

# **Fort McMurray Catholic Schools**

## **Operating Policies and Procedures**

### **OP 381 - Student Transportation Services**

#### **Policy**

There will be a safe, effective and cost efficient transportation service for eligible and designated user-pay students. The Associate Superintendent (Business and Finance) is responsible for student transportation.

#### **Eligibility**

1. Eligibility for transportation is determined using the walking distance between the student residence and his/her designated school. "Eligible" students are those that reside more than 2.4 km from their designated school. All other students are considered non-eligible. The walking distance will be determined using the Student Transportation Management System approved by Alberta Education and used by the District (Edulog Bus Routing Software).

#### **Services**

2. The following type of transportation services are available for students:
  - a. School (Yellow) Bus is provided for:
    - Elementary schools: for students travelling to their designated school. Service is only provided for students required to walk more than 1.0 km from their designated school;
    - Middle Schools (Grades 7-9): for students residing south of the Athabasca River travelling to their designated school;
    - Saprae & Prairie Creek: all students travelling to their designated schools;
    - French Immersion: all students residing south of the Athabasca River
    - Choice School: Students not attending their designated school may access existing Yellow Bus routes to another school of their choice if service and space is available. Typically, this will only be available on Yellow Bus transportation to schools that offer French Immersion Programs as the designated area for the program cover larger area. "Choice Students" will be the user pay rate.

- b. City Transit is provided for:
- High Schools: Only service provided for:
    - North of Athabasca River: all students (grades 7 to 12)
    - South of Athabasca River: senior high students (grades 10 to 12) except those in Saprae or Prairie Creek or in French Immersion.

## **Fees**

3. Fees for transportation are as follows: (effective for school year 2014/15)
- a. Eligible students: \$ 185 per student per year;
  - b. User Pay – Yellow Bus: \$ 450 per student per year;
  - c. Family Rate: when combining eligible and user pay yellow bus transportation a total of \$ 670 per year per family. The family rate does not include the cost of purchasing monthly transit pass for non-eligible students.
4. The District does not provide transportation services to non-eligible students attending the High School. Students may purchase a transit bus pass from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) at the student rate. The High School may also sell the monthly transit pass on behalf of the RMWB.
5. The Board recognizes that from time to time, there may be a need to review transportation fees due to hardship. When payment of transportation fees cannot be made in full, the parent(s) / guardian(s) or independent student is required to make written application for special consideration to their Principal. The Principal has the authority to provide a payment plan or to reduce the transportation fee. Any fee reduction will be charged to the school budget. Any hardship request must be made annually and supported by appropriate documentation.

## **School (Yellow) bus routes**

6. Bus routes, schedules and stops shall be provided based on the following criteria:
- a. Bus scheduling and routing should be designed to optimize service at a reasonable cost;
  - b. Routes, schedules and stops will ensure student safety;
  - c. Routes will be established within each school's attendance area;

- d. New routes will be established only when full capacity of the existing route has been reached or is imminent;
  - e. Whenever possible, ride times for students should be 50 minutes or less. In exceptional circumstances this may be extended to 60 minutes.
  - f. Wherever possible, yellow buses will serve two routes, both in the morning and the afternoon; and
  - g. Students will be picked up and dropped off at a designated stop. The location of stops shall be determined using the following criteria:
    - The distance between bus stops shall be no less than 0.4 km;
    - The walking distance from any residence to a designated bus stop should be 0.5 km or less;
    - No bus stops will be located less than 1.0 km from the designated school for that route;
    - The same bus stops shall be used for all yellow bus routes serving the same neighbourhood;
    - The number of bus stops shall be minimized in order to reduce the length of the bus ride as much as possible.
    - Except for special needs transportation, students will not be picked-up or dropped-off at their residence. Designated stop shall be used.
7. The Associate Superintendent (Business and Finance) may enter into agreements to obtain the services of the following:
- a. Yellow buses as provided by a contractor, which must be awarded through a tendering process;
  - b. City Transit services which are to be utilized wherever possible;
  - c. Handi-vans as provided by a contractor or the Regional Municipality; and
  - d. Cars and vans as provided by a contractor.
8. The principal shall ensure that students and parents are made aware that:
- a. They, or their parents, are responsible for any damages to transportation services; and

- b. any conduct on a bus that is improper or jeopardizes that safety of others may result in a suspension of transportation services;
  - c. Appropriate safety programs and rules shall be published and in place for observance and direction by drivers, passengers and employees.
9. The Associate-Superintendent (Business and Finance) may provide transportation to students residing in extreme unsafe walking conditions on a User-Pay basis.
10. Transportation services will be made available for students identified as "special needs" and transportation assistance may be made available for medical conditions identified as "permanent or temporary." Transportation may be provided as either regular or special travel services.
- a. Any additional costs incurred on behalf of students with temporary medical conditions will be borne by the parents.
  - b. The form of transportation provided for special needs students will be determined by the:
    - i. Ability of the student to utilize regular transportation services, and
    - ii. Travelling time or wait time for the student.

<b>References:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberta School Act, Para 51</li> <li>• Student Transportation Regulations.</li> <li>• Board Governance Policy EL # 17</li> </ul>	<b>Approved:</b>
	<b>Date Approved:</b> August 31, 2002
<b>Cross References:</b>	<b>Date Revised:</b> May 20, 2014