



## Administrative Procedure 4260 STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

Responsibility:	<i>Superintendent of Business Services and Treasurer of the Board</i>
Legal References:	<u><i>Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, s.35, s.39 and s.190</i></u>
Related References:	<u><i>Board Policy 2006 - Community Engagement</i></u> <u><i>Board Policy 4000 – Pupil Accommodation Review (Consolidation or Closure)</i></u> <u><i>Board Policy 4009 – Student Transportation</i></u> <u><i>Board Policy 4012 - School Attendance Areas</i></u> <u><i>Board Policy 6001 - Code of Conduct</i></u> <u><i>Administrative Procedure 1030 – Student Out of Boundary Transfer Requests – Secondary Schools</i></u> <u><i>Administrative Procedure 1040 – Out of Boundary Requests Elementary Schools</i></u> <u><i>Administrative Procedure 4130 - Severe Weather Conditions (Bus Cancellation-Student Dismissal-School Closing)</i></u> <u><i>Administrative Procedure 4991 – Boundary Reviews</i></u> <u><i>Administrative Procedure 4860 – Pupil Accommodation Review</i></u> <u><i>IS-16-01 – Walking School Designation Form</i></u> <u><i>Ministry of Education Common Reference Standards for 2025-26 Routing Simulation</i></u>
Revisions:	<i>June 2016, August 2017, November 2023, August 2025</i>
Reviewed:	<i>September 2019</i>

### 1. Preamble

- 1.1. This procedure outlines guidelines and expectations for providing transportation or support for active school travel to students of the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB).
- 1.2. Student transportation for the WRDSB is planned for and overseen by Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR).
- 1.3. ***Questions regarding the application of transportation policies and associated procedures should be directed to STSWR ([www.stswr.ca](http://www.stswr.ca)).***

### 2. Definitions

**Access points:** Pedestrian access to the closest edge of the property line, whether that be a path, field, gateway, etc.

**Alternative address:** A secondary address supplied by the parent/guardian of an elementary school student to reflect an alternative pick-up or drop-off point for transportation purposes.

**Designated address:** The primary address of the student as registered with the school and/or WRDSB. This typically refers to the student's legal place of residence. The designated home address will determine the student's designated school.

**Designated school:** Under [Board Policy 4012 - School Attendance Areas](#), the WRDSB shall establish geographic attendance boundaries for each elementary and secondary school, thereby creating designated schools regarding grades and programs. A designated school can be:

- A regular school whose attendance area covers the designated address; or

- A magnet program school (i.e., English as a Second Language/English Language Development, Extended French, Fast Forward, French Immersion, Instrumental Strings, Integrated Arts, International Baccalaureate), whose defined attendance area covers the designated address.

**Legacy Provision:** Permission to attend a school outside a student's designated school boundary because of a previous motion passed by the WRDSB Board of Trustees.

**Out of boundary school:** Any school other than the student's designated school. Students attending out of boundary schools with approved out of boundary transfer requests are not eligible for transportation services.

**Transportation boundary:** The calculation of transportation boundaries is determined by STSWR utilizing Geographic Information Systems software. Students residing within a transportation boundary may be eligible for transportation to their designated school.

**Walking school:** A school located in an urban area or established settlement that has requested and received approval to operate without motorized student transportation, except for students who qualify under Section 3.2.1 of this Procedure.

### 3. Distance Guidelines

3.1. The WRDSB has adopted the following distance guidelines to determine eligibility for transportation ([Board Policy 4009 - Student Transportation](#)).

3.1.1. To be eligible for transportation, a student's designated address must be within the limits of the approved transportation boundary.

3.1.2. Transportation may be provided to a student if their designated address is beyond the following distance from their designated school:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Distance</b>
Junior and Senior Kindergarten	0.8 km
1 - 8	1.6 km
9 - 12	3.2 km

All transportation measurements will be determined by STSWR and calculated using the shortest path by road, path or walkway from the corner of the student's property to the nearest school access point or bus stop. Reasonable flexibility may be applied to ensure consistent transportation experiences for all students in a neighbourhood. This flexibility helps define a logical boundary between areas eligible for transportation and those that are not, such as extending or limiting service to the end of a street, court or the nearest intersection. However, any adjustment will not exceed 200 metres beyond the standard measurement.

