TRANSPORTATION

Pursuant to district transportation policy 6600, the following regulations shall apply:

The term transportation refers to yellow bus service, Pierce Transit service, taxi cabs, cabulance, private automobile and commercial carrier. Whenever transportation is specifically not authorized, the use of Pierce Transit passes, tickets or any other means of transportation is not authorized.

Eligibility

Eligibility for transportation to/from school is based on at least one of the following criteria:

A. Distance:

Students whose residence or daycare is more than one radius mile from their neighborhood school, as defined in Regulation 3131R. The superintendent or designee may also establish minimum-walking distance to the students' assigned bus stop.

B. Students with disabilities:

Students in preschool through grade 12 with disabilities (as defined in RCW 28A.155.020) who are not ambulatory, who are not capable of protecting their welfare while walking to and from school, or whose individualized educational programs require it, shall be provided transportation to and from their assigned schools, in which case no mileage distance restrictions apply.

C. Hazardous Walking Conditions:

In addition to the above, a student who does not qualify for transportation under the above criteria may be transported to and from his/her neighborhood school if the district determines that the walking route contains hazardous conditions in accordance with district and state criteria for determining the existence of hazardous walking conditions.

The determination of a “hazardous walking area” is determined by an assemblage of factors such as:

1. Traffic Safety:

   Sight distance, speeding problems, sidewalk availability, road width, traffic counts, nature of street crossing and types of safety signals
available in these areas.

2. Personal Safety:

Existence of bushy or wooded areas, isolated areas with few or no houses, and potential problems which may be accentuated during the darker winter months. Social factors are not considered hazardous walking conditions.

3. Distance:

Serious topographic obstacles such as hills or other irregular terrain.

Annual requests for transportation based on hazardous walking conditions may be made to the district. The district shall evaluate guidelines based on those recommended by the state of Washington. Any appeals shall be referred to the district’s transportation appeals board.

D. Medical:

A student residing less than the established mileage standards from the neighborhood school, but whose medical condition does not enable the student to walk to/from school, may be eligible for transportation. Generally this type of transportation is short term until conditions improve (cast removed from leg, etc.). Such a request is made to the building principal or designee along with an accompanying letter from the student’s physician clearly delineating the nature of the problem and the potential impact on the student’s health of walking to and from school. All annual requests for medical transportation are subject to review by the building principal. A medical condition of the parent/guardian does not determine eligibility for transportation of students.

E. Transportation outside student’s attendance zone:

Students who enroll in a school outside of their neighborhood school’s attendance zone shall be eligible for transportation services if their enrollment is due to participation in specific program(s) designated by the superintendent and outlined in district transportation policies. Once the student has exited the program or the program is discontinued, the student’s transportation services may discontinue if the student elects to attend a school outside of their neighborhood school’s attendance zone the following school year. The Transportation Department may establish the stops and routes necessary to serve the students enrolled in these programs.

The district shall provide transportation for district-directed transfers that are a result of students not able to attend their neighborhood school’s attendance zone
due to building capacity issues. When these conditions no longer exist, transportation shall be provided in accordance with transportation eligibility guidelines.

Students not participating in a designated program, but attending outside their neighborhood school’s attendance zone may be given permission to use an existing bus stop as long as the reason for the stop remains in effect and space is available on the bus. The parent/guardian may make a request with the school for transportation. The student’s name must be on the driver’s manifest.

If during the course of the school year it is determined that a student for whom a bus stop was established is no longer eligible for transportation, the student’s bus stop shall be eliminated at the end of the school year.

F. Administrative Transfers:

A student who is assigned to a specific school or program as a result of a district-initiated administrative decision shall be provided transportation whenever transportation service is available.

A student whose parent/guardian initiates transfers during the school year to a school outside the student’s neighborhood attendance zone shall not be eligible for transportation unless otherwise required by law.

G. Transportation to/from Childcare:

If a student attends a childcare facility, whether at a childcare center, private home, etc., the location of the childcare facility shall determine the student’s eligibility for transportation. When a childcare location is outside the student’s neighborhood attendance zone, transportation between the childcare facility and the student’s neighborhood school shall not be provided. If a student attends the school located within the neighborhood attendance zone of the childcare, transportation may be provided depending upon the eligibility requirements. The district may, due to school capacity limitations, rezone individual childcare addresses to another school, as provided in Regulation 3131R.

H. Optional Enrollment:

Elementary: Transportation shall not be provided to a student attending a school under the optional enrollment policy.

Middle School and High School: Transportation may be provided if the student meets transportation eligibility guidelines. Transportation is not available in all
areas of Tacoma School District boundaries. Where transportation is available, either yellow bus service or Pierce Transit passes may be provided at the discretion of the district.

**Change of Residence**

Transportation is not provided if a student changes residence during the school year, but chooses not to change schools. Transportation is the parent’s/guardian’s responsibility.

If a student enrolled in a specific program (English as a second language, etc.) changes residences, transportation to the school of origin may be provided for the remainder of the school year.

Students whose residence changes during the school year shall be offered transportation services that are provided to their new neighborhood school. The student may continue to attend the school of origin. However, the student must make his/her own transportation arrangements unless alternative modes of transportation are available and specifically mandated by transportation policy or state or federal law.

**Out-of-District Students**

Transportation may not be provided for students who reside outside district boundaries unless specifically mandated by transportation policy or state or federal law. Students residing outside the district who have been authorized to attend a district school may be provided Pierce Transit transportation.

**Student’s Name Tags**

Students (e.g., preschool and kindergarten) who have difficulty communicating are required to have name tags secured to their outer clothing. Students departing school shall have name tags affixed to their clothing by the school. Parents are expected to affix tags to students’ clothing prior to boarding a bus.

