



*Southeast Polk Community School District*

# **Transportation Guide**

*Policies and Procedures*

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Transportation Guide is to provide important information for all students and parents in the Southeast Polk Community School District regarding transportation policies and procedures. These policies and procedures have been developed to promote the safety and well-being of all students and district personnel. Parents are encouraged to review this guide with their student/s to become familiar with what is expected for safe and orderly transportation to and from school. Although every effort will be made to update this guide in a timely manner, the procedures, practices, and policies described here may be modified or discontinued from time to time without notice, consultation, or publication. The District reserves the right and has the sole discretion to modify or change any portion of this guide at any time.

## ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSPORTATION

Per State of Iowa Code 285.1, the district shall provide transportation, either directly or by reimbursement, for all resident pupils. Students in grades Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade shall be entitled to transportation only if they live more than 2.0 miles from the school designated for attendance. Students in grades 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> shall be entitled to transportation only if they live more than 3.0 miles from the school designated for attendance.

When measuring the distance to determine eligibility for transportation, the distance shall be measured by using the shortest distance on public roads only. School buses do not travel on private roads, lanes, or in private subdivisions. Distance is measured from the student's driveway to the assigned attendance center's closest driveway. Any pupil may be required to meet a school bus on the assigned route, a distance not to exceed three-fourths of a mile.

### Special Education Students

The district shall provide transportation to eligible students as determined by the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Questions regarding special education transportation should be directed to the Director of Special Education at (515) 957-3400. Assignment of teacher associates to a school bus is determined by a student's IEP. Associates are employed by the Transportation Office.

### ELL Students

For students requiring English assistance and assigned to an English Language Learners (ELL) program, the district will provide transportation to the school where the ELL services are provided if these services are not provided at the student's attendance center and if this school is more than 2.0 miles from the student's home address.

### Seat Belts/Child Restraints

School buses are exempt from child restraints unless the bus is equipped with seat belts/child restraints or a van is used by the school for transport.

#### **If the school bus is equipped with seat belts/child restraints:**

- All students will be required to use the equipment

#### **If students are transported in 9-passenger or less family-type vehicle, the law requires:**

- A child under 1 year of age and weighing less than 20 pounds shall be secured in a rear-facing child restraint system used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- A child under 6 years of age who does not meet the description of "1" shall be secured by a child restraint system used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

- A child at least 6 years of age but less than 4 foot 9 inches tall shall be secured by a child restraint system used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or by a safety belt or safety harness.

## **ROUTE ASSIGNMENT**

Routes are designed to achieve maximum utilization and eliminate unnecessary mileage, safety, and duplication while assuring timely arrivals and departures within the framework of established school hours. Students will be assigned to a bus route based on their home address(es) and will be transported only on the route to which they have been assigned unless special alternate route requests have been made with the school district (i.e., Transportation to/from a child care provider.)

The district will place busing pick-up/drop-off information on each student's campus portal two weeks prior to the beginning of each school year if they have registered for busing. In the event that the bus route needs to be adjusted during the school year (i.e., time change of 10 minutes or more, bus stop location), information will be provided by email, and a letter will be provided to student riders. The transportation office will provide at least 3 days notice prior to changing the route.

Per state law, 281-43.1 (3) district bus routes will be designed to ensure riding time on the school bus is no longer than 60 minutes for elementary students and 75 minutes for secondary students. This time is measured from the school bus departure from the building/campus.

## **BUS STOPS**

Once the Transportation Department has established bus routes, students will be assigned bus stops. Student riders will be picked up and dropped off at their assigned bus stop only. Students will not be allowed to get off at a different location or ride a different bus. Students are not allowed to board or disembark at a school building where they are not enrolled; students that miss the bus are not to chase or board a different bus.

Elementary students in grades K-5 will normally not be asked to walk more than 5 blocks to a bus stop if the students have access to a sidewalk or 1 block without access to a sidewalk. Secondary students in grades 6-12 may be asked to walk no more than 10 blocks with sidewalk access or 5 blocks without. The school is not responsible for behavior at the school bus stop or behavior on the way to or from the bus stop. Each school has a parent service area, this area is a zone around a school that has no bus stop assigned.