### 3.2. Eligibility Other Than Distance

3.2.1. Transportation may be provided regardless of distance for students:

- With Special Education needs as documented in an Individual Education Plan (refer to the process in Section 11).
- Living in areas identified as hazardous walking zones by STSWR.
- With temporary medical conditions, upon submission of medical documentation (refer to the process in Section 11).

## 4. Designated Walking Schools

4.1. To be designated as a “walking school”, the following process must be followed:

- 4.1.1. Consultation with the school community (including, but not limited to, students, staff, School Council, families, municipal staff, and School Travel Planning (via STSWR) must take place in order to consider the impact and provision of the following:
  - supervision of students to and from school as well as upon arrival (e.g., walking buddies or walking school bus program, student hand-off practices, etc.);
  - the school's location and ability of the surrounding area to handle potential traffic volume increases;
  - the number of students who would no longer qualify for transportation and the distance between their designated address and the designated school;
  - the school community's commitment to active transportation programs and infrastructure to support students travelling to and from school (e.g., School Travel Plan, walk/roll to school days, bicycle racks, scooter storage, etc.); and
  - the student achievement and well-being benefits of being a “walking school”.
- 4.1.2. If the consultation with the school community suggests the items listed in Section 4.2.1 can be appropriately provided for and impact is minimal, a completed copy of [Form IS-16-01](#) must be sent to STSWR by December 15 for a walking school designation in the following school year. Form IS-16-01 will include the following items:
  - A summary outlining the consultation that has taken place with the school community
  - Signatures of the Principal and the designated Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being.
- 4.1.3. Upon receiving Form [IS-16-01](#), STSWR will analyze the proposal to confirm whether any safety or operational issues would preclude the school from being a “walking school”.
- 4.1.4. If STSWR supports the request, notification will be sent to the school.
  - The Superintendent of Business Services and Treasurer of the Board, and the Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being, responsible for the school should be copied on the response by STSWR.
- 4.1.5. If STSWR does not support the request, the Superintendent of Business Services and Treasurer of the Board, will refer the matter to Leadership Council for a decision.
  - The school will be notified that the matter has been referred to Leadership Council for a decision.

4.2. In cases where a school no longer wishes to be designated as a “walking school”, the following process will be followed:

- 4.2.1. A completed copy of Form [IS-16-01](#) must be sent to STSWR by December 15 for a change in the following school year, and include the following items:
  - A summary of the consultation undertaken with the school community and staff.
  - Signature of the Principal and the designated Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being.
- 4.2.2. Upon receiving the request, STSWR will analyze the proposal to confirm whether any safety or operational issues should be considered. Furthermore, STSWR will

provide a cost estimate for motorized transportation and indicate any changes to bell times required to minimize costs.

- 4.2.3. If STSWR does not recommend implementing a change, the Superintendent of Business Services and Treasurer of the Board, will consult with Leadership Council before making a decision.

- 4.3. Decisions regarding “walking schools” should be communicated by the first week of February, to facilitate implementation for the following school year and provide clarity for families during Kindergarten registration.

## 5. Service Standards

### 5.1. Distance-to-Stop (Maximum)

Although STSWR has sole authority over the placement of bus stops, the following guidelines will be used to inform decisions.

- 5.1.1. Students living in urban municipalities and established settlement areas may be subject to the following maximum distances between their designated address and a bus stop:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Distance</b>
Junior and Senior Kindergarten	0.8 km
1-8	0.8 km
9-12	1.6 km

- 5.1.2. Generally, students living in rural areas outside urban municipalities and established settlement areas will be picked up or dropped off at their laneway. Students may be subject to a 0.8 km distance between their designated address and a bus stop.

- 5.1.3. Several factors affect the placement of stops, including selecting locations to ensure a safe stop for boarding or space considerations for students to wait in groups.

- 5.1.4. Certain circumstances, such as dead-end streets, private driveways, or road conditions, may require exceptions to the distance-to-stop thresholds noted above.

### 5.2. Ride Time (Maximum)

Ride time refers to travel time between a student’s designated address and their designated school under typical conditions, and vice versa. Every effort will be made to ensure that ride times do not exceed one hour each way.

