilitate all dispatch communications regarding schedule changes and coordination of rerouting buses due to breakdown, road closures and other information deemed for the safe operation of the school bus. Mechanical problems, not impacting school bus operations, are to be communicated directly to the contractor.

### B.3.2. Emergency situations

In an emergency situation, the operator should remain as calm as possible. Take a calming breath, key the microphone, wait for a second and speak in a calm voice letting Transportation Services dispatch know that you have an emergency. All radio traffic communication in progress stops until the emergency is over, and Transportation Services dispatch will ask operators to “clear the radio” until that time. Once the emergency is over Transportation Services dispatch will let operators know the radio is open for use.

## B.4. Video Surveillance Equipment

PSD-contracted school buses are equipped with a digital video recording system. A school bus contains camera systems with eight channels of video recording, along with audio recordings. The system captures students loading/unloading, the behaviour of everyone on board and details of any drivers that pass the bus when the student loading lights are activated for the loading/unloading of students (driver report required).

**NOTE:** Bus operators must ensure the green LED light is on continuously. Report all other instances to PSD Dispatch.



All buses are equipped with an additional external high-definition video camera that records stop arm violations, by drivers who pass buses during student loading or unloading, when the eight-way flashing system is activated.

All video captured from the buses is the property of Parkland School Division. Any video recordings can be viewed at the Transportation Services office when necessary for student conduct concerns or when red light stop violations have occurred.

Requests to view video recordings may occur and the bus operator will be required to bring their bus to the Transportation Services office to have the video cartridge retrieved. Bus operators are expected to bring the bus to the Transportation Services office immediately upon request. If the bus operator is not able to bring the bus immediately then the contractor will be required to make arrangements to have the bus delivered to the Transportation Services office for staff to retrieve the video.

Operators that wish to view the video to identify student management issues such as vandalism to the bus or identifying a student vaping can contact dispatch to set up an appropriate time to come into the office.

## B.5. Child Check-Mate System

All buses operating within the division are to be equipped with a Child Check-Mate (CCM) System or a similar system installed from the manufacturer. The CCM is an alarm system that acts as an electronic reminder to help bus operators ensure all passengers are off the bus and nothing is left behind at the end of each bus route. Drivers need to walk to the back of the bus at all transfer sites, schools and at the last drop off of the day (checking for students who may have forgotten to get off the bus or fallen asleep).



Please review your operation procedures for deactivating the CCM on your assigned bus with your contractor.

## B.6. Global Positioning System (GPS) - Bus Pass Scanner

School buses that are contracted in Parkland School Division are required to have a functioning GPS and Bus Pass Scanner. This equipment is installed and maintained by Parkland School Division.

It is important that bus drivers are ensuring the GPS and Scanner is working and should include this in their pre-trip inspection each time they drive the bus. If the equipment is not working contact PSD Dispatch immediately.

## B.7. Carry-on Items

Section 17(3) of Alberta's Commercial Vehicle Safety Regulation (AR 121/2009, January 2021) states, "a bus shall not be operated unless the luggage, cargo, goods, equipment and tools that are carried on the bus are carried in an adequate place provided for the carrying of those items."

Transportation Services permits carry-on items; however, space is limited. In many cases, there simply is no room for larger objects. For this reason, all carry-on items must be no larger than 33 x 33 x 59 cm (13 x 13 x 23") and must be able to fit on the lap of a student or they cannot be accommodated on the school bus. All loose items are required to be in a sealed bag. Items blocking aisles or emergency exits on a school bus violate Alberta Transportation regulations and are **NOT permitted**.



Larger items that cannot be adequately secured and stored are considered to be hazardous to riders on the school bus. They could seriously harm someone in the event of sudden acceleration or a collision. According to Alberta Transportation and the National Safety Code Standard 10, large unsecured items are not permitted and must be transported in a separate vehicle.

### Examples of carry-on items that ARE allowed on the bus:

- Skates (as long as they are in a sealed bag meeting the above dimensions and have skate guards on).
- Mini hockey sticks, rackets, small skateboards - as long as they can fit in their backpack.
- Musical instruments, meeting the above dimensions (e.g. flute, piccolo, clarinet, oboe, trumpet, alto sax or trumpet), shall be kept on the lap of the student.

**Examples of carry-on items that ARE NOT allowed on the bus:**

- Hockey/ringette sticks, golf clubs, snowboards, toboggans, scooters, longboard skateboards, or other large items which may interfere with the safety and comfort of any student on the school bus.
- Large musical instruments such as tubas/sousaphones, baritones, French horns, guitars, drums, tenor/baritone saxophones and bass trombones.

If for some reason, a student arrives at a transfer site, from another bus, with an oversized item, it is not permitted to be transported onto the receiving bus. Site monitors will collect the oversized item and notify Transportation Services, who will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) to advise where the item can be retrieved.

## B.8. Routes

At the start of each school year, all bus operators are provided with the following information to plan the operation of their routes:

- **Stops Report:** includes the stop locations and tentative route scheduling
- **Maps:** outline the operator's bus route information
- **Driver Directions and Student List:** details each student's name, grade and parent contact (advise Transportation Services, through your operator, if the number of passengers on the bus exceeds the number of seats)
- **Operating Regulations Handbook:** outlines the requirements of being a bus operator for PSD
- **Route changes:** adding or removing a stop must be approved by Transportation Services

### B.8.1. Route test run

Transportation Services requires bus operators to perform a test run of any new route(s) or modification(s) of route(s) before transporting students. This will allow you to become familiar with the route and resolve any problems before you start loading students. If you find a problem with the scheduling of the route, notify Transportation Services.

### B.8.2. Introductory phone call

At the beginning of each school year, bus operators are expected to make a phone call to introduce themselves to each student on the bus and their families. The call helps build the relationship and make parents feel more comfortable about putting their child on the bus.

### B.8.3. Topics to be discussed during the phone call

- Introduce yourself as the bus operator for the student.
- Inform the parent of the route number, pick-up/drop-off times and stop locations.
- Remind the parent that students are expected to be at the stop location at least five minutes before the bus arrives.
- If the student is assigned a seat, let the parent know where the student is assigned to sit.
- Confirm that they have received their child's bus pass.

- Explain that the bus pass must be scanned when the student gets on and off the bus.
- Ask if the parent has any questions about the Parent Handbook posted on [psd.ca](https://psd.ca).
- Ask about any allergies, medical conditions or special considerations.