Students will be assigned one bus stop for use in the a.m. and one in the p.m. They do not have to be at the same stop in the morning as in the afternoon but will be used daily. Parents/guardians are required to contact the Transportation Director to request such service. Any student not meeting these criteria will be considered "Discretionary" ; a route and/or bus stop is designed at the district's discretion, and a fee not to exceed \$200 per year will be charged to bus discretionary students.

Students are asked to stand 10 feet from the curb at the designated bus stop and arrive at least 10 minutes prior to their scheduled stop; standing inside the house, on the front porch, in the garage, etc., is not acceptable. If the driver cannot see the student waiting at their respective bus stop, the driver will continue on to the next stop. Failure to follow these guidelines may cause longer than necessary bus stops and thus delays in bus stop schedules, increase traffic congestion, and delay the arrival of students at school. Parents are responsible for the conduct of students while going to and from bus stops and for students waiting at bus stops.

During the evaluation of a bus stop, there are numerous criteria utilized in the determination of hazardous conditions such as student's age, the existence of bridges or viaducts, railroad crossings, adequacy of sidewalks, width of shoulder

used for walking, obstructions to pedestrian traffic, general traffic conditions (number of lanes, speed limits, traffic volume), visibility at crossings, traffic control devices, availability of crossing guards. Bus stops will not be assigned at the intersection of multiple streets, the bus will stop 150 feet short of the stop sign to allow traffic to see the lights and the stop arm.

Should a parent/guardian wish to appeal their student's assigned bus stop, they may do so by sending an email to the Transportation Director stating the reason for the appeal. The request will be provided to the District's Bus Stop Review Committee, and the Transportation Director will respond to the parent/guardian. The committee meets on an as-needed basis.

Parents/guardians should contact the transportation office if a student is not riding the bus each day. If a bus driver stops and the student is not waiting or does not arrive at the bus stop, this will be considered a "no show." If a student is not present at his/her bus stop five (5) or more times, the transportation office will notify the parent to determine the status of the bus stop.

### **Transportation to/from Child Care Provider**

An elementary student entitled to transportation may be transported to and/or from a child care provider within the student's attendance area upon request of the parent/guardian and approval by district transportation office. In order for transportation to be provided to and/or from a child care provider, the request has to have prior approval by the district's transportation department.

## **Bus Route Changes**

### **Bus Routes that are adjusted and/or changed by 10 minutes or more:**

If a bus route is adjusted and the change will result in a time that varies 10 minutes or more from the original bus schedule, a letter will be sent home with students that are riding the bus. Information will also be provided via an announcement on campus messenger and the Bus App, requiring families to check their campus portal for a time or bus change. Parents are strongly encouraged to become familiar with campus messenger and the Bus App so that they receive necessary information.

### **Less than 10 min changes:**

Bus route times may change slightly every time a student moves in or out of a bus stop or school. If a student or parent has questions about these fluctuations that occur and are less than 10 minutes, review the campus portal for more information.

### **Late Buses**

Weather, traffic, maintenance difficulties, and unforeseen incidents may be responsible for delays in the arrival of school buses. In the event your bus does not arrive at the designated time, please allow 10 minutes before calling Transportation at 967-3793. If a school bus is running more than 30 minutes late before or after school, Transportation will attempt to contact the parents of each student and let them know the estimated bus arrival time as well as the building Principal. Information will be sent to parents with the school's bus app, Here Comes the Bus, and/or campus messenger. The information can be found on the Southeast Polk Schools Web pages and the campus portal.

### **Parent Providing Transportation**

In situations where transportation by a school bus is impassable, service is not available, or in special circumstances, parents/guardians may be required to transport their children to the school designated for attendance. The parent/guardian will be reimbursed for such transportation service at a rate set by the school.

### **Bus Accidents**

When a school bus or any vehicle transporting students is involved in a minor accident, and the bus/vehicle is not delayed more than 30 minutes, the transportation department will notify parents by email and the bus app.

In the event of a more serious accident that requires a doctor's attention for any passenger and/or results in a delay of more than 30 minutes, information will be sent via email, and school staff will call the parents/guardians of each student and provide pertinent information.

### **Assigned Seating**

All buses have some assigned seating.. Example (6<sup>th</sup> grade in the front, JH in the middle, HS in the back, or Kindergarten in the front and 5<sup>th</sup> grade in the back. These can be changed to a more strict seating arrangement by the driver at any time.