### 5.3. Pick-up and Drop-off Times

To ensure the safety of students, while maintaining the flexibility to plan efficiently for transportation, the following guidelines will be used in determining scheduled pick-up and drop-off times:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Earliest Scheduled Pick-up</b>	<b>Latest Scheduled Drop-off</b>
Elementary (JK-8)	7:00 am	5:30 pm
Secondary (9-12)	7:00 am	5:30 pm

#### 5.4. **Assigning Mode of Transportation**

Assigning an appropriate mode of transportation, which includes school buses, contracted vehicles, public transit, and taxi company-operated vehicles, may be based on several factors, such as:

- Student Need
- Safety and Service-Level
- Availability of Mode of Transportation
- Cost Effectiveness
- Routing Strategy

5.5. STSWR will make every effort to follow these guidelines, but certain situations may require exceptions. Any changes will be communicated to schools by STSWR.

5.6. Sections 5.1 (Distance-to-Stop), 5.2 (Ride Time), and 5.3 (Pick-up and Drop-off Times) do not apply to students whose assigned mode of transportation is public transit.

### 6. **Late Busing – Secondary Schools**

6.1. In some cases, schools may choose to provide late busing for secondary students to support their participation in extracurricular activities or other school programs. The provision of late busing should adhere to the following guidelines:

6.1.1. Transportation services will be provided in a manner consistent with the distance guidelines established by the WRDSB.

- Congregated stops will be used (i.e., stops may be provided for distances greater than those outlined in Section 5.1.1). Student safety will be a primary focus in determining stop locations.

6.1.2. Late busing should not be provided in areas serviced by Grand River Transit and bus passes will not be issued solely for the purpose of late busing.

6.1.3. As a general rule, late buses should only be provided on Mondays through - Thursdays; however, the days and times late buses will operate will be determined at the school level.

6.1.4. Consideration must be given to ridership to ensure that the provision of late busing remains economically viable and efficient.

### 7. **Bell Times**

7.1. To support system efficiencies and consistency between schools, the following guidelines will be used in determining bell times:

<b><i>Grade</i></b>	<b><i>Start-Time Window</i></b>	<b><i>End-Time Window</i></b>
Elementary (JK-8)	8:00 - 9:30 am	2:00 - 4:00 pm
Secondary (9-12)	8:00 - 9:30 am	2:00 - 4:00 pm

- 7.2. The process for requesting and approving bell time changes, as initiated by STSWR, is as follows:
- 7.2.1. Proposed changes for the upcoming school year should be provided to affected school(s), for written comment, by December 15.
    - In support of the [Board Policy 2006 - Community Engagement](#), it is suggested that schools communicate the proposed changes at minimum to their School Council and solicit feedback.
    - Feedback from schools must be received by the Superintendent of Business Services and Treasurer of the Board no later than February 10.
  - 7.2.2. A report and recommendation that includes feedback from the school(s), rationale for the change and cost implications must be provided by the Superintendent of Business Services and Treasurer of the Board to Leadership Council no later than February 15.
  - 7.2.3. All changes must be approved by Leadership Council. Decisions should be communicated to schools no later than March 15.
- 7.3. The process for requesting and approving bell-time changes, as initiated by the school, is as follows:
- 7.3.1. Any request for a bell time change that is initiated by a school must be pre-approved by the Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being responsible for the school.
  - 7.3.2. Upon receiving approval from the Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being, the school Principal will submit a request outlining the proposed change to STSWR. Proposed changes for the upcoming school year should be submitted by December 15.
  - 7.3.3. Upon receiving the request, STSWR will evaluate the impact of the proposed change, including cost, and provide the school with its assessment, including possible alternatives, by January 15.
    - The Superintendent of Business Services and Treasurer of the Board and the Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being responsible for the school should be copied on the response by STSWR.
  - 7.3.4. If an alternative has been recommended by STSWR, the school must indicate their willingness to accept/decline the alternative proposal by February 10.
    - If the school does not accept the alternative proposal provided by STSWR, both the original proposal and the alternative proposal recommended by STSWR will go to Leadership Council for consideration.
    - If an agreement is reached between STSWR and the school, only the draft proposal will go to Leadership Council for consideration.
  - 7.3.5. The proposal(s) to go before Leadership Council must be provided to the Superintendent of Business Services and Treasurer of the Board no later than February 15.
  - 7.3.6. All changes must be approved by Leadership Council.
  - 7.3.7. Changes should be communicated to schools no later than March 15.

## **8. Transportation for Out-of-District Students**

- 8.1. Where a student's designated address is located outside the district, the following guidelines will be used to determine transportation eligibility.

