



# Transportation of Students with Special Needs Administrative Procedure 7.20

7.0 Transportation and Vehicles

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**Board Governance Policy Cross Reference:** 1, 2, 3, 12, 13, 16, 17

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**Legal Reference:** *Public Schools Act Sections 41 & 43, Education Administration Act, Regulation 221/96, Regulation 465/88R, MR 468/88*

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**Date Adopted:** March 2008

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## Transportation Requirements

Most students with special needs are able to use the same transportation services as other students while some may require specialized services based on their particular needs.

*Manitoba Regulation 221/96* requires that transportation to and from school be provided, regardless of how far a student resides from the school they attend, for pupils “*who are physically handicapped or mentally challenged, have learning disabilities, or have behavioural or emotional disorders.*”

*Section 43(6) of The Public Schools Act* also states “... and nothing herein requires the school board to provide for the conveyance of a pupil to and from a point closer than .8 kilometres from the residence of the pupil.” In some instances, special arrangements may be necessary. It is the responsibility of each school division to provide safe student transportation in the most cost-effective manner that meets the individual needs of each student. This requirement *may* also be satisfied through payment of a transportation allowance in lieu of providing transportation; through payment of a living allowance in lieu of providing transportation; or, by providing board and accommodation in a residence for pupils operated by the school division.

*Sections 41(4) and 41(5) of The Public Schools Act* require that local school boards provide or make provision for education in Grades 1 through 12 inclusive for all resident persons who have the right to attend school. In cases where the local school board is required to make arrangements for students with special needs to attend an appropriate program outside the division, a transportation plan should be developed jointly with the parents/guardians. Consultation with the receiving school board may also be required. This plan should be written on a Personalized Transportation Plan (PTP).

## Transportation Considerations

### 1. Transportation Alternatives

Transportation to accommodate students with special needs may include:

- a. School division-purchased wheelchair buses
- b. Contract services
- c. Public transit
- d. Sharing vehicles with other divisions
- e. Taxi services
- f. Payment in lieu of transportation services
- g. Living allowance in lieu of transportation services
- h. Residences



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## 2. Costs

Cost or the lack of available equipment will be factors in the development of transportation services for students with special needs.

When the division arranges the placement of a student in a program that it does not operate, it must ensure that the means of transportation is written on the PTP.

If a decision is made whereby the school division allows the parents/guardians to arrange transportation, or provides a living allowance in lieu of transportation, the PTP will include fair compensation for the actual expenses incurred. A reasonable reimbursement schedule will be negotiated between the service provider and the school division.

## 3. Length of Ride

The same general guideline applies for the transportation of all pupils. In most cases, transportation should not exceed one hour each way. Decisions to exceed this guideline should be written on the PTP and should be based on the following factors:

- a. Location of the home relative to assigned school
- b. Nature of the student's need – possibly necessitating a distant school placement
- c. Routing/multiple runs
- d. Other unique situations requiring special arrangements

## 4. A Continuum of Service

Individual education planning (IEP) is the process by which educators, support personnel, and parents/guardians collaborate to meet the needs of students who require a range of accommodations and supports.

Transportation decisions should be based on a student's specific needs. Not all students with cognitive, physical, or other special needs will have special transportation needs. Inclusion begins with the assumption that all students who live within walking distance should walk to school. When walking is not appropriate because of a student's special needs, or because the student is not attending their local school, the IEP team may consider transportation alternatives. In each case, consideration of the student's specific needs, as identified by the IEP team, would determine the most appropriate and cost-effective transportation option for each individual situation.

Students with special needs may be transported on a variety of vehicles. These include, but are not limited to:

- Regular bus
- Regular bus with minor modification or lift
- Regular bus with integrated seat or restraint
- Modified bus with other students with special needs
- Modified bus with attendant with special training
- Bus ride alone with attendant
- Bus alternative



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Vehicle choice depends on the student's needs as identified by the IEP team (which includes parents/guardians and transportation personnel). Parents/guardians should be informed about the type of vehicle used to transport their child. Exceptional circumstances should be discussed and recorded on the PTP.

Location of loading and unloading sites for students with special needs may require alteration from general operating procedures. These alterations should also be recorded on the PTP. The PTP should also include an emergency contact for drop off when no authorized person is available to receive the child.

### **5. Transportation Personnel and the IEP Process**

At some IEP meetings it can be anticipated that the IEP team will recommend a specialized bus aide, specialized vehicle adaptations, adaptive bus equipment, non-routine schedule, or other service that is not regularly provided by the school division's student transportation department. In this case, a representative of the transportation department shall be invited and may attend the meeting to discuss options.

### Personalized Transportation Plan (PTP)

The PTP is an instrument for recording the individual student's special needs and the requirements for related transportation services. The PTP should be attached to the student's Individualized Education Plan. As the PTP is a separate document it should be signed by the parents/guardians.

Students with special needs as per *Regulation 221/96* who require transportation should have a PTP. The type of vehicle used, the frequency of the service, and any special or unique modifications should be specified. The transportation defined should identify the extent that the service is unique and that it exceeds service provided for regularly transported students. All necessary information about a given student should be reflected on the PTP. Transportation will not begin until a PTP is completed and necessary training has occurred.

### Disciplinary And Suspension Procedures for Students with Special Needs

All students, including those with special needs, are subject to disciplinary action by school principals as documented in school and divisional administrative procedures. The principal, by Regulation retains overall authority for student discipline, including school bus conduct. *Regulation 468/88* requires that principals: *"1. provide reasonable accommodation for students who have exceptional learning needs that affect their behaviour, and when disciplining the student, take into consideration the student's ability to comply and the amount of support required"*.