For each call made, operators should use the Call Log Form to record the date and time, who they spoke with, and whether a voice message was left.

#### B.8.4. Bus status

Transportation Services maintains an active Bus Status web page that includes all home bus routes. To view bus status (e.g. operating, delayed, not running, etc.), visit [psd.ca](https://psd.ca) and click the bus icon in the top-right corner of the homepage or go under the Transportation heading and select “Bus Status.”

Parents can download the free Bus Status app to receive up-to-the-minute school bus information and notifications (early, delayed, cancellations). The app is available on Google Play (Android) and in the App Store (Apple iOS), simply search for “bus status.”

The status, “School buses are not running” means buses are not running for the entire day; however, schools will be open to receive students that get dropped off by a parent/guardian.

#### B.8.5. Versatrans My Stop

Parents will be able to download an app called Versatrans My Stop mobile app. This app will provide parents / guardians with bus information and student ridership data. My Stop accesses GPS data and gives parents and guardians information on where their child’s school bus is and what time it is expected to be at their stop. My Stop also provides parents the ability to see when their child scans on or off the bus.

All school bus routes are assigned a GPS unit. ***If the bus operator is taking a unit that is not assigned to the route they must notify PSD dispatch immediately.*** Bus routes that do not have a properly assigned GPS unit will affect the Versatrans My Stop app. Parents will not be able to use this app and dispatch will not be able to identify if a student has scanned on the proper school bus.



## B.9. Complaint Process

When a complaint is brought to the attention of Transportation Services (by a parent, a concerned citizen, a school, another operator or a PSD staff member) and is regarding an incident that occurred on a bus or involving a bus operator, an investigation follows and includes:

- Completion of a Transportation Contact form to record the complaint;
- A review of GPS data for speeds, capacity through student scans and bus stop times;
- A review of the video surveillance equipment;
- Contact with the contractor and/or bus operator;
- Discussions conducted with the associated school and/or other parties involved;
- A seating plan review as necessary; and
- A summary report of the investigation including any recommendations.

Transportation Associates are typically the first point of contact when a complaint is made and the ones who initiate the investigation. All investigation findings are provided to the Director, Supervisor, and Transportation Planners within Transportation Services. The complainant is not given any specific outcome details, which ensures that confidentiality is preserved.

## B.10. Field Trips

Many contractors operate field trips for schools and other organizations between scheduled bus routes. Below are six key things to keep in mind when operating on a field trip.

- Regularly scheduled afternoon bus routes take priority over all field trips.
- Schedule a departure time from the field trip location that will allow enough time to operate the regularly scheduled afternoon bus route.
- Ensure the school contact person and all supervisors know the departure time.
- Plan ahead for traffic and construction delays.
- If the route is running late and could impact the regularly scheduled bus route, contact Transportation Services immediately.
- Do not leave students behind without first confirming it with Transportation Services.

## B.11. Alternate Arrangements

Any negotiations between the parent/guardian and the bus operator, requesting pickup or drop-off at any location other than the designated stop as assigned by Transportation Services is **strictly prohibited**.

Parents/guardians must contact Transportation Services a minimum of 24 hours in advance, if their child wants to get off their regular bus at a different stop location on their regular bus route. **Guest riders are not allowed** (e.g. going for a sleepover, etc.).

### B.11.1. Students who need to get off the bus at a different stop location

If a student needs to get off their regular bus at a different existing stop location, parents must contact Transportation Services or school administration to give their consent. Bus operators need to confirm the details with Transportation Services.

### B.11.2. Student bus passes

**Students are NOT permitted on the bus without a valid bus pass for the current school year.** Please note that bus pass colours change each new school year.

## B.12. Transfer Sites

### B.12.1. Parking

The school bus is positioned with its left side parallel to the ground marking and also indicated by a vertical line on the barrier (in winter) in front of the stall (see below).

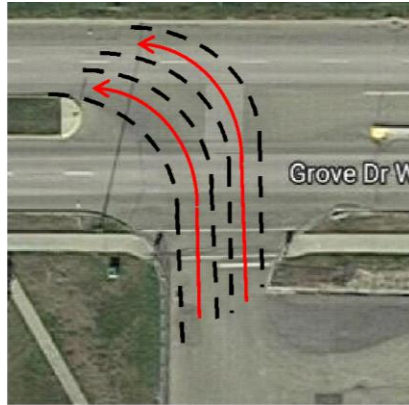


This positioning ensures enough room to pull out of the stall without the tail swing of the departing school bus hitting the parked school bus in the stall beside. If there is not enough room to pull out safely, radio a site supervisor to observe and direct.

Bus drivers are required to walk to the back of the bus to check for any students (e.g. anybody who forgot to get off or maybe fell asleep).

### B.12.2. Exit procedures at Greystone

1. Buses exit Greystone Transfer in two lanes.
2. Buses approaching the exit point from Greystone Transfer Station onto Grove Drive, take the available spot. Except for school buses that need to turn right, there is no specific order in which school bus gets which turning lane. Buses turning right must be in the right lane.
3. For those in the left lane, please pull fully into the median of the intersection before starting to turn left.



4. For those in the right lane, please remain back as to not block the vision of the school bus on the left.

### B.12.3. Non-supervised transfer sites

At non-supervised transfer sites, the transporting bus must wait for the receiving bus. At no time should students be off the bus unless they are directly boarding on to their next bus.

## B.13. Off-site Student Transfer

In the event of mechanical failure or after a collision, students aboard a bus may need to be transferred to another bus at a location other than a standard transfer site. The decision to conduct an off-site student transfer is made in consultation with Transportation Services, the contractor and the bus operator after assessing that there is no immediate need to evacuate the original bus because of fire or unsafe position. It is essential Transportation Services is consulted before an off-site student transfer occurs.

### B.13.1. Roles and responsibilities

During the transfer, buses must be safely secured and bus operators must assist students as they move from one bus to another. Students will need to scan off of the bus they are leaving and scan on the bus they are boarding. Additionally, the bus operator needs to keep track of each student at all times. No students are allowed to leave the site unexpectedly or without the operator first contacting PSD dispatch.

### B.13.2. Parking during the off-site student transfer

Whenever possible, during an off-site student transfer, buses should be parked in a safe off-road location. When an off-road location is not an option there are other considerations in both rural and urban areas to maintain student safety. In rural areas, buses should activate the alternately flashing lights and stop in a location where students have enough room to walk safely from one bus to the other. In urban areas, buses should be parked next to the right curb, so students can walk on the sidewalk or boulevard.