- 8.1.1. Where the designated address is within an existing agreement area, transportation may be provided in a manner that is consistent with established distance guidelines.
- 8.1.2. In the absence of an agreement governing the admission of out-of-district students, students admitted under s.35 (Resident pupil's right to attend more accessible elementary school) and s.39 (Resident pupil's right to attend secondary school in another district or zone) of the [Education Act](#) may be provided with transportation in a manner that is consistent with established distance guidelines.
- 8.2. Transportation will not be provided to out-of-district students who do not qualify under these provisions.

## **9. Transportation to an Alternative Address**

- 9.1. Transportation to an alternative address may be provided to students in grades JK-8 under the following conditions:
  - 9.1.1. The alternative address is located in the designated school's attendance area and within the transportation boundary;
  - 9.1.2. The student is always transported from or to the same location.
- 9.2. Transportation will not be provided to an address outside the designated school's attendance boundary.

## **10. Legacy Provision**

- 10.1. In some instances, it may be necessary to phase-in the implementation of transportation changes to provide a transition period for the community. The following conditions will be applied when legacy transportation service is provided.
  - 10.1.1. A definitive end date must be declared as of the implementation of the change.
  - 10.1.2. The provision of service may only be extended to students enrolled and attending the affected school(s) and living within the boundary of the affected school(s) on the date of the Board of Trustees' approval or a date set by a Board of Trustees resolution.
  - 10.1.3. Transportation service will be provided in a manner consistent with the distance guidelines established by the WRDSB.
  - 10.1.4. Should a student's address change, the provision will no longer apply to them.

## **11. Special Needs and Temporary Transportation**

- 11.1. Students with special needs who may require transportation will be identified by their designated school and the Special Education department. STSWR, in consultation with the Special Education department, will determine the most appropriate form of transportation for students with special needs.
- 11.2. In some cases, students may require transportation to accommodate a short-term medical condition or other special circumstances. The process for requesting and approving temporary transportation is as follows.
  - 11.2.1. The Principal reviews the request and, when appropriate, completes a [Special Request Form](#) (supplied by STSWR) and submits it along with supporting

documentation to the appropriate Superintendent, Student Achievement & Well-Being.

- Where appropriate, a medical note should accompany applications for special transportation for temporary non-ambulatory students.

11.2.2. If approved by the Superintendent, in consultation with the General Manager of STSWR, then STSWR will make the arrangements based on the information in the approved request form. The status of the request and confirmation of the arrangements will be sent to the school. The school will then contact the parent/guardian with transportation details and the agreed upon start date.

- In cases where the anticipated cost of the service will exceed \$10K, approval of the Superintendent of Business Services and Treasurer of the Board, or designate, is required.

11.2.3. Parents will be advised that it is their responsibility to:

- Inform the bus/taxi company directly if transportation is not required.
- Inform the school if transportation is no longer required.
- Inform the school of any changes, including schedule times or locations. It is the school's responsibility to inform STSWR.

## **12. Summer School Transportation**

12.1. The WRDSB may provide transportation for students attending summer school programs.

12.2. Transportation will be provided in accordance with the procedures established by STSWR, available at [www.stswr.ca/policies](http://www.stswr.ca/policies).

## **13. Magnet Program Transportation**

13.1. Transportation will not be provided for elementary students attending a magnet program that falls outside of their designated school boundary (i.e. French Immersion).

13.2. Transportation may be provided for secondary students attending a magnet program, where the student lives outside of the designated school's regular attendance boundary (i.e. French Immersion, IB, Integrated Arts - refer to 2.0: Definitions).

## **14. Student Code of Conduct**

14.1. To ensure that a safe and secure environment is maintained, a school bus will be treated as an extension of the classroom. As such, any student whose conduct endangers the safety or interferes with the comfort of others may have her/his riding privileges revoked. **Courtesy and respect for others are to prevail at all times.**

14.2. Improper conduct may result in the withdrawal of riding privileges by STSWR, in consultation with the school Principal or designate. Reinstatement will be at the discretion of STSWR and the school Principal or designate, after consultation with the student and parent or guardian.

14.3. Refer to [Board Policy 6001](#), which deals with the Code of Conduct.

## **15. Appeal Process**

15.1. Issues regarding the application of these procedures will be subject to the appeals process used by STSWR.

15.2. Refer to the STSWR website for additional information: [www.stswr.ca/policies](http://www.stswr.ca/policies).



- 15.3. Families who have lost an appeal may be referred to STSWR's School Travel Planning team to review other options and available supports at their school.