

Transportation

It is the intent of the Board of Education to comply with the letter and spirit of the Connecticut State statutes and with the regulations of the State Board of Education and of the State Department of Motor Vehicles. These will govern any questions not covered by specific declarations of policy herein.

I. Policy and Guidelines**1. Definitions**

- (a) **"School transportation"** means the procedure or program by which a student is conveyed to or from his/her designated pickup point to or from the school in which s/he is enrolled by the Board of Education at public expense for the academic day, whether by use of publicly owned equipment or by contract.
 - (b) **"Walking distance"** means the linear measure of a prescribed or authorized pedestrian route between the student's residence and his/her school from a point at the curb or edge of a public road or highway nearest the student's residence to a point at the entrance of the school grounds located within one hundred feet of the school building entrance; or the route from the point on the public thoroughfare nearest the residence to the school bus, or vehicle, embarkation point established by the Board of Education.
 - (c) **"One mile walking distance"** means a reasonable measurement of a route to be traversed extending from the point of measurement at least 5,280 feet.
 - (d) **"Grade K"** means kindergarten or a school program appropriate to a beginning student under age six.
 - (e) **"Hazard"** means a condition affecting the safety of students walking to and from school or designed bus pickup area; a possible source of peril, danger, duress or difficulty (cf. Webster)
2. In cases of appeals, the Superintendent of Schools, or his/her designee, shall furnish to the Board of Education evidence satisfactory to the Board of Education that reasonable and desirable transportation has been furnished every eligible student according to its policy and that the maximum walking distance does not exceed the following schedule:
- (a) Students in grades 3 through 8, up to one mile.

3. Reasonable transportation or prescribed walking routes or the sum of both shall not exceed one hour each way from home to school or returning.
4. In cases of appeals, the Superintendent of Schools shall furnish evidence satisfactory to the Board of Education that no student has been denied transportation when such Board has been aware of the existence of a hazard in his/her walking route to and from school of such severity as to be judged dangerous according to the following standards:
 - (a) A street or road having an adjacent or parallel sidewalk or raised walk area shall be deemed hazardous when any one of the following conditions exist:
 1. For students enrolled in grades K through 8, absence of a pedestrian crossing light or crossing guard where three or more streets intersect and at street crossings where there are no stop signs or crossing guards and the traffic count during the time that children are walking to or from school exceeds 25 vehicles per hour;
 2. Any street, road or highway with speed limits in excess of forty miles per hour that do not have pedestrian crossing lights or crossing guards or other safety provisions at points where students must cross going to or from school;
 3. The usual or frequent presence of any nuisance such as open manholes, construction snow plowed or piled on the walk area making walkways unusable, loading zones where delivery trucks are permitted to park on walkways, commercial entrances and exits where cars are crossing walking areas at speeds in excess of five miles per hour, and the like, including such nuisance that is dangerous or attractive to children.
 - (b) Any street, road, or highway that has no sidewalks or raised walk areas may be deemed hazardous unless all of the following conditions exist:
 1. There exists no line-of-sight obstruction caused by a hill, curve, structure, outcropping, landform, planting, snowbank, or other obscuring object or structure that may be safely negotiated by vehicles only at speeds under fifteen miles per hour;
 2. The line-of-sight visibility together with posted speed limits permit vehicular breaking/stopping distances in accordance with the "Connecticut Driver's Manual."
 - (c) Any walkway or pathway area adjacent and parallel to railroad tracks shall be considered hazardous unless a suitable physical barrier along the entire pedestrian route is present and fixed between students and the tracks, and any crossing of railroad tracks that carry moving trains during hours that students are walking to or from school shall be deemed hazardous unless the following conditions exist:

1. A crossing guard is present, or
 2. An automatic control bar is present at crossings used by children under age ten, or a bar or red flashing signal light is operational when the crossing is used for students over ten years of age.
- (d) Any street, road, walkway or path designated as a walking route for school students that passes through an area that has a history of aggressive acts or molestations resulting in actual or threatened physical harm or moral degradation to children during the hours when students ordinarily walk to or from school shall be deemed hazardous.
- (e) A situation shall be considered unduly hazardous wherein a Board of Education requires a student enrolled in a grade K through 8 or equivalent to walk to or from school at any time prior to one-half hour before sunrise or after one-half hour after sunset.
5. Appeals
- (a) Any parent who wishes to appeal a decision of the Board of Education regarding the transportation of their child shall have the right to as provided in the statutes.