## B.14. Adult Riders

If an adult, other than the bus operator, plans to be on a PSD-contracted bus during a regularly scheduled route, permission must be obtained from Transportation Services. It is recommended that notification be given by sending an email, at least one day beforehand, to [dispatch@psd.ca](mailto:dispatch@psd.ca). The adult rider is also required to wear a safety vest. **Please note that parent volunteers are NOT allowed to ride.**

**An additional adult rider is allowed when:**

- A contractor is evaluating the bus operator's driving skills
- A new driver is learning a route
- A supervisor is assisting with student management

## B.15. Transporting Preschool Children

If an operator wants to have their child ride on the bus with them, approval must be obtained from Transportation Services beforehand.

Keep in mind, there is a maximum of two children allowed, at any one time, on the bus and each child must be at least six-months-old. Depending on the age and weight of the child(ren), the bus operator may also need to provide their own car seat for each child and ensure it meets the requirements of the *Traffic Safety Act*. Additionally, having a child on the bus cannot interfere with other students or a bus operator's ability to perform their duties.



## C. Safety Procedures

Obey all rules and regulations of the *Traffic Safety Act* at all times. Bus operators are required to report all driving violations immediately (includes violations acquired by any vehicle operated both personal and company). Contact Transportation Services before dropping off a student if there are any safety concerns.

*“ The only way that you can know if one of your passengers is not under the bus is to assign a safety zone for passengers waiting for the bus and a safety zone for them to go to once they have gotten off the bus. ”*

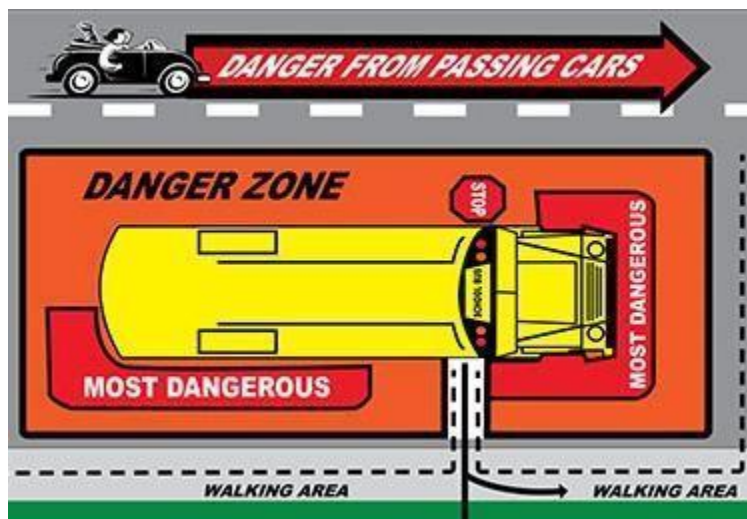
from the Alberta School Bus Driver Improvement Program, [Operator's Manual](#) (p. 38)

### C.1. School Bus Danger Zones

Danger zones are the areas around the bus where students, people, or objects are not easily seen. They are within 4.5 meters of the bus on all sides. It is the bus operator's responsibility to know when students are clear of the danger zone before moving the bus. It is also the operator's responsibility to help train all students who ride the bus where these danger zones are.

To protect students, operators need to assign safety zones for pickup and drop-off locations. The safety zone area is five steps away from the road. Bus operators must instruct students on how to wait in the safety zone both before boarding and after disembarking the bus. When training passengers, emphasize

the importance of remaining in the safety zone and not to move towards the bus until the door is fully opened and the bus operator has motioned for them to proceed. Before pulling away, bus operators should check these safety zones after loading to ensure all passengers are accounted for—counting passengers is an easy way to do this. If a bus operator has lost track of a passenger they must secure the bus, do a total shutdown, take the key out of the ignition and check around the bus.



## C.2. Route Assessment Process

Before the first day of school, each bus operator must complete a route assessment to help identify any potential hazards on the route. Some of the items to be considered include visibility concerns, such as trees that need to be trimmed, and pickup locations that have insufficient space for safe loading. Route assessments can be updated throughout the year as needed. These assessments are reviewed by the Transportation Supervisor and the Transportation Planners to ensure all issues are resolved so that each PSD route is as safe as possible.

Operators can contact Transportation Services concerning bus route changes through their contractor or by attending one of the Open Houses throughout the school year. Operators can contact Transportation Services directly about any unsafe bus stops and may suggest a more appropriate alternative at any time. No changes can occur until approved by Transportation Services.

## C.3. Urban Bus Stop Locations

Bus routes are designed for safety and efficiency. Many bus stop locations are at a safe spot, which is intended to serve several students in a community. As stated in AP 850 – Transportation Services, a reasonable walk distance to a stop is up to 1 km for students in grades kindergarten to grade 6 and 2 km for students in grades 7 to 12. **Bus operators must stop only at designated bus stop locations.**

If an operator feels a stop adjustment is required, they need to consult Transportation Services. If there is a parked vehicle or another object blocking the stop location, the bus operator must pull ahead to a safe location. Transportation Services utilizes the eight-way alternately flashing lights in all urban centers of Parkland County and surrounding school authorities it serves.



## C.4. Alternately Flashing Lights

Alternately flashing lights and stop arm must be used by all bus operators when loading or unloading students from the school bus.

### C.4.1. Passing while lights are flashing

It is against the law for a vehicle to pass a stopped school bus when the alternately flashing lights are activated. If any motorist is observed to have violated the law, which is particularly dangerous because students cannot always be seen when getting on and off the bus. Transportation Services asks all its bus operators to report such incidents of motorists passing the bus when alternately flashing lights are activated. A form to help report such incidents is available on [psd.ca](https://psd.ca) (on the main Transportation page, scroll down near the bottom and look for “Driver Documents”).

If a chronic problem exists in the area, operators should contact the Transportation Supervisor.

## C.5. Winter Driving

There are often more days of cold, snow or poor road conditions than warm, clear and dry roads. Transportation Services bus operators should be prepared to drive in various conditions.