### **Large Items**

Large items will not be allowed on the bus. We have very limited seating, and in an accident, they can prevent students from using exits. If it can sit on a student's lap, then it will not be allowed on the bus.

### **Dangerous Bus Loading or Unloading Areas / Bus Stops**

If Southeast Polk Schools deems an unsafe condition for students or for a bus stop, the school will enact Iowa Code 281.1 (2). This code will require parents to meet the bus at a safe area not to exceed  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile from the residence. A dangerous bus area will be considered by parent request and or bus stop issues. A meeting involving the School Bus Stop Committee will determine if this is needed and where the bus stop will now be located.

## **FEES**

### **Non-Discretionary Bussing**

Families residing outside the 2-mile radius for grades K - 8 schools and outside the 3-mile radius for grades 9-12 schools will not be charged a transportation fee by the SEP Community School District unless they are using multiple addresses to have their child(ren) transported to and/or from their respective school.

### **Discretionary Bussing**

Students living within the 2-mile radius for grades K-8 schools and within the 3-mile radius for grades 9-12 schools can receive transportation services at a charged fee of \$200.00 per child per year from established bus stops.

### **Waiver**

Families who seek the opportunity to have their child continue to attend a different school area; will be charged a transportation fee of \$200.00 for the school year. The 2-mile radius/3-mile radius is based on their home address and the new elementary school boundary, not the previous elementary school boundary. In order for this to happen, they must first complete a waiver to have their child attend the previous school. If the waiver is approved by the associate superintendent, they would be charged the transportation fee if bus service is provided.

### **Forced Waiver**

Families who are placed at another school (within our district) because of enrollment/class size issues will be excluded from transportation fees unless they use multiple address locations.

### **Multiple Stops**

Families who use/reside at multiple addresses, including the use of daycare services that are not on a daily basis. While having their child transported to and/or from the school will be charged a transportation fee of \$200.00 for the school year or \$100.00 per semester.

### **Parent Service Area**

This is an area around schools that have sidewalk service. This 10 block area has no bus stops. Parents may choose to have their student walk outside the parent service area and ride a bus. Bus fees would apply.

### **Open Enrollment**

Families who have children that attend SEP Community School District as “Open Enrollment” students will be charged a transportation fee of \$200.00 for the school year if the district provides transportation to the school. Please note that the SEP Community School District determines what school the open enrollment student will attend within our district.

### **Free and Reduced**

The school district will follow the Free and Reduced guidelines to establish the reduced rate of payment for transportation. Families who qualify for free lunches under the Free and Reduced School Lunch Program will be excluded from transportation fees, if they fill out the free and reduced paperwork through the nutrition program. Families who qualify for reduced lunches under the Free and Reduced School Lunch Program will pay for transportation at a reduced rate.

### **Family Emergency**

If a family emergency occurs, the fee may be waived. However, approval of such a waiver is very limited. Should a family believe that they have an extenuating circumstance warranting consideration, they must first contact the Director of Transportation and will then be provided with more information regarding the steps and proof required for appeal of fees. Upon the receipt of all requested documents, the Director of Transportation will discuss them with District Administration, and situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## **OTHER**

### **Complaint Process**

Parents should contact Transportation to report concerns/problems with bussing. If the parent's concern is with another student, an investigation form will be filed with the school principal, and any actions will be determined by the principal and passed on to the Transportation Director and or the driver. If the report concerns a driver, please contact the Director of Transportation and provide all pertinent information. The Director will investigate the concerns and determine the appropriate action, if any, to be taken.

### **Lost and Found**

All items should have a student's name attached to it. Items that do not will be kept on the bus for 5 days. A student or parent can claim them for that time period on the bus. After the 5 days the item will be disposed of properly. Items with a student's complete name on them will be returned to the building the student attends. Chromebooks will be returned to the technology department. Non-emergency items such as cell phones and air pods will be retained on the bus for 5 day for the student to claim, after which it will be sent to the students' school of attendance, if the item has a student's name. (Please put your students name on all personal property) Emergency items such as medical bags will be returned to the building asap, if a student's name is on the item.

