

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

June 2016



PARENT HANDBOOK

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OBJECTIVE

The main objective for the Chinook's Edge School Division Transportation Services is to ensure that students are transported to and from school safely. The safety of students is contingent, in large part, upon student behavior. It is necessary to establish general rules to set a standard to judge acceptability of behavior on the bus and to enforce those rules in the interests of the safety of students. The school bus is considered an extension of the classroom and, therefore, classroom conduct is to be observed at all times. The bus driver is responsible for the students on his/her bus and must, therefore, receive the respect, consideration and co-operation of each student. Your bus driver is required to implement the rules established by the Chinook's Edge School Board, the School Act and the transportation laws set by federal and provincial governments. Students riding on a school bus are under the immediate supervision and authority of the driver from the time they are loading until they are discharged at the school and, similarly, on the afternoon return trip. The following paragraphs highlight some of the issues that pertain to the safe transportation of students. Your co-operation in reviewing these issues with your student(s) will be appreciated.

This Student Transportation Parent Handbook was developed to assist in understanding Chinook's Edge School Division's (CESD) busing system.

The School Act (Act) provides that a school board shall, in accordance with the regulation, transport a student who:

- Resides within the attendance area of the school in which the student is enrolled;
- Resides within the division boundary; and
- Resides at a distance greater than 2.4 km from that school.

The Act also allows the Board to levy a fee for transportation services.

TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURE

The procedures followed by Transportation Services are laid out in AP 5-11 which can be found on the Chinook's Edge School Division website at:

www.chinooksedge.ab.ca

ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION

Rural students living within the **rural** areas of Chinook's Edge School Division have access to the transportation system as required under the School Act. However, transportation must be requested at the school within 10 days of first registering a student. Once a rural student is in the system, transportation will continue from year to year. There is no need to reapply.

Urban students within Chinook's Edge School Division wishing to access transportation will need to reapply on an annual basis whether they are eligible riders or not. Transportation will be provided for **urban** students on the following basis:

ELIGIBLE URBAN STUDENTS

- There are 2 groups of eligible students. The first group of eligible students are those who live further than 2.4 kilometers from their designated school. They will be served at no cost to the student. The second group of eligible students are Kindergarten to Grade 5 students who live between 1.6 and 2.4 kilometers from their designated school. This second group will be served at a fee which is 0.5 x the Basic Student Transportation Fee (BSTF). This fee is set annually by the Board of Education. Transportation Services must receive an Urban Transportation Registration Form for busing from eligible urban students within 10 days of the start of the school year in order to guarantee those eligible students a seat. Seats that have not been claimed will be made available to non-eligible students by September 30th and the eligible students who apply for transportation after the 10 days will be served on a first come – first served basis equal to non-eligible students. Our buses have limited seating and we may not be able to fill all requests.

NON-ELIGIBLE URBAN STUDENTS

- Non-eligible students (Grade 6-12 students who live closer than 2.4 kilometers from their designated school and Kindergarten to Grade 5 students who live closer than 1.6 kilometers from their designated school) will be served next, on a first come - first served basis. There will be an annual fee set by the Board of Education to help cover the cost of busing. There is no government funding for students who live closer than 2.4 km from their designated school. Registration for busing of non-eligible students will take place by September 30th of a particular school year once all eligible students have been placed on a bus. This will be dependent on the space left on a bus.

TRANSPORTATION FEE FRAMEWORK

- Students with a primary residence less than 1.6 km from the designated school – 1.0 x *BSTF*
- Students with a primary residence greater than 1.6 km and less than 2.4 km from the designated school
 - K- 5 – 0.5 x *BSTF*
 - 6-12 – 1.0 x *BSTF*
- Students with a primary residence 2.4 km or greater than from the designated school shall be charged no fee
- Students with a primary residence outside the Division who request transportation after September 30 of the school year – 1.0 x *BSTF*
- All rural riders who do not have a walkway to the municipality boundary would be charged no fee
- Maximum fees - families shall be charged for a maximum of two children per family per primary residence.
- Transportation to schools and programs of choice, where transportation is offered, fees as approved by the Board, will be charged
- Students who are granted transportation from a location other than their primary residence and who require a second seat to transport them to that alternate location shall be charged – 1.0 x *BSTF*.

