

Policy 3541 School Bus Transportation

December 2007

I. Introduction The Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education directs the superintendent to operate a pupil transportation system based upon the General Statutes of North Carolina concerning pupil transportation, N.C.G.S. § 115C-239, et seq., and to operate a maintenance program in compliance with state law and state regulations so as to provide the most efficient and economical services possible.

II. Responsibility of Parent and Students.

A. While WS/FCS provides school bus transportation for most students, WS/FCS does not provide transportation for all students nor does WS/FCS provide supervision of students as they walk to and from bus stops and wait at bus stops. It is the responsibility of students as they walk to and from school or bus stops to look both ways before crossing streets, and, in general, to be responsible for their personal safety. Parents may assist their children by escorting young children to and from school or the bus stop until the students learn how to walk safely. Parents also are encouraged to organize community watch programs to provide adult supervision of students as they walk to and from school or bus stops and as students wait at bus stops.

B. Pre-K, kindergarten and first grade¹(1) students. It is the duty and responsibility of parents or their designee to provide supervision at the bus stop of pre-K, kindergarten and first grade students who are served by school transportation. Any student who serves as a designee must be in the fourth grade or older. In the event no one is present at the bus stop in the afternoon to pick-up the child,

1. the parent will be contacted immediately by telephone and advised to pick-up the child;
2. the child will be taken to the next school on the route or nearest school that is open, as appropriate; and
3. if the parent fails to pick-up the child within 30 minutes, the parent shall be charged a child care fee of \$10.00.

III. Annual Review of Bus Routes. Prior to the commencement of each school year, the Transportation Department, with the aid of principals, shall prepare and submit to the superintendent or his designee for approval a proposed route for each school bus including stops for receiving and discharging pupils, so as to assure the most efficient use of such bus and the safety and convenience of the pupils assigned thereto.²(2) Adjustments may be made in the proposed routes to accommodate unforeseen situations as provided in Section V, General Guidelines for Route Adjustments.

IV. General Guidelines for Routing School Buses

A. Buses should be routed so that they pass

1. within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of the residence of each high school student who resides more than one and one-half miles from the school that serves the student's high school attendance area and
2. within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of each middle or elementary student who resides more than $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of the school to which s/he is assigned in the student's attendance zone.

B. Transportation may be provided for high school students who reside within 1.5 miles of a school and middle or elementary students who reside within 0.5 of a mile from their school under the following conditions:

1. The students must cross a road with three or more lanes at an intersection that is not controlled by a crossing guard, stop sign or traffic light.
2. The streets, lawns or shoulders along the students' walk path are not adequate for walking in a safe manner.
3. There are no alternative routes such as parks, par courses or community trails that provide a safe path to and from school.
4. The posted speed limit on the road that students must walk exceeds 35 MPH.
5. Crime statistics indicate at the times when students are walking to and from school the area where students must walk is a "high crime" area.
6. There is a high volume of traffic at the time that students are walking to or from school.
7. The buses allocated to the school have space available.

C. The travel time (one way) for each student shall not exceed one and one-half hours under normal conditions.

D. School bus routes and stops shall be established so as to avoid steep hills, sharp curves and other hazardous road conditions.

E. In urban areas and densely populated suburban areas, school buses should be routed so as to most safely and economically serve the students eligible for transportation.

F. In rural and suburban areas, school buses should be routed on main or primary roads and not onto side roads or into housing developments unless:

1. There is a student who resides more than 0.5 of a mile from the main or primary road.
2. There are ten or more students attending the same school to be served by school bus transportation.
3. There are pupils in grades 1 through 3 who are unescorted by an older student or an

adult. Unescorted children are defined as follows: Children who are not accompanied by a parent due to a physical or mental disability of the parent/guardian; children who are not accompanied by an older student(s); or children who are not accompanied due to some other condition that renders them without adequate supervision.

4. The side road is a state or city maintained road.

5. There is a safe place for the bus to turn around.

V. General Guidelines for Adjusting Routes

A. During the school year, the Transportation Department, with the aid of the principal, shall review each route in an effort to shorten the time and distance traveled by each school bus.

B. School bus routes in rural and suburban areas may be removed from side roads and housing developments when the number of children to be served is seven (7) or less.

C. Parents shall be notified at least two weeks in advance of any adjustment in a school bus route or stop.

VI. Transportation for Children With Special Needs

A. Transportation shall be provided from a student's home to and from school for those "children with special needs," as defined by N.C.G.S. § 115C-109, who because of their handicap or disability cannot get to school or to a school bus stop.

B. If school bus transportation cannot reasonably be provided, the school system shall assist the child's parent in obtaining travel reimbursement from the State of North Carolina at the standard rate.

VII. General Guidelines for Bus Stops

A. The Transportation Department with the aid of principals; shall designate school bus stops.

B. Bus stops shall be no closer together than 0.2 miles unless mandated by safety factors.

C. School buses shall come to a complete stop at each bus stop but if no student is in sight, the bus shall proceed onward immediately.

D. It is the responsibility of the school bus driver to report to the principal the name of any student who is frequently late for the bus.

VIII. Transportation Review Procedures

A. Any parent or school administrator, by submitting a properly filled out WS/FCS Routing Request Form, may request the Area Transportation Supervisor to review:

1. A bus route.

2. The location of a bus stop, or

3. The lack of transportation within one-half mile of an elementary or middle school student's school or 1.5 miles of a high school student's school.

B. If the parent or school administrator is not satisfied with the decision of the Area Transportation Supervisor, he/she may request a review by the Operations Manager for Transportation, the Superintendent's designee, in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Parent and Student Grievance Procedure, P5145, Section IV, B., Superintendent's Level.

C. The decision of the Operations Manager for Transportation may be appealed to a Hearing Panel of the Board in accordance with the Parent and Student Grievance Procedure, Policy 5145, Section IV, C.

Adopted: February, 1980

Revised: April, 1991; June, 1993; November, 1999; October, 2002; November, 2006; November, 2007

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System

Endnotes

1 (Popup - Popup)

1 Provision applying to first grade students effective at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year.

2 (Popup - Popup)

2 [N.C.G.S. §.115C-246](#)