### Tips for safe winter driving:

- **Be on time.** In cold weather, operators need more time to complete a proper pre-trip and get where they are going.
- **Adjust speed for the conditions.** If more time is needed to complete a scheduled route, contact the Transportation Services Transportation Planner.
- **Increase following distance.** This ensures more room between vehicles.
- **Clear windows.** Keep the windshield, windows and mirrors clear of snow and ice.
- **Dress in layers.** This ensures you are protected and comfortable if there are changes in weather conditions.
- **Clean lights.** Keep lights clear of snow and ice to increase visibility in adverse weather.
- **Impassable roads.** If known in advance that roads are impassable, contact PSD dispatch. Drivers are to arrange for a safe pickup or drop-off location and, if appropriate, contact parent(s) and/or guardian(s) to explain the situation.



## C.6. Inclement Weather

When the safety of transporting bus students is at risk because of weather conditions, the Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with the Director of Transportation Services, may choose to suspend school bus services. The suspension could affect all PSD school routes, region-specific routes or just one route.



**Weather guidelines that support the decision to suspend bus services include:**

- Wind chill of  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$
- Visibility of less than one kilometer
- Impassable rural roads
- Temperature of  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$

\*For Athabasca Delta School, temperatures and wind chill at or below  $-45^{\circ}\text{C}$

For morning routes, a decision to suspend bus service is typically made no later than 6 a.m.

**NOTE:** Except in very special circumstances, PSD schools always remain open on school days.

Official notifications regarding the suspension of bus services or closure of schools will be posted on [psd.ca](https://psd.ca) and sent via email and phone message. Alerts will also come through on the free-to-download Bus Status app (user must set notifications to “allow”).

“School buses are not running” means buses are not running for the entire day, but the school is open to students for parent(s) and/or guardian(s) who wish to bring their student(s) to school.

## **C.7. Railway Crossings**

Operators should always be cautious and prepared to stop at all railway crossings.

At an uncontrolled railway crossing, a school bus must stop no less than five meters and no more than 15 meters from the nearest rail. The operator should secure the bus and then look and listen. If there is no indication of an approaching train, operators may proceed across the tracks.

### **C.7.1. Delay at railway crossings**

If the bus is delayed at a railway crossing when the lights and/or gates appear to be malfunctioning, a bus operator must radio Transportation Services with the bus route number, the crossing number and the expected delay time. Transportation Services will contact the Canadian National Railway Co. (CN) or the Canadian Pacific Railway Ltd. (CPR) to resolve the situation. Operators should be prepared to wait. Even if a train is not visible when the lights are flashing or the crossing arm is down, operators are not permitted to move the bus across the tracks without the guidance of a CN or CPR representative or a police officer.

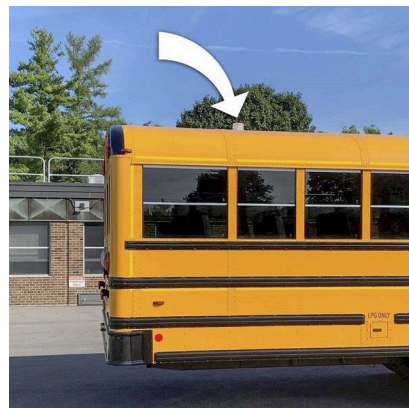
If an operator has other concerns regarding any railway crossings on a bus route (bolts protruding or damaged wood) contact Transportation Services outside of peak bus times.

## **C.8. Private Property**

School buses are not to enter private property unless a written agreement and explicit permission are given by Transportation Services dispatch.

## C.9. Strobe Light Usage

- Strobe lights are required to be used at all times when the bus is in motion, this applies when the bus is operational on school bus routes, field trips, shuttles, or whenever students are on board. (e.g. sports academy shuttles)
- If the school bus is operational for PSD business the strobe light is required to be on when in motion.
- Strobe lights will be turned off at transfer sites but will need to be reactivated once the bus is in motion.



## D. Student Management

### D.1. Student Code of Conduct

Post the Code of Conduct posters at the front and back of your bus.

### D.2. Basic Strategies to Support Students

Below are considerations to help operators prevent problem behaviour:

- **Develop a positive rapport with the child, family and school team.** Learn the students' names. Provide a welcoming environment by saying, "Good morning, how are you?" This goes a long way in building relationships and setting the tone for the bus ride. Get to know the students. Being a positive role model is key. This can be achieved by being friendly and polite, saying, "please" and "thank you," when appropriate, and complimenting good behaviour.
- **Respect the students' personal space.** Students have little personal space on a school bus. Operators should be sure to not crowd students any more than necessary. If a student is approached, remain at least one leg-length away.
- **Consider the environment.** Be sensitive that the nature of a bus is a sensory-rich environment, and might be unsettling for some students (e.g. noise, proximity, smells, vibrations, etc.). Allow stress-relieving tools (silly putty, stress ball, etc.) in consultation with the school-based team or parent.
- **Be aware of body language.** As students board the bus, watch their body language (e.g. posture, movement, gestures and facial expressions) for signs that someone might be feeling anxious or upset. Operators should also be aware of their body

language. Try not to do something that may appear threatening to a student such as scowling, putting your hands on your hips or shaking your finger in a student's face. Pay attention to changes in behaviour and communicate those with the school and/or parent.

- **Establish routines and expectations.** Outline your expectations and rules to the students. Do this early, so the students know what you expect of them. A good time to do this is after you board the students from the school in the afternoon on the first or second day of school. Bus operators need to ensure all rules are being enforced. Be firm, fair and consistent with discipline. It is important when enforcing the rules to explain them positively. For example, saying, "Please keep your hands to yourself," is more positive than saying, "Don't hit."
- **Reinforce expectations and use positive reinforcement.** Tell the child specifically how he is a good rider—say, "You have a quiet voice" or "You are doing a good job keeping your hands in your own space." Find things you can say "good job" to.
- **Consider your communication style.**
  - It is not only important to think about the words/language you use when communicating with students, but also about your tone of voice, rhythm, speed and volume of speech, and how these things can be triggers for student anxiety and dysregulation.
  - Simplify your language and use concrete terms. Too many words can be overwhelming.
  - Tell the student what you want rather than what you do not want.
  - Describe the request. Say, "use your quiet voice" rather than "settle down."
  - After you make a request, give the student time to process it.
  - Do not give multiple verbal requests (shift to a visual prompt like pointing or showing).
  - Do not take "acting out" behaviour personally—behaviour is a form of communication.
  - Reassure the child if they look like they are getting stressed.
- **Use a seating plan.** Consider the best placement for individuals, predictability provides security and reduces anxiety.
- **Remain calm.** If a student's behaviour is escalating, remain calm. Even when students are belligerent or insulting, do not allow them to "push your buttons." Any escalation on your part may intensify the situation.
- **Have compassion.** You may not know the whole story or what might be going on with any given student.