TRANSPORTATION FEE WAIVER PROCESS

Where there is financial hardship, a family may have the transportation fees waived. In this situation, the transportation fees will be tied to the school fees and if school fees are waived, so are the transportation fees. Your school's Principal and/or office staff can help with the process of waiving the school fees which will in turn, waive the transportation fees. You will need to complete a Fee Waiver Form which they can provide for you.

BASIC TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

Pick-up times

For rural busing, at the start of the school year, the driver will contact each family and inform them of their morning pick-up times. The bus routes will be reviewed for efficiencies throughout the month of September. The pick-up times will be finalized by the drivers as soon as possible. However, adjustments can occur throughout the year if there are changes in the route or riders. The driver will notify the parents of any changes to the pick-up times.

Late for the assigned pick-up

Students are expected to be at the stop, ready to board the bus 5 minutes before their assigned pick-up time. If your students are late, you must have a contingency plan to get them to school. The driver will leave your stop at the assigned time. If everyone on the bus were late by even one minute the bus would arrive at school approximately 30 minutes late. **Please be on time.** Have a contingency plan in place in case the bus does not arrive. For example, sometimes a bus may have a mechanical difficulty mid-route and cannot complete their pickups. Students should have a plan on what to do if the bus does not arrive.

Drop-off times

Generally speaking, drop-off times need to be flexible. The routes can be shortened due to student absences in the afternoon. This may result in your student arriving home early. Make arrangements or establish a contingency plan for this situation.

SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

School attendance boundaries are established by the Board as required under the School Act. Students are transported to their designated school within the attendance boundaries.

School of Choice

Under the School Act, parents have the ability to choose a school other than the designated school of attendance for their students. If a family decides to attend a school other than their CESD designated school, the Board is not required to provide transportation for the student to the school of choice. Students can still access Chinook's Edge School Division buses; however, the following will apply:

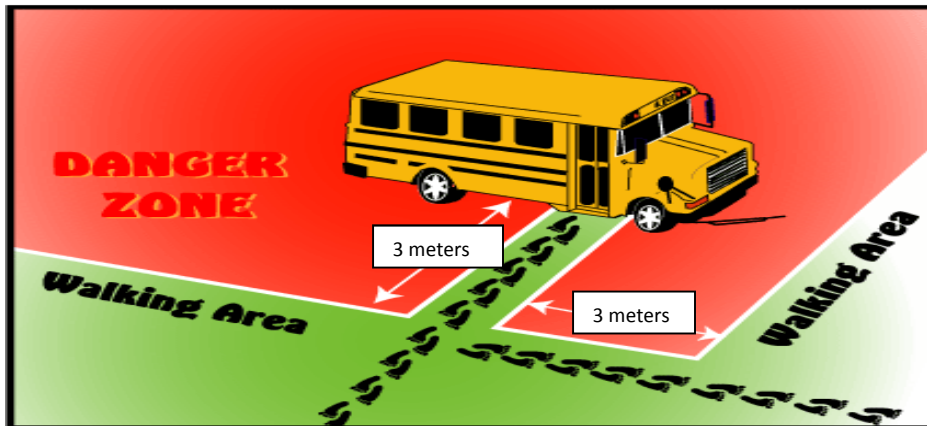
1. The student must be accepted at their school of choice.
2. Parents must complete an Out-of-Area Request Form.
3. Parents must pay all applicable transportation fees.
4. Parents must agree to transport their child/children to and from an existing meeting location determined by Transportation Services within the attendance area for the chosen school. This location may change should the routes change.
5. There must be room on the bus.

SCHOOL BUS LOADING AND UNLOADING

The most dangerous part of the school bus ride is getting on and off the school bus. The loading and unloading area is called the "Danger Zone".

The "Danger Zone" is the area on all sides of the bus where children are in the most danger of not being seen by the driver (three meters in front, three meters on either side of the bus, and three

meters behind are all areas where a child may be in the driver's blind spot). **It only takes a second to lose sight of a student if a driver becomes distracted by students on board the bus.**



When training our bus drivers we stress the importance of safe loading and unloading procedures. This is where our drivers need to be fully focused and cannot be distracted by students or parents.

