

FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Transportation

School Bus Transportation, Walking and Bicycling Routes

This policy supersedes Policy 8610.5

I. PURPOSE

To prescribe the conditions under which the School Board shall provide certain Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) students free bus transportation during the school day for all educational programs developed and approved by the Virginia Board of Education and the Fairfax County School Board; to authorize nonschool use of buses in accordance with the Code of Virginia; and to prescribe policy for walking and biking routes. Transportation will not be provided to non-FCPS students except as specified in section III.G.

II. SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE LAST PUBLICATION

- A. Section III.B. removed the requirement to notify the Division Superintendent of exceptions to the transportation mileage limitations due to unusual hazards. This decision is made by the Division Superintendent's designee.
- B. Section IV.C. revised language in the policy that encourages walking and biking to and from school using existing infrastructure. Acknowledges that this parental decision is not subject to review by the principal and that parents have the ultimate responsibility for selecting their children's routes to and from bus stops, schools, and home. Maintains unique procedures for kindergarteners.
- C. Section IV.D. was removed.

III. SERVICE PROVIDED

A. Regular Program Support

Daily school bus service shall be provided for all elementary students living in excess of one mile from school and for middle and high school students living in excess of one and one-half miles from school. Elementary students eligible for bus transportation may be required to walk up to one mile, and middle and high school students eligible for bus transportation may be required to walk up to one and one-half miles to reach a bus stop.

B. Exceptions

Students living within the mileage limitations shall be transported if, in the judgment of the Division Superintendent, or his or her designee, unusual hazards make

walking to school unsafe. ~~The Division Superintendent shall be advised in such cases by representatives of the assistant superintendent, Department of Facilities and Transportation Services, the Office of Transportation Services, the School Safety Section, and the police department, as needed.~~

An exception to the mileage limitations may also be made if, in the judgment of the Division Superintendent, or his or her designee, there is space available on the bus and there is a walking route to the nearest designated bus stop that is free of unusual hazards.

The School Board is not required to provide transportation for those students who are the subjects of student disciplinary sanctions as a result of actions taken by the School Board, a committee thereof, or the Division Superintendent or his or her designee except as required by law.

C. Special Support

Designated students (for example, some but not all special education students) shall be provided daily door-to-door bus service between their homes and schools.

D. Field Trips

The use of school buses for field trips shall be permitted, but field trips shall not interfere with the routine operation of regular school bus runs.

E. Late Bus Service

Elementary, middle, and high school students participating in school-sponsored after-class activities may be provided late bus service within guidelines established by the Division Superintendent.

F. Nonschool Use

School buses may be used for nonschool purposes as provided for in the Code of Virginia. (Uses that are similar to field trips shall be considered but will receive lower precedence than school uses.)

G. Transportation for Non-FCPS Students

Bus transportation will not be provided for non-FCPS students unless required by law or by the conditions of a federal or state grant.

IV. ROUTES

A. Establishment of Bus Routes

Bus routes shall be established by the Division Superintendent or his or her designee.

B. Restrictions

Bus routes shall not be established using roads that are not properly maintained or

that are otherwise inappropriate for school bus travel. Except for designated students (for example, certain special education students), bus routes shall not be established for the purpose of delivering students to their residences individually; buses shall stop at designated loading and unloading locations.

C. Walking and Bicycling Routes

~~Parents are responsible for selecting their children's walking routes to and from bus stops, schools, and home. Parents are also responsible for providing supervision that is appropriate for the student's age, the student's maturity, and conditions on the route. The Division Superintendent's staff does not assess all possible walking routes, supervise those routes, or guarantee the safety of any particular route. Staff members provide general safety information to school communities and respond to request for specific information and advice when practicable. Staff member also assess routes for unusual hazards when concerns are brought to their attention.~~

Recognizing the health benefits, FCPS encourages parents to consider having their children walk and/or ride a bicycle to and from school using existing infrastructure. This parental decision is not subject to review by the principal. Ultimately, parents have the responsibility for selecting their children's routes to and from bus stops, schools, and home. Parents are also responsible for providing supervision that is appropriate for the student's age, maturity and conditions of the chosen route. The unique procedures for kindergarten students are addressed in the current version of Regulation 8617.

FCPS staff does not assess all possible walking and bicycling routes, supervise those routes or guarantee the safety of any particular route. However, FCPS will review routes for unusual hazards upon request and will collaborate with other agencies in the development of pedestrian and biking route enhancements and projects.

D. ~~Safety Education~~

~~With the assistance of the Fairfax County Police Department, the Virginia Department of Transportation, and other organizations as appropriate, the school system will ensure that walking and bus safety programs are offered to students and parents.~~

Legal references: Code of Virginia, Sections 22.1-176 and 22.1-182

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