## BOARD POLICIES

### **Policy 712-02 STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION**

Students utilizing school transportation will conduct themselves in an orderly manner fitting to their age level and maturity with mutual respect and consideration for the rights of the school vehicle driver and the other passengers. Students who fail to behave in an orderly manner will be subject to disciplinary measures.

The driver will have the authority to maintain order on the school vehicle. It is the responsibility of the driver to report misconduct to the transportation director.

The board supports the use of recording devices on school buses used for transportation to and from school as well as for field trips, curricular or extracurricular events. The recording devices will be used to monitor student behavior and may be used as evidence in a student disciplinary proceeding. The recordings are student records subject to school district confidentiality, board policy and administrative regulations.

It is the responsibility of the superintendent, in conjunction with the transportation director, to develop administrative regulations regarding student conduct and discipline when utilizing school transportation.

Legal Reference:

[Iowa Code §§ 279.8; 285; 321.](#)

Cross Reference:

503 Student Discipline

506 Student Records

### **Regulation 712-02R1 STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION REGULATION**

All persons in school district vehicles will adhere to the following rules and regulations while waiting for a school vehicle, traveling to and from school, or on school related activities. The driver, sponsor or chaperones are to enforce the rules and report violations to the transportation director or building administrator.

The district will utilize three-point lap-shoulder belts on district school buses as required by state law. All three-point lap-shoulder belts available on district buses will be used by passengers when the vehicle is in any non-stationary gear.

The following describes a broad range of behavior considered to be student misconduct. The behavior described should be viewed as representative of the misconduct that most frequently disrupts the orderly educational process. The District breaks down infractions into three categories or tiers based on severity: Tier 1 (Bus Note Home), Tier 2, and Tier 3.

Tier 1 (Bus Note Home) – The punishment for a Tier 1 offense ranges from a verbal warning to the filing of a report into the district's student information reporting system (Infinite Campus). The report may also be shared with a building principal, or designee and appropriate disciplinary action taken by the Principal or designee if warranted. At this step, the driver will provide verbal redirection first. If the behavior does not improve, the driver will provide a written note. The written notes will be entered into the student's account in Infinite Campus, and an automated message will be sent to the parents or guardians. In some cases, drivers will work with the building staff to help design special programs to help coach the student.

Tier 1 (Bus Note Home) Acts of misconduct may include but are not limited to:

1. Not being present at the designated loading point before the bus or school vehicle arrival time.
2. Refusal to stand away from the curb until the bus or school vehicle comes to a complete stop before attempting to enter.
3. Extends arms or heads out of the vehicle windows.
4. Remains in the aisle while the bus is in motion.
5. Uses the emergency exit door for non-emergency situation.
6. Leaving bus seat while the vehicle is in motion.
8. Has food, gum, or drinks (choking hazards) on school vehicles.
9. Exhibits student misbehavior such as horseplay, yelling, distracting use of electronics, spraying of perfumes/deodorants, inappropriate language, or conversations that cause others to feel uncomfortable or unsafe is not allowed.
10. If the bus is equipped with seat belts, all students are required to wear the seat belt properly.

Tier 2 –Under the Tier 2 offenses, the school vehicle driver files a conduct report with the building principal or designee, who then applies the student behavioral expectations and takes appropriate action following the building’s discipline procedures. Tier 2 violations also carry the possibility of suspension of bus/school vehicle

privileges and mandatory attendance at a Saturday Safety class. Students may be required to attend a meeting with transportation and building staff to discuss plans or participate in training related to bus rules and safety.

Tier 2 Acts of misconduct may include but are not limited to:

1. Repeated violations of Tier 1 rules as determined by the transportation department in communication with the building principal or designee, in the violation report.
2. Deliberate damage or defacing of the school vehicle/property. The student may be required to reimburse the district for repair or replacement of property.
3. Deliberate damage to the property of another student.
4. Subjecting another student to physical confinement or restraint while disobeying the driver’s redirection.
5. Defiance of the authority of school personnel that could be deemed as a major safety concern for the student(s) and/or driver.
6. Harassment
7. If the bus is equipped with seat belts, failure to wear the seat belt after verbal redirection provided by the bus driver.
8. Tampering with another student’s seatbelt or property.
9. Issues causing a health hazard to others.
10. Littering on public roads or Highways.

