

**STATEMENT**

The Avon Board of Education will provide a safe, adequate, efficient and economical transportation service for all students of the Avon Public Schools, consistent with applicable state statutes.

Transportation is safe when:

- the bus company provides properly maintained and inspected buses,
- the bus company carefully selects and adequately trains bus drivers,
- the schools and bus drivers carefully regulate and supervise student conduct,
- the number of passengers conforms to the manufacturer's maximum seating capacity for a school bus, and
- every passenger is able to sit within the confines of a bus seat.

Transportation is adequate when:

- students do not have to spend an excessive amount of time on a bus traveling to or from school.

Climatic, traffic or other conditions may affect the actual time a student spends on a bus.

Transportation is efficient when:

- bus schedules are precise and regular.

Transportation is economical when:

- the Board of Education keeps operating expenses at the minimum necessary to provide a safe, adequate and efficient transportation service.

**GUIDELINES**

- I. **Goal:** The Avon Board of Education seeks to achieve a maximum travel time on a bus, to or from school, for any student of no more than 35 minutes.
- II. Definitions of terms used in this policy:
  - A. "School transportation" means the procedure, program, or plan by which students are transported to and from school from their residence or bus stop at public expense, whether by use of publicly owned equipment or by contract. Such transportation shall be over public roads approved by the Town or private roads as described in C.C.S.
  - B. "Walking distance" means the linear measure of a prescribed or authorized pedestrian route between the student's residence and school from:
    1. a point at the curb or edge of a public or private road nearest the student's residence to a point at the entrance of the school, or a
    2. safe entrance to the school grounds located within 100 feet of the school building entrance or the bus pick-up area, or
    3. the route from the point on the public thoroughfare nearest the residence to the school bus stop or vehicle embarkation point established by the Board of Education or school administration.

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- C. "One-mile walking distance" means a reasonable measurement of a route to be traversed extending from the point of measurement at least 5,280 feet, but not more than 5,380 feet.
- D. "Grade K" means kindergarten, or a school program appropriate to a beginning student.
- E. "Hazard" means a possible source of peril, danger, duress, or difficulty affecting the safety of students walking to and from school or their designated bus stop.
- F. "Sidewalk" means a portion of the landscaped right of way, usually parallel to the traffic lanes which may be paved or unpaved, distinguished by some elevation above the street pavement level, marked by curbing, drainage ditch, grass area, fencing or any white line safety markings along the street pavement that cross entrances to business establishments.
- G. "Student" means any individual of school age residing in Avon enrolled in a public school or enrolled in a vocational technical, agricultural, or special education program.

**III. General Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of the Avon Board of Education to provide students with safe transportation to and from school from their designated pick-up points and their schools. This responsibility is shared with parents and other agencies. Transportation will be provided from the bus stop nearest the child's legal residence only; transportation to or from an alternate location shall require the approval of the Superintendent of Schools.

The Motor Vehicle Department establishes rules and regulations on equipment and operation of buses and makes annual inspections.

Town government is responsible for town roads and local police are responsible for crossing protection, physical security and enforcement of traffic regulations.

**IV. Busing, Walking Requirements and Hazardous Conditions**

- A. The maximum walking distances from home to school or to a designated bus stop are the following:
  - 1. Students enrolled in grades K through 4, one mile.
  - 2. Students enrolled in grades 5 through 8, one and one-half miles.
  - 1. Students enrolled in grades 9 through 12, two miles.

Any walking route to either the bus stop or the school in excess of the above distances will be considered hazardous.

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- B. A street or road having an adjacent or parallel sidewalk shall be deemed hazardous when any one of the following conditions exists:
  - 1. For students enrolled in Grades K through 4: the absence of a pedestrian crossing light or crossing guard at an intersection where students must cross a street that has a traffic count in excess of 60 vehicles per hour during the time that students are walking to or from school or a bus stop.
  - 2. For students enrolled in grades 5 through 12: the absence of a traffic light, stop signs or crossing guard at an intersection that has a traffic count exceeding 90 vehicles per hour during the time when students are walking to or from school or a bus stop.
  - 3. or all students: any street, road or highway with posted speed limits in excess of 40 miles per hour that does not have pedestrian crossing lights, crossing guards or other safety provisions at points where students must cross when going to or from school or a bus stop.
  - 4. For all students: the usual or frequent presence of any nuisance such as open manholes, construction, snow plowed or piled on walkways, loading zones where delivery trucks park on walkways, commercial entrances and exits where cars are crossing walking areas at speeds in excess of five miles per hour, and any other nuisance that is hazardous or attractive to children
- C. Any street, road or highway without sidewalks shall be deemed hazardous if any one of the following conditions exists:
  - 1. For students enrolled in grades K through 4: any street, road or highway with a traffic count of 60 or more vehicles per hour at the time when students are walking to or from school or a bus stop.
  - 2. For students enrolled in grades 5 through 8: any street, road or highway with a traffic count of 90 or more vehicles per hour at the time when students are walking to or from school or a bus stop.
  - 3. For all students: any roadway available to vehicles that does not have a minimum width of 22 feet.
  - 4. For students enrolled in grades K through 4: any street, road, or highway with a speed limit in excess of 30 miles per hour.
- D. Any street, road or highway that has no sidewalks shall be deemed hazardous when the line-of-sight visibility and posted speed limits do not permit vehicular braking/stopping in accordance with the Connecticut Driver's Manual or Department of Transportation, Division of Design, or as determined by the Avon Police Department.