### D.2.1. Reporting good behaviour

Transportation Services encourages bus operators to recognize students who stand out as helpers or who have improved their behaviour. Operators are encouraged to complete the Student Conduct Form to document positive conduct on the bus. When the form is filled out for positive behaviour, Transportation Services will inform the school principal.

*“ Positive rewards can change the atmosphere of an entire bus and make passengers look forward to the ride. ”*

from the Alberta School Bus Driver Improvement Program, [Operator's Manual](#) (p. 60)

### D.3. Peer Conflict

Conflict between and among peers is a natural part of growing up. Children will have times when they disagree and cannot solve their problems. They may even become so frustrated that they say mean things or act out physically by hitting, kicking or trying to hurt.

### D.4. Mean Behaviour

Children may try out behaviours to assert themselves. This could include saying or doing mean things, such as making fun of others, using a hurtful name, taking something without permission, leaving a child out or cutting in line.

- It is not usually planned and seems to happen spontaneously or by chance.
- It may be aimed at any child nearby.
- The child being mean may feel bad if an adult draws attention to the harm they have caused.

## D.5. Bullying

There are many forms of bullying that can potentially take place on a school bus. It is the responsibility of the bus operator to limit, as much as possible, any behaviour on the bus that is disrespectful of or harmful to other individuals. Below are four types of bullying operators should look out for:

- **Physical bullying:** hitting, kicking, inappropriate touching, sexual gestures, groping or threatening with/without a weapon.
- **Verbal bullying:** name-calling, starting rumours, teasing or threats.
- **Relational bullying:** excluding others from the group, rolling of eyes, tossing of hair, ignoring and shunning, gossiping, spreading rumours, telling secrets, setting others up to look foolish or damaging relationships.
- **Cyberbullying:** using email, social-networking sites, cell phones, webcams, text messages or Internet sites to embarrass, verbally harass, socially exclude, or threaten physical or psychological harm to another passenger.

### **Bullying Behaviour:**

Bullying is serious behaviour that has three key features—all three must be present for the situation to be considered bullying:

- **Power imbalance:** one child clearly has power over the other(s), which may be due to age, size, social status and so on.
- **Intention to harm:** the purpose of the bullying behaviour is to harm or hurt other(s)—it is intended to be mean and is clearly not accidental.
- **Repeated over time:** bullying behaviour continues over time and gets worse with repetition. There is a real or implied threat that the behaviour will not stop, and in fact, will become even more serious.

The effect on the child who is being bullied is increased fear, apprehension and distress. Often by the time adults find out about what is happening, the child has tried many ways to stop the bullying but cannot do so on their own. Adults must address bullying behaviour and ensure the safety of the student who has been targeted. They also need to reassure the children who may have witnessed the behaviour that adults are taking care of it.

- **Bullying Red Flags** (look for patterns over time)
  - Money changing hands.
  - One child being escorted to a different seat by another child.
  - Older/larger child focusing on younger/smaller child.
  - A child being tripped or slapped while going up the aisle.
  - A child being unusually quiet or upset.
  - Child exhibiting fear or avoidance of another student.



- **How to Prevent Mean Behaviour and Bullying?**

- Establish a respectful climate on your bus from the first day.
- Establish clear, consistent expectations for bus behaviour.
- Establish clear consequences for bullying behaviour that all passengers understand.
- Model appropriate behaviour.
- Praise students when they are demonstrating positive behaviour.
- Let children know you will not tolerate put-downs, bullying or mean behaviour.
- Get to know the children on your bus.
- Strongly encourage children to let you (or another adult) know if anything makes them feel unsafe.
- Be aware of changes in a student's behaviour or attitude and report it promptly.

- **How to Respond to Mean Behaviour and Bullying?**

- Learn about bullying so you know what to look for.
- Never ignore mean/bullying behaviours.
- Intervene immediately. If you see something, do something - stay assertive and calm.
- Give a verbal warning using the names of the student who is bullying.
- Remind students of expectations and possible consequences.
- Maintain control.
- Do not argue with, or try to convince, the student who is bullying.
- Move the affected student to a new seat that is safe.
- Praise students for corrected behaviour.
- If necessary, report the incident to the student's school administration.
- Follow through with consequences as needed.
- If the behaviour escalates, stop the bus in a safe place and contact Transportation Services for assistance.

- **Distinguish between “tattling” and “reporting”**

- Ensure confidentiality.
- Establish a non-threatening way for students to report bullying.

- **Teach children to work together**

- Encourage students to stand up or reach out to excluded peers.
- Teach students that being a silent bystander enables bullying to continue.
- Celebrate acts of kindness.

■ **What if You Suspect Bullying?**

- Many adolescents do not want to get their peers in trouble, so discreetly ask the child you think is being bullied if there is a problem.
- Let those you suspect of bullying know you are watching and intervene early.
- It is not your job to conduct an in-depth investigation; report your observations to school officials or your supervisor as soon as possible and complete the infraction sheets to track the behaviour.



## D.6. Seating Plans

**All drivers must use a seating plan.** This can help operators establish predictability, reduce student anxiety, and set the tone of authority on the bus. Many discipline problems that occur on a school bus are a result of not having a seating plan in place.

### **Seating plan benefits:**

- It helps to avoid disruptive behaviours, as some students are assigned a seat on the bus that lessens their disruption on a bus;
- It helps to keep students who are in conflict with each other separated;
- It separates age or gender differences between students and may alleviate concerns for inappropriate conversations or touching; and
- If forgotten items are found, or evidence of vandalism is discovered, a seating plan will help identify a student.



## D.7. Discipline Process

Transportation Services expects all bus operators to be responsible for managing and maintaining behaviours on the bus. The provision of discipline is the responsibility of the school principal. The bus is an extension of the classroom and school officials will handle any misconduct in consultation with transportation services. PSD-contracted buses are equipped with video cameras and may be used for safety and corrective actions only. The principal may suspend a student from riding the school bus for violation of the Transportation Services Safety and Code of Conduct on School Buses and regulations subject to Section 36 of the School Act (June 17, 2021).

**If a student does not follow the rules, the following steps should be taken:**

- Talk with the student in private (on the bus with the video surveillance system equipment on);
- Give a verbal warning;
- Phone the parent, or guardian, to discuss ways to improve behaviour;
- Complete a Student Conduct Form and deliver it to the student's school promptly, if the behaviour does not improve; and
- Communicate with the student's school administration for guidance and tips on resolving the discipline issues.