It is important to have parents understand that drivers need their cooperation to be fully focused at this time, by not parking and staying away from the loading and unloading zones. **Please park well away from loading zones at all times.**

It is also important to instruct students in the proper procedure for loading and unloading.

1. Be cautious when carrying loose papers or books which might drop near the bus – we encourage students to use a book bag.
2. Be aware of the dangers of clothing, book bag, backpack, and jacket strings/straps that could become entangled in the doorway of the school bus.
3. Wait in an orderly fashion safely back from roadway or pick-up zone. Students need to be at their stop five minutes early. The time you have been given for pick-up is the time the bus departs from your stop.
4. Board the bus in single file; use the handrail so you don't trip on the steps.
5. Sit down right away, so you don't fall when the bus starts moving.
6. Sit back in your seat, face forward and keep your feet to the front.
7. Keep the aisle clear of feet, backpacks, books, etc.
8. Talk quietly in order that you do not distract the driver. Remember, it's the driver's responsibility to keep you safe!
9. Keep your head, arms, and hands inside the bus, not out the window.
10. Never throw things in the bus or out the window.
11. Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop and the doors to open before you leave your seat.
12. After leaving the bus, take five giant steps away from the bus so you are out of the Danger Zone and in a safe spot.

13. If you need to cross in front of the bus make sure you look at the driver for a signal that it is okay for you to cross the roadway.

THE FAMILY PET

It is the responsibility of the family to ensure that the family pet is kept away and clear of where the bus pulls up to load students.

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR ON BUS

The bus driver is in full charge of the bus at all times. Students are accountable for their behavior on the bus. Passengers must obey the driver promptly and in a courteous manner. When a student's behavior is unacceptable or rules have been disobeyed, the driver will file a misconduct report with the school administrator. The administrator will investigate the incident and take appropriate actions.

- Noise is to be kept to an acceptable level. Shouting, fighting, harassment and/or disorderly conduct by students will not be tolerated.
- **Students shall not stand, change seats, or move about the bus while the bus is in motion.**
- Students shall not extend any object or arms or head out of the bus windows.
- Garbage must be placed in a receptacle designated by the driver or packed off the bus with the student. No garbage shall be thrown on the floor or out of the windows of the bus. **Do not dispose of your garbage while the bus is in motion.**
- Drivers have the ability to determine whether or not eating or drinking will be permitted on board their bus. Students are to adhere to the driver's directions in this regard.
- Profane language will not be tolerated. Students shall not engage in behavior that may be deemed vulgar, abusive and/or that which constitutes harassment.
- The use or possession of intoxicants/other controlled substances is prohibited.
- Smoking and the use of other tobacco products are not permitted on the bus.
- Students must not distract the driver.

SEAT ASSIGNMENT

The driver shall develop a seating plan and each student shall sit in the assigned seat. Students have the responsibility of readily accepting the seat specifically assigned by the driver. Students will sit in their assigned seat at all times unless authorized by the driver.

USE OF PERSONAL RADIO/CD PLAYER, IPAD/IPOD, ETC.

Students are not permitted to play an electronic device that plays sound without earphones while on the bus. Any apparatus that is operated with the use of earphones shall be operated at a level that ensures that the sound does not affect other passengers nor interfere with the driver's ability to communicate with the students on the bus.

PERSONAL ITEMS BROUGHT ONTO THE BUS BY STUDENTS

The size and number of personal items brought onto buses is regulated through federal and provincial laws along with CESD Board procedures. In order to ensure safety of students, the following will apply.

