
TRANSPORTATION

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Bus Safety

The Director of Essential Services, in consultation with School Principals, will ensure that students riding the school bus will receive safety training on a regular basis. This training will include behavioural expectation, emergency evacuations and other safety and management issues while a passenger on a bus.

Cold or Adverse Weather Conditions

In all cases, the Superintendent in consultation with the Director of Essential Services has the authority to suspend, cancel or reroute bus service if it is deemed that the safety of staff, students or the general public is in jeopardy.

Temperature Factors

Bus service in a certain area is to be cancelled by 6:30 am by the school administrator when the temperature reaches -40°C without the wind or -48°C with the wind as measured by Environment Canada Data. This communication must be posted to the schools' website and Facebook page.

Road Conditions

When road conditions such as ice from freezing rain create an unsafe driving condition, or in blizzard condition and excesses accumulation of snow during the storm, the decision to cancel a bus route rests with the Superintendent in consultation with the Director of Essential Services.

Other Factors Affecting Safe Driving

Other factors not related to road conditions or temperature may also necessitate cancellation of bus service. For example, periods of heavy fog or smoke may reduce visibility to such a point that it is not safe to drive. In such cases, each individual driver must make the decision as to whether or not it is safe for them to drive.

Cancelling Service

Whenever a route is cancelled, it is the responsibility of the driver to contact each family on the route to advise them of the cancellation. Families should be contacted in order of pick up and informed that the run is cancelled and for what duration. Should a situation arise that would necessitate a cancellation or delay mid-run, the driver should contact the bus garage to assist with the notification of families.

Protocols for Canceling Extra-curricular Trips Due to Weather/Road Conditions

1. On the previous evening (before 9 pm) or on the day of the planned extra-curricular activity, the principal will contact the Director of Essential Services to discuss the following information:
 - a. School bus cancellations within the division.
 - b. Weather and road conditions within the division. (511 Alberta Data)
 - c. Present weather and road conditions outside the division. (511 Alberta Data)
 - d. Weather forecast for the region. (Environment Canada data)

The principal will use the information gathered from the Director of Essential Services to make a decision with the Superintendent as to whether the planned extra-curricular activity will go ahead or not.

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2. If busses are cancelled in some locations of the division and a planned extra-curricular activity would bring students into that location, then the extra-curricular activity would be cancelled/postponed for that school on that day.
 3. If busses are cancelled outside of the division due to weather/road conditions and a planned extra-curricular activity would bring students into that location, then the extra-curricular activity would be cancelled/postponed for that school on that day.
 4. When a previously planned field trip is expected to travel in or through an area where buses have been cancelled for that day, consideration may be made to continue with the planned trip if weather/road conditions have significantly improved through the day. In such cases, prior to the beginning of the scheduled trip, the school administrator will consult with the Director of Essential Services and then the Superintendent and provide evidence of appreciable improvements.

Note:

- After a bus driver begins transporting students, the bus driver has the responsibility to make the decision as to whether it is safe to continue or not.

Cross Boundary Bussing

Cross boundary transportation will not be provided for students attending schools out of their attendance area. However, subject to space availability on the bus, students may ride to a school out of their area from a location on an existing bus route. Existing bus routes will not be modified to provide transportation services to students outside their attendance area.

Permission from the Secretary-Treasurer is required prior to any cross boundary transfers.

Department Objectives

- To provide a safe, efficient, and effective system of school bus transportation service for the students of Fort Vermilion School Division in accordance with established practices, *Education Act* and *School Transportation Regulations*. (see FVSD Appendices)
- To provide assistance and support to families and students requiring special transportation services due to student disabilities.
- To provide opportunities for the continual improvement of driver abilities through a system of driver training and safety education programs.
- To provide and maintain an effective driver appraisal program aimed at improving driver service to the division.

ECS Bussing Guidelines

The Fort Vermilion School Division is committed to creating safe procedures to protect the children in our care at school and during transportation. Students in ECS/Early Intervention programs will be treated with the utmost care and when transported by the Division the driver **must ensure** someone is at home to receive the child or that they are being accompanied by siblings old enough to ensure their safety once off the bus. In instances where a young child is dropped off alone and where it cannot be verified that someone is at home the bus driver should:

1. Ensure they are stopped in a safe location away from traffic.
2. Attempt to call the home or ask the bus garage to call to see if someone is at home.
3. We **MUST** have eyes on someone before leaving a child. If no one can be reached the child must be returned to the school (contact the school immediately if this occurs.)