### D.7.1. Student conduct reporting

#### **Minor Problems:**

- **First Infraction:** The bus operator talks to the student, asks for a commitment to change their behaviour and contacts the parent(s) and/or guardian(s).
- **Second infraction:** The bus operator repeats the talk and informs the principal through the completion of a conduct form.
- **Third infraction:** The bus operator informs the principal, who treats the matter as a major problem and a Student Conduct Form will be completed by the bus operator.

#### **Major Problems:**

- **First Infraction:** The bus operator stops the bus, calls the student to the front, warns, and records details of the incident on a conduct form. The bus operator gives a copy of the Student Conduct Form to the principal, who meets with the student and

advises the parent(s) and/or guardian(s). Police may be informed if a law has been broken.

- **Second Infraction:** The bus operator, principal and student meet. The student may be suspended from the school bus. Their return depends on agreement between parent(s) and/or guardian(s) and principal for behaviour change. Police may be informed if a law has been broken. The school sends a copy of the Student Conduct Form to Transportation Services.
- **Third Infraction:** The bus operator, principal, student and parent(s) and/or guardian(s) meet. Permanent suspension from the school bus may be recommended. The school sends a copy of the Student Conduct Form to Transportation Services.

#### **Completing a Student Conduct Form:**

- Complete one form for each student involved in the incident.
- Do not put another student's name in the comments.
- Report on facts only and not on perception or opinion.
- If quoting a student, make sure to write their exact words.
- Ensure the proper grammar is used and spelling is checked.
- Notify a parent/guardian by phone and document the call's date and time on the Student Conduct Form.

### D.7.2. Communicating with Parents

- **Be proactive.** Do not wait for a problem to escalate. If there is a problem, call the parents right away.
- **Build a relationship.** Consider also calling parents when a student does something well.
- **Keep trying.** Even if you had a bad experience once, try calling again. It may help mend the relationship and even prevent problem behaviour.
- **Practice a phone script.** Start the conversation with a parent/guardian by introducing yourself:

“Hi, my name is (*your name here*) and I’m (*student’s name here*)’s bus operator. How are you this evening?”

Continue by explaining the reason for your call:

“I’m calling because I’d like to get some help from you.”

Next, explain what is going on. Demonstrate you know who their child is—parents/guardians are interested in their child and not how it impacts you.

“(*student’s name*) is a friendly student and seems to have a lot of energy. Sometimes he has trouble staying in his seat while the bus is moving. I’ve given (*student’s name*) some gentle reminders about the importance of sitting safely. I’m wondering if you can follow up with by talking to (*him/her*) about why it is important to stay seated while on the bus? I just don’t want (*him/her*) to get hurt.”

Before ending the call, politely thank the parent/guardian, by saying something like:

“Thank you. I appreciate your help with this.”

#### **Remember:**

- Stick to the facts; the rules on the bus are meant to keep students safe; the conversation is more effective when emotions and opinions are kept out of it.

### D.7.3. Incident reporting

Any incident resulting in an injury to a student, bus monitor or bus operator—regardless of how minor—must be reported to Transportation Services immediately. Whether the incident took place on the bus, while boarding or disembarking the bus, or at a school or transfer site, it needs to be reported.

**The rules on releasing students after an incident are as follows:**

- Students who are injured cannot be released until it is cleared by Transportation Services.
- If a student has caused a disturbance, acted violently or injured another person, he/she can only be released from the bus at their regularly-assigned/designated bus stop or school.
- The operator may only release a student from the bus at an alternate location if it has been determined that it is for their safety or if the safety of another student is at risk.
- The bus operator must complete a Student Incident Report/First Aid Record. The form then needs to be submitted to Transportation Services immediately.



## D.8. Bus Passes

The bus pass is a student identification tool designed specifically for school bus transportation. The bus pass system uses Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) to provide Transportation Services with information on when, where and what time students get on and off school buses, helping to ensure their safety.

All students **MUST** carry their current year bus pass with them (each year's pass is a different colour). Students **MUST** scan their pass when boarding and exiting their assigned bus.

*\*Students attending Athabasca Delta School in Fort Chipewyan are not issued bus passes.*



If a student does not have their bus pass when boarding the school bus, they should notify the bus operator at that time and the bus operator will confirm registration.

### Steps to follow if a student does not have their bus pass:

- Step 1:** Confirm that the student is a registered rider. You can do this by looking at your passenger list or by contacting PSD dispatch.
- Step 2:** If the student is NOT a registered rider, contact PSD dispatch immediately for further instructions.
- Step 3:** If a student is a registered rider, tell the student that they need to find their bus pass or have their parent/guardian come to the transportation department to get a new bus pass for them. After 3 days of the student not having a bus pass, contact the transportation department by using the driver hotline (780) 591-5668 or emailing dispatch at [dispatch@psd.ca](mailto:dispatch@psd.ca)

**Dispatch will provide Student Conduct Reports to schools when necessary.**

### D.8.1. Lost or broken bus pass

Any lost or damaged bus passes can be replaced at the Transportation Services office for a fee.

Non-functioning bus passes without damage can be replaced at Transportation Services free of charge. (If a bus pass is not scanning as expected, please contact Transportation Services.)



## D.9. Students with Special Needs

### D.9.1. Transporting students in wheelchairs

Transporting students who use wheelchairs is a specialized undertaking. There are many types of wheelchairs and the condition of students who use them can vary considerably. The following section is meant to assist bus operators in providing safe and effective service to students in these situations.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **The bus operator is responsible for:**

- Operating the wheelchair lift; and
- Loading, unloading and securing any students using wheelchairs.

##### **The parent or guardian is responsible for:**

- Escorting the student to the bus;
- Observing and ensuring the student is safely seated;
- Supervising the student;
- Keeping one hand on the wheelchair while the bus operator moves on or off the bus, to safeguard against the student rolling off the ramp; and
- Meeting the bus on its return trip.

##### **The school staff members are responsible for:**

- Greeting, supervising and assisting the student as they arrive at the school and depart from the bus;
- Assisting the bus operator with student supervision while the student gets on or off the bus;
- Keeping one hand on the wheelchair while the bus operator moves on or off of the bus-to safeguard against the student rolling off of the ramp;
- At dismissal, escorting the student to the bus and on the bus; and
- Waiting with the student until he or she is safely secured on the bus and the driver is ready to depart.