Tier 3 Under Tier 3 offenses, the school vehicle driver files a conduct report with the transportation director and the building principal or designee who then applies the student behavior expectations and takes appropriate action following the building's discipline procedures. In addition, the student will face a loss of bus or school vehicle privileges for a period of time agreed upon by the transportation director and building administration. The student will attend a mandatory Saturday safety class before the student is allowed to ride the bus again. Saturday safety class is provided monthly.

In the event of a Tier 3 act of misconduct, the transportation director will schedule a meeting with the student and appropriate staff as quickly as possible to discuss possible changes to current transportation plans. Parent transportation will be required until the meeting is held.

Tier 3 Acts of misconduct may include but are not limited to:

1. Violation of Board Policy [503-01 Student Behavioral Expectations](#)
2. Violation of Board Policy [502-08 Weapons](#)
3. Violation of Board Policy [502-09 Smoking-Drinking-Drugs](#)
4. Repeat offender of Tier 1 and/or Tier 2 violations as determined by the transportation department. This will be communicated with the building principal or designee, in the violation report.
5. Attempt to blind the driver operating the vehicle.
6. Possession of and/or threatening behavior involving flammable materials.
7. If the bus is equipped with seat belts, failure to wear the seat belt after verbal and written notices provided by the bus driver.
8. Vandalism, intentional damage to, or destruction of school property. The student may be required to reimburse the district for repair or replacement of damaged equipment.

## **Regulation 804-07R1 USE OF RECORDING DEVICES ON SCHOOL PROPERTY REGULATION**

The board supports the use of recording devices on district property as a means to monitor and maintain a safe environment for students and employees. District property includes district-owned land, buildings, vehicles, buses and any other property as needed. The contents of the recordings may be used as evidence in a student or employee disciplinary proceeding.

### Student Records

The content of the recordings may be a student record subject to federal and state law, board policy and administrative regulations regarding confidential student records. Generally, surveillance video that does not capture any specific incident is not a student record or personnel record and may be disclosed as a public record upon request. Only those persons with a legal basis or legitimate educational purpose may view the recordings. In most instances, individuals with a legitimate educational purpose may be the superintendent, building principal, classroom teacher, transportation director, bus driver, HR director and special education staffing team. A parent may inspect, review or be informed of the content of the recording without consent from any student or parent of a minor student also shown in the recording, whether the student is a bystander to an incident or directly involved. The district may, but is not obligated by law to provide a copy of a recording to a parent or student upon request.

A recording during a school-sponsored trip, such as an athletic event, may also be accessible to the sponsor or coach of the activity. If the content of the recording becomes the subject of a student disciplinary proceeding, it will be treated like other evidence in the proceeding.

### Notice

The school district will annually provide the following notice to students, employees, and parents:

The Southeast Polk Community School District Board of Education has authorized the use of recording devices on school district owned property. The recording devices will be used to enhance safety and security within the educational environment. Students, employees, and parents are hereby notified that the content of the recording may be used in a student or employee disciplinary proceeding. The content of the recordings may be considered confidential student records and will be retained with other student records. Recordings will only be retained if necessary for use in a student or employee disciplinary proceeding or other matter as determined necessary by the administration. Parents may request to view the recording of their child.

The following notice will also be placed on all school buses equipped with recording devices:

This building/bus is equipped with a recording/audio monitoring system.

### Review of Recording Devices

The school district will review the recordings:

When necessary, as a result of an incident reported by an employee or student. The recordings may be re-circulated for erasure after 180 days.

If not public records, the viewing of the recordings is limited to the individuals having a legitimate educational purpose. A written log, as appropriate, may be kept of those individuals viewing the recordings stating the time, name of individual reviewing and the date the recordings was viewed.

### Student Conduct

Students are prohibited from tampering with the recording devices on the school property. Students found in violation of this regulation will be disciplined in accordance with the school district discipline policy and Good Conduct Rule and will reimburse the school district for any repairs or replacement necessary as a result of the tampering.

### Employee Conduct

District-generated recordings may be used as evidence in employee disciplinary matters, as appropriate. Employees are prohibited from tampering with recording devices on school property. Employees found to be in violation of this regulation will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the employee handbook and relevant board policies.

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