Name tags should include the following:

A. Student name – first and last name and any nickname the student has.

B. Student address – home or day care to where student is transported.

**Parents Accompanying Students**

Parents may ride with students on yellow buses to/from school when space is available. Parents must notify both the school and the transportation office one day prior to riding.
Bus Passes Rules and Procedures

Bus drivers shall have a student manifest indicating all eligible bus riders. Students may not board a school bus unless they are authorized riders. All students must show the bus driver their student identification upon request. A student who does not possess a student ID card may ride a bus if designated by an authorized district administrator.

Bus Stop Behavior

Students at the bus stop are subject to the same rules as when riding the bus. Students who are identified as causing vandalism at the bus stop or disrupting the bus stop may lose their bus riding privileges.

Safety First

A student may be permitted to leave the bus at a stop other than his/her regular stop if permission is first obtained from the parent/guardian. School bus rules of conduct are established first and foremost to insure the student has a safe ride to and from school. The school bus is an extension of the classroom and appropriate behavior is expected at all times. For those who are unable to follow the established rules, sanctions shall be applied that are appropriate to the offense and consistent with federal and state law and district policies.

Minor Offenses

For minor offenses, the student shall be given a verbal warning for the first offense. If a student fails to respond to a verbal warning, a written notice of unsatisfactory conduct shall be issued as a written warning and the parents shall be notified by mail. For students who continue to misbehave after receiving a warning, notices of unsatisfactory conduct shall be issued and the parents shall be notified by mail of a suspension from bus riding privileges. A copy of these notices shall be sent to the student’s school. The following penalties will apply:

A. First offense after a verbal and written warning: three days suspension of bus riding privileges.

B. Second offense after a verbal and written warning: five days suspension of bus riding privileges.

C. Third offense after a verbal and written warning: 10 days suspension of bus riding privileges.

D. Fourth offense after a verbal and written warning: 30 days suspension of bus riding privileges.

E. Fifth offense after a warning: complete revocation of bus riding privileges.
Secondary school students (grades 6-12) may not receive a warning notice, and a suspension may be given for the first offense. It is expected that secondary students are capable of greater self-control than elementary students.

Suspension or revocation of the bus riding privileges does not relieve the parent of the responsibility to ensure the student attends school. School attendance in the state of Washington is compulsory through age 18.

**Major Offenses**

Major offenses may result in indefinite suspension or complete loss of bus privileges. Infractions of the following rules are considered major offenses.

A. Open defiance or directing obscenities, profanities or racial slurs at the bus driver.

B. Fighting.

C. Failure of a student to provide his/her name to the driver when asked, or giving a false name.

D. Failure to surrender student ID card to the driver when asked.

E. Engaging in any act that seriously jeopardizes the safety of anyone on the bus.

F. Smoking – anything.

G. Bringing weapons, including, but not limited to, knives, guns, razors, etc. on the bus (See Regulation 3240).

H. Opening any emergency exit (except in an emergency) or exiting by any emergency exit or window.

I. Bringing prohibited substances, such as narcotics or other drugs, explosives, fireworks, bullets or alcoholic beverages, on the bus.

J. Bomb threat.

K. Threats.
Rules for Passengers Riding District-Authorized Transportation

A. The driver is in full charge of the vehicle and passengers. Passengers must obey the driver, as well as the bus monitor, promptly and willingly.

B. Except for ordinary conversation, classroom conduct must be observed.

C. Passengers are to assist in keeping the vehicle clean by keeping their waste paper off the floor. In order to help keep the vehicle clean, eating is not allowed.

D. No passenger shall use tobacco, smoke or light matches on a bus.

E. No passenger shall extend his or her body parts out of the windows.

F. Passengers shall not possess anything heavy, sharp, or bulky, and/or possess other items that may inadvertently affect the safety of the bus and passengers or cause injury to another, such as skis, ski or vaulting poles, skateboards, scooters, sticks, breakable containers, knives, firearms, flammable materials, straps, or pins extending from clothing. No animal is permitted on the vehicle, except for a working animal.

G. Passengers shall limit conversation with the driver.

H. Passengers shall remain seated while the vehicle is in motion, and may not get on or off the vehicle until it has come to a full stop.

I. Misconduct on a vehicle may be sufficient reason to discontinue providing vehicle transportation to those students involved.

J. Parents of students who damage buses shall be responsible for proper reimbursement. A student may be suspended and not readmitted to school and/or not permitted to ride district-sponsored transportation until the damage has been paid for in full or the superintendent directs his/her readmission.

K. Passengers transported in school buses equipped with lap belts or other similar safety devices shall be required to wear them whenever the bus is in motion.

L. Passengers shall not throw objects from buses.

M. Passengers shall be courteous to fellow passengers.

N. Aisles must be kept clear.
O. Passengers waiting for a bus must form a line starting well back from the curb.

P. Student identification cards must be readily available to show the driver when entering the bus.

Q. A passenger may occupy one seat only. Seats may not be saved for others.

R. Passengers who have disembarked from the bus shall not tamper with or touch the bus.

S. A passenger riding a yellow bus:
   1. Shall not leave the vehicle except at the student’s regular stop;
   2. Shall not open a window on the bus without permission from the driver; and
   3. Who must cross the street to board or exit the bus, shall cross only in front of the stopped bus with use of activated stop paddle and flashing red lights. This does not apply, however, at an intersection controlled by a traffic signal.

Rules for Pierce Transit Riders

All students must follow the rules of public transit prepared by Pierce Transit.

Approved 3/12/02