FVSD Owned Vehicles

The Board believes that FVSD owned vehicles (excluding buses) are to be used for the purpose of carrying out FVSD business or approved school activities, except where specifically authorized by the Superintendent.

1. The Supervision of FVSD owned vehicles falls under the responsibility of the Director of Essential Services.
2. Authorized drivers who are a minimum of 18 years of age and are in possession of a valid "class 5" Operator's Certificate shall be permitted to drive vehicles owned by FVSD. A "class 4" Operator's Certificate is mandatory for employees to transport students in division vehicles. Proof of a valid "class 5" or "class 4" Operator's Certificate and Driver Abstract shall be provided to the Transportation Department prior to operation and must be provided anytime upon request. The Director of Essential Services may pull annual abstracts by department.
3. Only FVSD employees shall be permitted to operate FVSD owned vehicles unless the Superintendent grants prior approval, in writing.
4. FVSD owned vehicles shall be inspected by Fort Vermilion School Division bus shop mechanics, or equivalent, every six months.
5. All divisional vehicles that are assigned to staff must be picked up at the La Crete Bus Garage where a vehicle sign out form is completed with the Director of Essential Services. The vehicle must be returned to the Director of Essential Services for the sign in form to be completed. Contact the Director of Essential Services to make arrangements.
6. The purchase of any FVSD vehicle shall require final authorization by the Superintendent or designate.
7. FVSD owned vehicles shall be insured under the Board's insurance policy and arranged through the Finance Department.
8. Registration of vehicles shall be in the name of Fort Vermilion School Division and shall be through the Director of Essential Services. (To register a vehicle and issue license plates, the Motor Vehicles Branch requires an Application for Vehicle Registration completed and Proof of Insurance Coverage. Proof of Insurance (or pink card) can be obtained from the Transportation Department.) After registering the vehicle, a copy of the registration must be sent to the Finance Department for record keeping.
9. All costs associated with purchasing, licensing, maintenance, repair, insurance, and operation of any FVSD vehicle shall be the sole responsibility of the school or department utilizing the services of the vehicle.
10. FVSD owned vehicles shall contain each of the following:
 - a. Proof of Insurance (pink card)
 - b. Registration
 - c. Emergency Kit
 - d. Maintenance and Mileage Logs
11. FVSD may provide vehicles to employees who require a vehicle to carry out their duties for any of the following:

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- a. duties required in various locations,
 - b. necessity of having tools and/or equipment in possession at all times,
 - c. responsibility for transporting employees and/or materials to various sites, and
 - d. unusual circumstances that are approved by the Superintendent.
12. Drivers must drive safely in accordance with the requirements of the *Traffic Safety Act* and Municipal Traffic Bylaws and must advise the supervisor of any changes on their licenses. The Director of Essential Services, in consultation with the Superintendent, has the right to revoke driving privileges if demerits become excessive.
 13. An FVSD owned vehicle assigned to an employee becomes the responsibility of the employee for its condition and is to be maintained in a clean and operable manner. This includes ensuring that all fluid levels are at a safe operating level at all times. Vehicles are to be returned in sound mechanical condition and cleaned (interior & exterior) – as appropriate for the age and previous use of the vehicle. In the event that there are deficiencies, the cost to bring the vehicle to an acceptable condition may be assigned to the employee or their department.
 14. The vehicle will be serviced according to the vehicle's maintenance manual. The operator will make arrangements by contacting either the bus garage or another local shop to complete the service.
 15. All fuel purchases will be recorded in the maintenance log book and a copy submitted to the transportation department monthly.
 16. When the vehicle is not in use, the vehicle will be parked and locked, at a location authorized by the Director of Essential Services. Wherever possible, board property should be removed from the vehicle to avoid theft.
 17. Generally, FVSD owned vehicles shall not be used for personal use and shall only be used for the purposes of carrying out FVSD business. The only exception to this is when it is clearly in the FVSD's interest for the vehicle to be taken home over night and prior approval must be obtained from the Superintendent or designate.
 18. Daily mileage logs shall be maintained by the employee to quantify the personal use for each employee assigned a vehicle. Mileage logs shall be approved by the supervisor and a copy shall be submitted monthly to the Director of Essential Services as well as the Finance Department.
 19. The value of a benefit for personal use of a FVSD owned vehicle provided to an employee shall be included in the income from employment of the employee and reported on a T4 supplementary annually. The taxable benefit shall be calculated annually based on Canada Revenue Agency's current rules.
 20. In the event of an accident or traffic violation, the incident must be reported immediately to the supervisor and R.C.M.P. Drivers failing to report an incident may be subject to disciplinary action and or dismissal.