It is important to be aware of the specific needs of students with special needs and to plan carefully to identify and provide the supports required.



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A principal or school board may need to take action to suspend or expel a student when his or her conduct is “injurious to the welfare of the school.” However, accommodation must be made for the student with special needs when the inability to respond appropriately is based on a mental or physical disability.

If a student’s behaviour is a danger to the driver and/or other students, transportation service could be interrupted. In order to deal equitably with suspension issues, school and division administrative procedures should be followed.

## Safety

### 1. Assisting Devices

Assisting devices include crutches, canes, walkers, scooters, braces, and wheelchairs. The need for and use of assisting devices should be determined and monitored by qualified personnel.

If vehicle modifications are required, the modification procedures must be clearly defined on the PTP. (An example of this would be a description of the safety vest or safety belt used to secure the child in the wheelchair or school bus seat.) Wheelchair models with adequate back support for the occupant, and wheelchairs which are appropriately designed to accommodate the four-point tie-down system in the school bus should be given serious consideration by all care providers.

Wheelchair sizes vary and require different methods of locking and different belt attachment locations for the four-point tie-down system. Special consideration must also be given to the securement of crutches, canes, walkers, scooters, and braces while the vehicle is in operation.

### 2. Emergencies

Drivers must be properly prepared to respond to emergency situations. Adequate training could eliminate potential dangers. An updated passenger list should be carried on the school bus and should include:

- a. name of student;
- b. grade;
- c. physical address;
- d. home phone number; and
- e. emergency contact.

Parents/ guardians should update the information annually. The information should be kept strictly confidential.

Students with health care needs should have an Individual Health Care Plan prepared. School bus drivers should be familiar with the plans for the students they transport.

### 3. Evacuation Drills

Evacuation procedures should be well known and rehearsed by drivers in order to ensure competent handling of an emergency situation.



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An accurate passenger manifest, available on each bus, would provide necessary information to the driver or emergency personnel in emergency situations.

Drivers should be trained to evacuate all passengers through all exits with or without the lift. Written directions should be posted near all mechanical apparatus requiring special skills or knowledge.

All students, especially those with special needs, should be familiarized with evacuation procedures. Regardless of the vehicle, students with special needs should be instructed to function within their individual capabilities. Procedures exist in divisional administrative procedures and in *Regulation 465/88R*. Students with special needs often require additional training beyond what is provided for other students. It may be helpful to have the assistance of school staff in ensuring that each student understands the evacuation procedures.

### Personnel Development Programs

Written administrative procedures and review of special needs transportation should be provided to transportation personnel in order to facilitate understanding of the special needs of individual students.

Training should be conducted on a regular basis. Adequate skill development is measured as part of bus driver evaluation.

Periodic review should include:

- An overview of specific special needs, as appropriate
- Development, approval, and implementation of PTP procedures
- Disciplinary procedures
- Behaviour management
- Seating assignment
- Schedule management
- Care and management of assisting devices
- Communication with parents/guardians and students
- Emergency procedures
- Special evacuation procedures
- First aid
- Loading and unloading

### Behaviour Management

Appropriate behaviour is necessary to ensure safe transportation. An effective driver is one who provides an in-vehicle environment allowing students the opportunity to exhibit appropriate behaviour. Students with special needs should have their particular needs communicated to the bus driver.

Some steps to establishing a safe and pleasant environment include:

- Establishing a daily routine



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- Personnel involved functioning as a cooperative team
- Minimizing the rules as much as safety will permit
- Clearly communicating expectations in ways that can be understood by students at different ages and levels of understanding
- Reinforcing appropriate behaviour with attention and praise
- Consistency with behaviour management



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## Personal Transportation Plan

### SECTION A – PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name:

School:

Parent/Guardian 1:

Phone:

Address:

School Year:

Grade:

Parent/Guardian 2:

Phone:

Address:

### SECTION B – STUDENT INFORMATION (To be completed by school and parent; please check where appropriate)

- Verbal       Non-Verbal       Hard of Hearing  
 Behaviour       Visually Impaired       Cognitively Delayed       URIS Cat. A/B?       Student on Medication  
 Other Pertinent Information:

Special Instruction for Emergency Situation:

### SPECIAL BUS EQUIPMENT/PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS

#### Mobility Requirements

- Home       School       Safety Vest       Safety Belt       Assist Boarding/Exiting Bus       Assist Enter/Exit School

#### Student Uses

- Wheelchair       Walker       Braces       Crutches       Communication Device       Other:

Special Instructions:

PTP Completed by:

Phone Number:

Date:

### SECTION C – TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Effective Date Service is to Begin:

Bus Driver Name:

Bus Number:

Pick Up Time (A.M.):

Approx. Drop Off Time (P.M.):

Other:



# Personal Transportation Plan

## SECTION D – FORM REVIEWED & APPROVED

_____ Principal Signature	_____ Date
_____ Bus Driver Signature	_____ Date
_____ Transportation Supervisor	_____ Date
_____ SS Administrator Signature	_____ Date

**\*Before sending to ESC for Supervisor signatures: Please review PTP with bus driver, have bus driver sign, and give bus driver a copy for bus binder. The fully signed PTP is for ESC and Transportation Department records only (not needed for Bus Binder).**