II. Students Entitled to and Privileged to Transportation Service

1. All resident students living more than one mile from the school attended are entitled to transportation service. Students in grades K through 2 will be provided transportation regardless of the distance.
2. Bus routes will be established so that an authorized bus stop is available within reasonable walking distance of the home of every resident student entitled to transportation service, that distance not to exceed one mile for elementary, or one and one-half miles for secondary students.
3. Any students unable, because of physical infirmities, to walk to and from school or the bus stop, as required by Paragraph 1 and 2 herein, may obtain a certificate from the Principal, permitting direct pickup and delivery of such student from and to this home. However, such certificate will be given only upon authorization by the School Health Officer.
4. Subject to the prior claim of resident student to transportation service, any student not residing within the district, but attending another district or regional school (special needs student) may be transported on any district bus trip over a regularly established bus route, by approval from the Director of Pupil Services, authorizing the transportation requested between the specified points on bus trips specified. Such certificate may be terminated at will in the event that granting of bus privileges to non-resident students cause overloading of a bus trip.

III. Responsibilities

1. The Board of Education is responsible for the efficiency and economy of the school bus system, as determined by the selection of bus routes, the scheduling of bus trips and the authorization of bus stops.
2. The Board is responsible for establishing proper standards of safety in the operation of buses and will ensure their enforcement by the operator. Disputes relative to the maintenance of proper safety standards, will be referred to the Board of Education for arbitration.
3. The Principal will be responsible for execution of the transportation policy and regulations adopted pursuant thereto. S/he may delegate this duty to staff subject to Board approval.
4. Parents are responsible for the safety of their children while walking or riding on vehicles other than school buses between home and school or home and authorized bus stops.

IV. Operation of the School Bus System

1. Bus routes will be established under the direction of the Principal and subject to Board approval, over the most direct roads practicable for bus travel to serve those entitled to transportation service. Where an alternate route may be selected, without sacrifice of efficiency or economy, preference will be given to that route serving the larger number of students more directly. Routes will be designed to employ, as nearly as practicable, the full carrying capacity of each bus trip. New routes will be established only when full capacity of the trips on existing routes has been reached or is imminent.
2. Insofar as educational requirements permit, school schedules will be adjusted to allow maximum utilization of each bus in the system by alternating elementary and high school trips with the same fleet of buses.
3. Bus schedules will be established under the direction of the Principal in cooperation with the bus operator and subject to Board approval. The purpose of bus scheduling will be to achieve maximum service with a minimum fleet of buses, consistent with rendering reasonably equal service to all patrons. The measure of service rendered will be the total time between leaving a bus stop in the morning and returning thereto in the afternoon on a regular bus trip
4. Bus stops will be established under the direction of the Principal in cooperation with the operator of the bus system. A bus stop so established will be designated as authorized when the Board of Education has approved its designation as such. The operator may not permit drivers to load or unload patrons at other than authorized bus stops. Authorized bus stops will be located at convenient intervals in places where

students may be loaded and unloaded, may cross highways and may await arrivals of buses with the utmost safety permitted by highway conditions.

The number of bus stops on each trip will be limited, consistent with the policy stated as to service, so as to enable buses to maintain a reasonable average speed

V. Reasonable Walking Distance to School

In the revision of school transportation policies, the Board of Education is concerned as to the measure of reasonableness in the administration of Section 10-220 of the general statutes authorizing Boards to provide for the transportation of children wherever transportation is reasonable and desirable.

Several factors must be taken into consideration, among them the following:

1. The maximum walking distances appropriate for school children is as follows:
Grade 3 through 8, 1 mile to school.
2. Walking distances prescribed by a Board of Education shall be measured from a point on a town accepted street or highway in front of the entrance way to the property of a child's home to the nearest allowable entrance to the school yard provided such entrance is within 100 feet of the school building or designated bus pick-up area. Any hazard found to exist along the route prescribed for walking to or from school shall be considered grounds for appeal on the basis of the hazard regardless of distance.
3. The Board of Education in formulating policy on reasonable walking distance should so phrase the ruling that it makes allowance for individual differences--the health and physical powers of the student, the terrain to be traversed, environmental hazards, the opening and closing school hours with reference to daylight available during walking time and the statutes pertaining to children eligible for special educational services.
4. Reasonable transportation or prescribed walking routes or the sum of both shall not exceed one hour each way to or from school. A normal period of time shall be computed from the time a child leaves his home until s/he arrives at school.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 10-186 Duties of local and regional boards of education
 10-220 Duties of boards of education
 14-275 Equipment and color of school buses
 14-275a Use of standard school bus required, when.
 14-275b Transportation of handicapped students.

14-275c Regulations re: school buses and motor vehicles used to transport special education students.

14-276a(c) Town/school district may require its school bus operators to have completed a safety training course.

14-280 Letters and signals to be concealed when not used in transporting children. Signs on other vehicles.

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Reviewed: March 10, 2020

NORTH CANAAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

North Canaan, Connecticut