21. Employee's assigned FVSD owned vehicles must report to their supervisor and the Director of Essential Services any charges and or convictions for driving related offences they have received. Any traffic violations received while driving a FVSD owned vehicle will be the responsibility of the driver. For items such as photo radar tickets, proof of payment will be required.

Missing Student Protocol

When transporting children of all different ages, from several origins, and to many different destinations, it is possible to have a child board the wrong bus, or not board at all. Special circumstances arranged by a parent could be misunderstood or forgotten by the child(ren), school staff, or the bus driver. For example, a child staying with grandparents while the parents are away, may forget and board their regular bus after school. If the driver has forgotten or not been informed, the child could be dropped off at home alone without the care of an adult. This could become a very serious situation.

Drivers should communicate clearly with parents the importance of keeping them well informed of any special pick-up or drop-off situations. All such arrangements should include a note from the parent and/or school. When possible, drivers should also be diligent in getting to know their students and their home care situations.

In the case of a situation involving a missing student, the following process should be started immediately:

- the person who first realizes the child is not where they should be, must contact the bus garage and/or the school to make them aware of the situation
- the bus garage will then radio out to all buses asking whether or not drivers have that child on the bus.
- Bus drivers must then call out to their passengers, asking if the missing child is on their bus. This must be done, even if the driver is very sure that they did not see that child. The drivers should only respond by radio if they have the child, or know of their whereabouts. Having drivers respond in the negative only occupies the radio and may inadvertently block out important information from another driver.
- At the same time, the bus garage will contact the school to see if they are aware of any special arrangements.
- If there is still no knowledge of the child's location, the school should attempt to contact the parents, guardians, or emergency contacts using all available contact information.
- Once the child has been located, a radio call should go out to all drivers and a telephone call to the school informing them that the child has been located.
- If, after 30 minutes, the child has still not been located, a call should be made to the police to request their assistance.

Parent Transportation of Students with Special Needs

In the event student(s) with special needs are unable to successfully ride a school bus, the Fort Vermilion School Division may enter into a contract with the student's parent or guardian to transport their own student to their designated school if:

- a) Parent consultation with Principal, Assistant Superintendent of Learning and Supervisor of Transportation deems the student is unable to successfully ride the school bus.
- b) The parent or guardian so agrees, the Board will provide remuneration from the student's residence to the designated school and return. Such a contract is to remain in effect until such time that any of the following apply:
 - i) either party provides the other with thirty (30) days' notice in writing of intent to cancel the agreement;
 - ii) the Board can provide regular busing service or other transportation service as it deems appropriate to convey the student to a school to which he or she is placed;
 - iii) the student ceases to be a resident of the jurisdiction;
 - iv) the student is expelled from the school named in the transportation agreement;
 - v) the student withdraws from the school indicated in the transportation agreement;
 - vi) the end of the school year.

Parents Picking up Children from Extra-Curricular Trips

- Parents can pick up and keep child if the following conditions are met and agreed upon:
 - Letter from parent required confirming responsibility for the child(ren) is being returned to the parent.
 - It is agreed that the Division is not responsible for child once the parent takes control.
 - It is agreed that the Division does not have insurance for the parent(s).
- Bus passenger manifest must be updated to indicate that the child will not be returning on bus.
- Students are not to be released to an individual other than their parent(s) or guardian unless it is requested in writing prior to the commencement of the extra-curricular trip from the parent(s) or guardian.

Rural Yard Service

Yard Service will be provided free of charge to students where there is a child in grade three or less and the driveway exceeds 0.4 kilometers ($\frac{1}{4}$ Mile), or where the driveway exceeds 0.8 kilometers ($\frac{1}{2}$ Mile) for any other students. Parents who want yard service and do not meet the distance requirement will be charged \$75 per month. Students with physical disabilities may be provided yard service at no cost.