- Skates are permitted on school buses only if the blades are protected by blade guards or they are carried in a tote bag and placed under the student's seat.
- Skis, snowboards, and skate boards are not allowed on buses.
- Any item that cannot fit under the seats is not allowed on buses.
- Curling brooms and hockey sticks are permitted on buses only if they can be wedged and secured under the seat in a fashion that they cannot be dislodged when the brakes of the bus are applied.
- Band instruments may be carried on the bus only if they will fit under the bus seats.
- Large duffle bags and backpacks can be carried on the bus only if they can easily fit under the bus seats. The ease of storage for these items must be a consideration as bus routes cannot be delayed by the effort to safely stow these large articles.
- Because the safety of students is our main concern, parents must be aware that knives of any type are not permitted on school buses. This includes jackknives that are quite commonplace in our society. If a student requires a knife to eat lunch, the student should check with the staff of the school for the item required.
- Flashlights and lasers are not permitted on school buses.
- Certain items are prohibited on school buses by law. See the following excerpt:

"No person shall, while transporting pupils on a school bus, convey in or on the school bus

- Animals,
- Firearms,
- Explosives,
- Flammable materials or substances,
- Fuel other than in the fuel system and fuel tank of the bus, or

- Anything of a dangerous or objectionable nature, or
- Anything that may endanger the lives or safety of persons in the bus.”

Drivers have been directed to enforce the above rules regarding the student's carry-on items. Students attempting to board the bus with an article that does not conform to the above will be required to leave the item behind or may be turned away from boarding the bus with the item.

PROPER WINTER ATTIRE

All students riding on a school bus during the winter months shall be required to be prepared for unexpected severe weather conditions. The student shall carry with them appropriate winter footwear, outerwear, headwear and gloves/mitts. Bus drivers are to use their discretion in determining the suitability of the student's clothing for the weather conditions. If a student presents him/herself at a morning pick-up and is not properly dressed, the bus driver shall pick up the student and, upon arrival at the school, the driver will complete a misconduct report identifying the problem and submit it to the school principal for follow-up action. If the co-operation of the student is not received, school bus transportation may be suspended.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In cases of extreme weather and unsafe road conditions there may be a need to cancel bus service. The Director of Transportation or designate will assess the situation to determine whether all bus routes, specific routes and/or portions of specific routes should operate for that day. If cancellations were to happen you would be contacted by either your bus driver, Transportation Services, or the Division's automated phone out system. You can also access this information by checking the website at www.chinooksedge.ab.ca/Routes.php. If it is the decision to cancel all routes for an entire area we would also then alert the media.

If the school needs to send students home early due to extreme weather/unsafe road conditions during the school day, you will receive a phone call from the school advising you that your student will be delivered home early. Students shall not leave the school before a safe place for the student is established and that this information is communicated to the parents/emergency contact. Parents can view route cancellations by checking the website.

EMERGENCY AUTOMATED PHONE FAN OUT

An emergency automated phone fan out is necessary to respond to unexpected interruptions in bus service. This would include phone calls, texts, and emails. If the event involves a mechanical breakdown, cancellation of a portion or all of a bus route due to weather, or an emergency situation while on route, transportation personnel will initiate an automated phone fan out. Please ensure that your contact information is always up-to-date with the schools.

VIDEO CAMERAS ON BUSES

The Board believes that the use of video cameras on school buses will help protect the safety of passengers, prevent vandalism, and be a useful resource for school administrators when dealing with student discipline matters. Video monitoring of buses may either be conducted on a random basis or on selected routes at the discretion of the Director of Transportation. Use of a video camera will be in accordance with Administrative Policy 5 – 04 / Video Camera and School Bus Operations.

STUDENT CHECKLIST

Students - always listen to school bus drivers – they're in charge. If you forget any of the school bus safety rules they can tell you what it takes to be a safe bus rider.

1. Stand in a group while waiting for the bus. Don't run around.
2. Stay out of the danger zone until the bus driver lets you know it's safe to get on. If you can touch the bus, you're too close.
3. Once the bus arrives, line up with the smaller children at the front. Get on the bus one at a time.
4. Use the handrail when getting on or off the bus.
5. Take your seat right away and stay seated until you leave the bus.
6. Face forward and don't throw things inside the bus or out the bus window.
7. Keep the aisle clear.
8. Talk quietly and keep your head and arms inside the bus.
9. Wait until the bus stops before standing. Move away after leaving the bus.
10. Always cross roads safely. Look four ways before crossing – left, right, ahead and behind, and remember to "Point, Pause and Proceed".

Parents, make sure your children are properly dressed for the weather and have a plan in case they miss the bus. Our drivers are instructed not to answer phone or text messages once they are on their route. If you communicate with your driver in this manner the contact must be made before the driver leaves for their run.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Can I bring a friend home on the bus?