### D.9.2. Students using safety seats and harnesses

In addition to wheelchairs and mobility devices, some students may also need to use safety seats or harnesses while traveling on the bus. The following section is meant to assist bus operators in providing safe and effective service to students in these situations.

#### **Safety Seats (Roles and Responsibilities)**

##### **The bus operator is responsible for:**

- Ensuring the student is properly secured;
- Checking that the harness straps are at the top slots above the shoulders;
- Checking that the retainer clip is positioned at the armpit level;
- Checking that all straps are snug; and
- Releasing and removing the student from the safety seat in the event of an emergency.

##### **The parent or guardian is responsible for:**

- Escorting the student to the bus in the morning, ensuring the child is secured in the harness; and
- Meeting the bus on its return trip and releasing the child from the harness.

##### **The school staff members are responsible for:**

- Releasing the student from the seat upon arrival at school in the morning, assisting the bus operator, as required; and
- At dismissal, escorting the student to the bus and ensuring that the child is secured in the seat and the harness is properly secured.

#### **Harness (Roles and Responsibilities)**

##### **The bus operator is responsible for:**

- Supervising the student while transporting;
- Ensuring the student is properly secured and does not get out of the harness; and
- If required, assisting the parent/aide in releasing the student from the harness at their destination.

**The parent or guardian is responsible for:**

- Fitting the student with the harness before the bus arrives;
- Escorting the student to the bus and securing the harness;
- Meeting the bus on its return trip and releasing the student from the harness; and
- Storing the harness overnight.

**The school staff members are responsible for:**

- Releasing the student from the harness upon arrival at the school;
- Storing the harness during school hours;
- Fitting the student with the harness before the bus arrives; and
- Escorting the student onto the bus and securing the harness.

## E. Emergency Procedures

### E.1. Motor Vehicle Collision Procedures

If a bus operator is involved in a collision—regardless of how minor—the following steps must be followed:

- **Remain calm.** Take charge of the situation and direct assistance where possible.
- **Check to see if any passengers are injured.** Quickly assess the situation and evacuate the bus if necessary. Student safety is the top priority.
- **Treat the injured in order of seriousness,** starting with the most serious. Use the ABC method of First Aid treatment.
  - **A (airway/breathing):** those who have stopped breathing are treated first.
  - **B (severe bleeding):** those who are severely bleeding are treated second.
  - **C (consciousness level):** assess and treat for shock and minor injuries.
- **Immediately call for assistance**—radio Dispatch at Transportation Services. If the radio is inoperable, use a cell phone as an alternative and call the driver hotline at 780-591-5668.

**NOTE:** Transportation Services will only contact 911 in an extreme situation (due to 911 requiring on-site information before dispatching emergency services).

- **Transportation Services will need all of the following information:**

- a brief summary about the collision
- bus location
- number of students on the bus
- if any passengers are injured
- severity of injuries

- Once Transportation Services is contacted, have each student scan their bus pass again. This will assist Transportation Services staff in confirming the list of names of all the students who are on the bus.

**NOTE: Please provide a list of any names that did not scan.** This list needs to be provided to Transportation Services as soon as possible—give it to either the on-site Transportation Services staff member or call the driver hotline at 780-591-5668.

- Continue to protect the well-being and safety of the students while waiting for assistance. **NOTE:** Students are not to be removed or released from the collision scene unless directed by EMS, Police Services or PSD authority.
- Provide details and assist with reporting the particulars to the PSD Transportation Supervisor and/or an appointed representative. Cooperate with any investigations required by the Parkland School Division Board of Trustees and appropriate authorities.
- Once students have been cleared from the scene by Transportation Services or the RCMP; the students are transported to their respective schools or homes. The bus operator must come into the Transportation Services office to fill out the remaining paperwork within 24 hours.

**NOTE:** Bus operators are not authorized to provide a list of names to the RCMP or release any information to schools, public or media, even if asked for it. Only Transportation Services can release the names—Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) documentation is needed before the names can be released.

#### E.1.1. Mechanical breakdowns

In the event of a mechanical breakdown, operators should contact Transportation Services and their local contractor and ensure the safety of the students on board the bus. An evacuation should be conducted if there is a fire, danger of fire or if the bus is in an unsafe position (see section E.2., Emergency Bus Evacuations).

### E.1.2. Accident and incident protocol for field trips

If a bus is involved in a collision, or breaks down, with PSD students on board while on a field trip, operators must contact Transportation Services immediately. The office will provide guidance and assistance.

## E.2. Emergency Bus Evacuations

Generally, the safest place for passengers to remain is on the bus during an emergency. However, the following three situations do require a school bus evacuation:

- **Fire:** A bus should be stopped and evacuated immediately if the engine or any portion of the bus is on fire. Passengers should move to a safe area, a minimum of 35 meters in the safest direction from the bus. Passengers should remain at the safe area until the operator has determined no danger exists.
- **Danger of fire:** Being near an existing fire, near the presence of fuel, or near other flammable material is considered being in “danger of fire.” If the bus cannot be moved to a safe place, passengers should be evacuated.
- **Unsafe bus position:** In the event a bus is stopped because of a collision, mechanical failure, road conditions or operator error, the operator needs to immediately determine if it is safer for passengers to remain on the bus or be evacuated.

### Other times an evacuation is necessary

- If the final stopping point of the bus is in the path of a train or immediately adjacent to the railroad tracks.
- If the stopping position of the bus may change and increase the danger. For example, if a bus stops near a body of water or precipice and there is a possibility it could still move, resulting in it rolling into the water or over a cliff, the bus should be evacuated. The operator must be certain the evacuation is carried out in a way that affords maximum safety for all passengers.
- If the stopping position of the bus creates danger of a collision with traffic on the highway. In normal traffic conditions, the bus should be visible from 300 meters or more. However, a stopped position just over a hill or around a curve where such visibility does not exist is considered sufficient reason for evacuation.

### E.2.1. Evacuation procedures

**There are three standard methods of evacuating a school bus:**

1. **Front-door evacuation:** everyone on the bus exits through the front entrance door.
2. **Rear-door evacuation:** everyone on the bus exits through the rear emergency door.
3. **Split evacuation:** everyone in the front half of the bus exits through the front door and everyone in the rear half of the bus exits through the rear door.