School Bus Rentals (Charitable and Community Organizations)

The Director of Essential Services will arrange, when possible, for buses to be provided to charitable and community organizations. The bus shall be charged at a rate of TWO DOLLARS (\$2.00) per kilometer plus all other costs (i.e. driver wages, meals, hotels, etc). **There will be a minimum charge of \$50.00 per trip.**

Student Discipline

Pupils riding in a school bus shall be under the immediate authority of the driver, who shall report all major cases of pupil misconduct to the principal of the school. The principal may suspend the pupil from riding the bus if it is deemed necessary.

Student Eligibility

The Fort Vermilion School Division will provide transportation to and from school for all students and children residing greater than 2.4 kilometers from school who have a Right of Access to Education in the Fort Vermilion School Division. 2.4 kilometers from school is calculated via the shortest public access route. A student's school is defined by attendance areas. Attendance areas are approved and amended by the Board of Trustees.

Student Transportation in Private Vehicles

The Board recognizes the positive aspect that the extra-curricular program has on student development. The Board also approves of educational field trips/tours and projects when such are a planned part of the instructional program of the school.

When planning these activities, schools may encounter situations where transportation to these events may require the use of volunteer drivers. The following rules shall govern the use of volunteer drivers to transport students for school sanctioned activities:

Volunteer Driver

- Students are not allowed under any circumstances to drive as a volunteer.
- Volunteer driver time shall comply with the provisions of the *Traffic Safety Act* regarding maximum work day (maximum 13 hour day within a 15 hour day) Volunteer driver time shall include his/her individual work time.
- It shall be the principal's responsibility to ensure that volunteer drivers are suitable, providing due consideration to the following:
 - Volunteer drivers must be twenty-one (21) years of age or older.
 - Registered owners of the vehicle being used to transport students must carry a minimum of TWO MILLION DOLLARS (\$2,000,000.00) liability insurance and the driver assigned to the vehicle must have a valid class 5 driver's license.
 - The maximum number of students to be carried must not exceed the number of functioning seat belts in the vehicle.
 - Vehicles used by volunteers must be in "good condition" as determined by the principal or designate.
 - School principals, at any time, reserve the right to refuse the services of a particular volunteer.
 - If division transportation is provided the Volunteer can drive to event in own vehicle with sponsoring teacher on bus to supervise students.
 - Volunteer can be reimbursed for expenses at the discretion of the principal based upon Division claim form.
 - No students should travel with volunteer or teacher unless it is their own child.
 - Division does not have insurance for driver.

Parent Volunteer Driver

- Parent drives own child.
 - May drive other students provided that the volunteer driver criteria are followed and the Division is not offering alternative transportation.

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- Parent of other student must give written permission to Principal authorizing their child to be transported by Parent Volunteer Driver.

Employee Driver

- Employee may drive students within / out of Division in own vehicle under the following conditions:
 - Driver criteria are followed except:
 - Employee must have a Class 4 license
 - Employee shall be reimbursed for applicable expenses through FVSD expense claim form
 - The division is not offering alternate transportation.
 - Commercial Transportation guidelines must be followed for maximum hours of service. A driver cannot drive after having driven 13 hours; or after being on-duty for 15 hours.
 - All requests must be approved by the Superintendent or Designate
- Large school trips that require backup vehicle
 - Teacher driving vehicle requires class 4 license
 - Prefer Division vehicle taken – If unavailable, same conditions as above point apply

Transportation Fees and Practices

The Fort Vermilion School Division receives funding from Alberta Education to transport students and children to schools. Funding is not sufficient to meet the requirements of all educational stakeholders. Therefore, the Fort Vermilion School Division must establish a Fee and Practices to assist in mitigating revenue shortfalls.

Urban Transportation

Transportation is available to students within the 2.4 kilometers walk limit and residing in an urban area. The cost for urban transportation within the Division is as follows:

- ♦ Students with physical disabilities - no charge
- ♦ E.C.S. (½ time) - \$25.00 per month
- ♦ E.C.S. (Full-time) - \$40.00 per month
- ♦ Grades 1-6 - \$40.00 per month
- ♦ Grades 7-12 - \$50.00 per month
- ♦ Family Rate* - \$100.00 per month

Discontinuation of urban routes may be necessary due to shortage of bus drivers for required bus routes in excess of 2.4 km.

Young Children on the Bus

- Applies to Volunteer, teacher, or bus driver's children.
- A preschool aged child may be transported on a bus while their parent or guardian is driving or also riding the bus, if they are secured in an approved child restraint system (car seat) that meets the requirements of the Vehicle Equipment Regulation and, if the child does not occupy a seat required by a student who is transported on the bus.