



**PRAIRIE SPIRIT
SCHOOL DIVISION**

PURSUING STUDENT SUCCESS

Rural Busing Guidelines for Families



Safe Transportation: A Shared Responsibility

Every school day, Prairie Spirit bus drivers transport approximately 4,500 students from home to school and back home safely again. Our 145 route buses travel 22,000 kilometres every day. Considerable cooperation and coordination are required to accomplish this task efficiently and safely. This document provides key information for riders and parents along with contact information in the event of questions or concerns.

Expectations

Riding on a school bus is a privilege, not a right. We expect excellent behavior and cooperation from students on our buses, just as we do in classrooms.

- A student who fails to abide by the rules, or who misbehaves on a bus, may be denied bus transportation. As well, inappropriate language will not be tolerated.
- After consulting with the bus driver, the principal may suspend a student from riding the bus for up to three days per incident.
- In the event that the principal recommends a suspension exceeding three days, the Director of Education, or designate, will decide on appropriate action to be taken in accordance with *Administrative Policy No. 409 – Student Discipline*.

Parents are encouraged to foster a positive relationship with their bus driver in order to promote better communication between themselves and the bus driver. Please ensure the bus driver has all necessary contact information and is aware of any health concerns your child may have.

Bus drivers require a phone call if a student will not be on the bus. This notice is very important in order to maintain the bus schedule and to prevent unnecessary travel.

Students should be ready to board the bus five minutes before the designated departure time. Students should stand back from the bus when it is approaching the bus stop and face forward when the bus is in motion. If a student has to cross the road when leaving the bus, they must cross in front of the bus.

Students are not allowed to take any article on the bus that may be classified as a projectile, e.g., skates/ski boots without protective bags, hockey sticks, toboggans, skateboards, skis and ski poles, etc.

Bus drivers will not allow students on the bus who are not on the bus list, unless prior permission has been obtained. Bus drivers will maintain an established seating arrangement throughout the school year.

Bus travel is restricted to provincial highways, municipal roads and approved yard service. Yard service may be approved if the residence is at least 200 meters from the road allowance (fence line), the access road is of all weather construction and there is a clear area to enable the bus to turn around without backing up.

Drivers have the right to refuse transportation to any student who is not appropriately dressed for the weather conditions.

Bus route time schedules are based on normal driving conditions. The schedule is to be communicated to parents with the directive that, under normal conditions, buses will wait no longer than two minutes at any one pick-up point, nor will they leave any pick-up point ahead of time, unless all students are accounted for. Buses depart from the school five minutes after dismissal time.

Transportation protocols and guidelines

Transportation requests for new students or changes to a route must be made directly to the Conveyance Manager, not to the bus driver.

If a request comes in with an out-of-attendance area land location, the land location will be confirmed and parents will be notified that they do not live in the attendance area of their school of choice. Parents are required to send a letter of request for their out-of-attendance area busing. This request will be forwarded to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent must give permission before a student will be assigned to a bus from an out-of-attendance area.

Prairie Spirit bus transportation is provided to addresses that are primary residences of the families who request bus service. For Prairie Spirit busing purposes, primary residence is defined as “the residence where the family spends the majority of the nights per year.” Information provided by the family regarding a primary residence will be accepted, unless contrary information is provided.

At times, there are requests to transport students – other than normal bus riding students – on an occasional basis. This is allowed based on the following criteria:

- there is room on the bus;
- there is an approved bus stop; and
- no extra kilometres are added to the route.

In compliance with Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Regulations, a Prairie Spirit bus is considered full when all the seats have a maximum of two students per seat. This requirement will ensure students are able to be seated squarely on the seats as per direction from the Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Regulations. Bus drivers have been asked to pay particular attention to this safety regulation as we may be monitored at any time by Saskatchewan Government Insurance.

Severe weather conditions

Buses are not to run if the combined temperature/wind chill factors result in a reading of -40 degrees C or below at 6 a.m. Buses for students with special needs are not to operate if the combined factors result in a reading of -35 degrees C or below.

Environment Canada "Saskatoon" temperatures are to be used as a guide for all schools (except Duck Lake and Leask schools who are to use "Prince Albert" temperatures) in determining if buses should run.

In stormy conditions, bus drivers within the same district are to contact one another and compare local weather and road conditions and use their discretion whether or not to run.

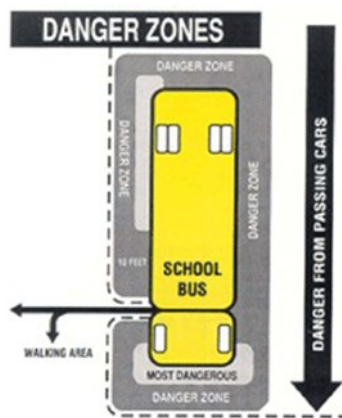
Bus drivers are to decide whether or not to run by no later than thirty minutes before the first scheduled morning pick-up, and no later than one hour prior to the scheduled afternoon dismissal.

Buses that do not run at the regular time in the morning are not to run at all on that same day.

There is to be no early dismissal due to deteriorating weather conditions. If it is determined that the buses will not run at the regular dismissal time, previously arranged in-town billeting is to be used for bus students and families are to be notified of those arrangements.

Schools will only be closed to students for reasons such as health and safety. As long as a school remains open for students, parents are welcome to transport their children to the school at any time during the school day.

Student safety



Children are typically hurt outside the school bus more often than inside. Children need to be aware that every yellow school bus is surrounded by a danger zone.

Students should:

- take five giant steps as soon as they leave the bus
- establish eye contact with the driver when crossing in front of the bus and proceed only when the driver nods approval

Students should not:

- go back to pick up items they've dropped near the bus or left on the bus

Some Common Questions

Q: Can my child be dropped off somewhere other than the normal place?

A: Yes - providing there is no expense added and the regular bus schedule is maintained, but clear advance notice to the driver is required.

Q: My child is having a party after school. Can friends travel to our home on the same bus?

A: Yes - up to a maximum of four Prairie Spirit students are allowed, as long as the driver is consulted in advance, there is room on the bus, and the bus schedule can be maintained.

Q: Why is my child not allowed to eat on the bus?

A: Our concerns include the danger of choking, triggering an anaphylactic reaction among riders and spilling food or drinks. Students are permitted to drink only water on the school bus (not pop). School buses, while safe, still travel over bumpy, gravel roads. We need cooperation from parents in this matter.

Q: Is the driver trained as a school bus operator?

A: Yes - our drivers are trained and must pass all SGI tests and medicals before they are allowed to drive a bus with children aboard. All our buses are inspected by SGI-certified Prairie Spirit Bus Shop Technicians.

Bus fleet

Prairie Spirit has its own bus shop facility on the east side of Saskatoon. This facility is an ultra modern five bay shop with all the appropriate equipment needed to properly maintain and service a fleet of 180 buses.

We have five highly qualified technicians who are experts in school bus maintenance. We are able to provide excellent bus service with safe equipment at a reduced cost to our ratepayers. Operating our own fleet of buses and using our own drivers has helped us to lower costs for charters and field trips, a very important consideration for managing tight, school-based budgets.

For more information

For more information about rural busing in Prairie Spirit School Division, please go to the following [link](#).

To refer to the administrative policies regarding transportation in Prairie Spirit School Division, please go to this [link](#).

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