This is a convenient practice that we provide for rural busing only. Cooperation from parents is necessary. Currently, any student registered with CESD can be transported on a one-time special occasion provided that there is:

- Room on the bus
- A note is provided to the bus driver by the sending parents approving the ride.

2. What should I do if my child complains about another student or a situation on the bus?

As a parent, the first action should be to contact the driver and discuss what you know about the incident. There is a good chance that the driver knows about it and is dealing with the issue. However, the driver may not know about the issue and so should be made aware of it. The successful resolution of any busing problem will come from effective communication.

The driver will involve the school at the appropriate time. Many issues have a way of working themselves out as the drivers are very resourceful in this regard. The school will expect the driver to have tried solutions already and to have contacted the parents before the issue is brought forward. The following are steps we train our drivers to follow when dealing with student discipline:

Step 1 - Verbal Warning. If the driver has a concern with a student's behavior the driver will give the student a verbal warning.

Step 2 - Parent Contact. If this verbal warning does not correct the situation, the driver will contact the parents to advise them of the concern, ask for their support, and attempt to work out a solution.

Step 3 - Written Misconduct Form. If the parent contact has not resolved the problem, the driver will send the Student Misconduct form to the principal.

Step 4 - Administrative Referral. If the student's actions continue to be a concern, the driver will complete another Student Misconduct form and meet with the Principal. Disciplinary action may be taken by the Principal and the parents will be notified.

Depending on the severity of the incident, any or all of Steps 1-3 may be omitted. In those instances where the driver has determined that the incident is severe, e.g., the student's actions have compromised the safety of others, they may proceed directly to Step 4.

All issues are considered important and will be dealt with seriously and in a professional manner.

3. What should I do if my child will not be riding the bus?

Inform your driver. Have your student tell the driver beforehand or phone the driver yourself. This is a courtesy that the drivers really appreciate. If your driver shows up at your pick-up location and you do not come out, they will only stay until your departure time and then leave. Please inform the driver prior to their run as they not respond via the telephone while they are driving.

4. What special training do our drivers have?

CESD drivers are some of the best trained drivers in Canada. All drivers must provide a valid current driver's abstract as well as a clean Child Welfare Intervention Check and Criminal Record Check before they can be considered to drive for Chinooks Edge School Division. All drivers must possess a valid Class 2 driver's license and are required to take the 'S' Endorsement (school bus operations safety) course within twelve months of their start date.

Drivers attend a full-day professional development seminar each year, as well as, safety workshops throughout the year. All full time drivers are required to maintain current First Aid and CPR certificates.

5. How do I become a school bus driver with Chinook's Edge School Division #73?

Obtain an application on-line at www.chinooksedge.ab.ca/Transportation.php, complete and turn it into Transportation Services at: 4404 – 42 Avenue, Innisfail, AB T4G 1P6 Fax: 403-227-7217.

Once all the paper work has been returned to our office and your application has been approved we would send you to complete your class 2 training along with any other required training. We have in-house trainers who help you get ready for the drivers' exams.

6. What happens when there is no bus driver available to drive the bus?

We have been recruiting and training drivers to take over for regular route drivers when they require time off. Depending on the area, the number of spare drivers in some areas is limited.

If there is not a qualified driver available to drive, sometimes a run may have to be cancelled. If this were to happen you will receive a call from either your bus driver or through our automatic phone out system, to inform you that buses will not be running due to bus driver shortage. Parents are advised to have a contingency plan in place so that their students do not miss school.

7. What happens if weather conditions, especially fog, create a unique situation in our division?

When conditions are such that the safety of students becomes jeopardized, the school bus driver may make the decision that it is safest not to do a pick-up or drop-off. He/She would call the parents so they know to make alternate arrangements.

CONTACT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

**Upstairs at
4404 – 42 Avenue
Innisfail, AB
T4G 1P6**

**Phone: 403-227-7072
1-800-266-9573
Fax: 403-227-7217**

Regular office hours during the school year: 7:00 am – 5:00 pm. (closed between 12:00pm – 1:00pm)