A bus operator's assessment of the emergency will determine the type of evacuation to be performed. An evacuation always needs to start with passengers nearest to the door being used for the exit. The key objective for the bus operator is to get all passengers off the bus in an orderly and safe manner and in the shortest amount of time possible. The passengers should go to a safe location at least 35 meters from the bus and remain there in a group until given further instructions by the operator. In the event of injuries on the bus, evacuate the passengers first who can get off the bus on their own, then help those who require individual assistance.

### E.2.2. Practice evacuation drills

It is unrealistic to expect passengers to complete an evacuation properly without proper practice. As a result, PSD semi-annually conducts practice bus evacuation drills at its transfer sites and schools. The drills include all PSD students, regardless of whether they are registered to ride a bus or not.

Bus operators are also encouraged to discuss emergency procedures regularly with their passengers and elect responsible leaders and helpers to aid in the event of an emergency. Having all of this in place will make an actual evacuation more efficient. Bus operators are responsible for the safety of all their passengers; however, in an emergency, an operator may be incapacitated and not in a position to direct an evacuation. It is recommended that all operators elect leaders and helpers to be responsible for the safe and orderly evacuation of the bus if the operator is unable to do so (a scenario such as this should be covered in the practice evacuation drills).

In the event of a real emergency, it is advisable to also have alternates appointed to ensure knowledgeable passengers are on hand should the regular leader or helper not be on the bus that day.

The purpose of a drill is for passengers and operators to learn the proper procedure for an emergency evacuation. With thorough instruction and careful monitoring of the passengers, injuries can be prevented in a real evacuation situation. During these drills, bus operators should be positioned at the back door and kneeling on the seat to assist and monitor the evacuation. In an actual emergency, however, the operator needs to be at the front of the bus directing the order the passengers evacuate the bus.

### **Rear-door evacuation**

A rear-door evacuation is the most common evacuation used. To conduct a practice evacuation drill, use the following checklist:

- Announce to students, "Remain seated, this is an emergency evacuation drill, rear door."
- Advise the designated helpers to proceed to their stations on the ground at the back of the bus on either side of the open rear door. The helpers are the first two off the bus.
- Passengers should have their hands free and not take any of their personal belongings off the bus—getting off the bus is the first priority. It is the operator's responsibility, if it is safe, to go back to the bus after an evacuation to get any remaining belongings.
- The leader, who is the third person off the bus, is responsible for taking all the passengers to a safe area, which is a minimum of 35 metres away from the bus.
- The designated helpers are stationed outside of the bus at the rear door, one will count exiting passengers, and both will assist passengers leaving through the rear door.

### **Proper stance for students**

- Two designated helpers should be standing facing one another on the ground on each side of the opened rear door.
- When the passengers are at the rear door they will assume the skier stance: knees bent, one foot slightly forward, arms bent at the elbow, hands in a fist and body slightly bent at the waist.
- The helpers will reach up, one hand cupping the evacuating passenger's elbow and the other gripping the wrist firmly. Once achieved, they need to say, "NOW."
- Evacuating passengers will push off the bus using their back leg and step (not jump) to the ground with the assistance of the two helpers.
- Helpers must know to not pull the passenger from the bus and not let go of the passenger until they have a firm footing on the ground. At all times, after leaving the bus, there must be a safe distance about the width of a seat between each passenger. All passengers are to be evacuated to a safe location at a distance of at least 35 meters away from the bus.

**Evacuation drill checklist:**

- Ensure the parking brake is set, the ignition is off, the keys are removed and the transmission is in the appropriate gear.
- Ensure the Child Check-Mate System is deactivated.
- Once all the students have boarded the bus, stand and face the passengers.
- Provide instructions and then proceed to the back of the bus.
- Getting passengers off the bus in an orderly and safe manner and in the shortest amount of time is the key objective. Do not allow passengers to take backpacks, lunch boxes, books or other personal items with them when they exit the bus.
- In a real evacuation situation, the emergency equipment (e.g. fire extinguisher, First Aid kit and approved warning-device triangles) should be placed outside of the exit door being used for the evacuation. In a drill, this is not necessary.





## **F. Training**

### **F.1. First Aid**

When operating a school bus within PSD, it is highly recommended that a school bus operator have certification in emergency First Aid or a higher standard. It is the operator's responsibility to ensure their certification is current and renewed every three years.

### **F.2. Operator Training**

Throughout the year, Transportation Services offers bus operators various professional learning opportunities geared towards maintaining, upgrading and updating driver skill sets. Some of the training programs include the School Bus Driver Improvement Program ("S" endorsement) and the Transportation Services refresher training.

#### **F.2.2. School Bus Driver Improvement Training**

The School Bus Driver Improvement Program ("S" endorsement) is a mandatory course all Alberta-based bus operators are required to complete (as of March 1, 2019). To learn more about the "S" endorsement program, or to register, contact Transportation Services. To download the "S" endorsement manual, visit:

[www.transportation.alberta.ca/content/docType45/Production/schoolbusopmanual.pdf](http://www.transportation.alberta.ca/content/docType45/Production/schoolbusopmanual.pdf)

## G. Forms & Resources

### G.1. Forms

- Visit [Transportation | Parkland School Division](#) Scroll to the Quick Links section to find documents and forms.

### G.2. Resources

#### Alberta Transportation

- School Bus Driver Improvement Program – School Bus Operator’s Manual  
[www.transportation.alberta.ca/content/docType45/Production/schoolbusopmanual.pdf](http://www.transportation.alberta.ca/content/docType45/Production/schoolbusopmanual.pdf)
- Traffic Safety Act [Alberta Traffic Safety Act](#)
- Commercial Vehicle Safety Regulation (AR 121/2009)  
[http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2009\\_121.pdf](http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2009_121.pdf)

#### Government of Alberta

- [Distracted driving | Alberta.ca](#)
- [Making Alberta roads safer](#)
- The Provincial Administrative Penalties Act [BILL 21](#)

#### Government of Canada

- [Impaired Driving Laws](#)
- [Impaired driving - Canada.ca](#)

## **Parkland School Division**

- Board Policy 17 – Student Transportation  
[Board Policies 17 | Parkland School Division](#)
- Administrative Procedure 750 – Severe Weather  
[Administrative Procedures 750 | Parkland School Division](#)
- Administrative Procedure 810 – Safety and Code of Conduct on School Buses  
[Administrative Procedures 810 | Parkland School Division](#)
- Administrative Procedure 850 – Transportation Services (Student Transportation)  
[Administrative Procedures 850 | Parkland School Division](#)