- E. A lake, pond, stream, waterway or bridge that does not have a fence or other suitable barrier within 15 feet of the sidewalk shall be deemed a hazard for students in grades K-4.
- F. Any area adjacent to a road, sidewalk or bridge having a drop of three or more feet per four feet of travel length on either side of the established lanes and that does not have a fence or other suitable barrier shall be deemed hazardous for students in Grades K-4.
- G. Any street, road, walkway, sidewalk or path designated as a walking route that passes through an area with a history of aggressive acts of molestation to students resulting in actual or threatened physical harm or moral degradation shall be deemed hazardous as determined by the Board of Education with advice from the Avon Police Department.
- H. Walking to or from school or the bus stop at any time prior to one-half hour before sunrise or anytime one-half hour after sunset shall be deemed hazardous for students in grades K-8.

V. Exceptions

The Board of Education may grant an exception to any provision of this policy based upon the reasonable judgment of the Superintendent of Schools that a peculiar condition or combination of conditions is hazardous.

The Board is aware that the health and physical powers of the student, the terrain to be traversed, physical security and environmental hazards, the opening and closing school hours and the statutes pertaining to children eligible for special education services will at times necessitate exceptions to the regulations on walking distances.

In determining the exceptions that are necessary, the Board will consult pertinent agencies (i.e., police, fire, and public works departments) in an attempt to make a reasonable judgment.

VI. Handicapped and Special Education Students

- A. Students possessing physical handicaps and/or health conditions rendering them unable to walk to either a bus stop or school, as determined by their physician or the school medical advisor, shall receive appropriate transportation.
- B. Transportation for special education students shall be determined on an individual basis.

VII. Boundaries, Routes and Scheduling The Director of Finance is responsible for planning efficient boundaries, routes, schedules, and bus stops. In planning bus stops, the Director of Finance will take into consideration the number of students at each stop, distances students are required to walk, the number of stops on the route, the total travel time for the route, any safety hazards as described in this policy, and the physical terrain at the bus stop.

- A. The principals and Director of Finance will approve all educational and extra-curricular trips. The general policy of the Board is to use a commercial carrier with full public liability and property damage insurance.
- B. Avon residents with children attending private nonprofit schools in Avon will be provided with transportation in accordance with Section 10-281 of the Connecticut General Statutes. All aspects of this policy referring to public school students also pertain to private school students.
- C. Avon Public Schools will not provide transportation to out-of-town schools except as required by State Statutes.

**VIII. Bus Drivers**

- A. The driver shall be responsible for the safety of all students while they are on the bus and shall be responsible for reporting violations of any rules and regulations adopted by the Board of Education concerning the conduct of students on or about the bus and shall attempt to maintain order among the students in his/her charge.
- B. Drivers shall always follow the general instructions for route designations. Specifically they will:
  - 1. Transport only the designated students on their route except by written order of school authorities through the bus contractor and in case of emergency.
  - 2. Drive their route in exactly the sequence as outlined on the route sheets except when:
    - a. Road detours prevent the route from being followed exactly.
    - b. Extremely dangerous road conditions exist.
    - c. Written or oral authorization for a change is received from the School Business Office to the bus contractor.
  - 3. Not alter or exceed their time schedule except with permission of school authorities through the bus contractor or in cases of emergencies.
  - 4. Not leave a regular bus stop if students are in sight and making an effort to reach the bus, unless, after warning, the tardiness continues and appears to be willful.
  - 5. Not permit any dogs or other animals on school buses.
  - 6. Unload buses from the front to the rear.
  - 7. Remain on buses during loading and unloading operations.

**C. Discipline**

Bus drivers will respond to discipline problems in the following manner:

- 1. When appropriate, stop the bus when correcting the actions of a student.

2. Inform trouble-causing students what is expected of them.
3. If a student continues to be disobedient, the student will be reported to the bus company supervisor who will notify the principal in accordance with the rules and regulations for discipline as approved by the Board of Education.
4. If students are misbehaving, the driver shall transport them to their destination and report the offense to the bus company supervisor. Under no circumstance should a driver put a student off the bus in the middle of a run. If, in the driver's opinion, the difficulty being caused by the student is such that it makes driving hazardous, the driver should return to school and notify the principal and the bus contractor. Disruptive students are to be removed from the bus and transported home by parents.
5. At each school, a teacher or administrator will be on duty for both the unloading and loading of buses for disciplinary purposes.

#### IX. Student Responsibility

Students will be informed of the rules and regulations for bus transportation in writing at the beginning of the school year. The following are the rules and regulations governing students' conduct on school busses:

##### A. While waiting for the school bus and boarding it, the student should:

1. Be at the designated bus stop at least five minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time.
2. Always wait for the bus on the shoulder of the highway or sidewalk away from the main thoroughfare, in one group.
3. Wait until the bus comes to a full stop before trying to get aboard. When boarding the school bus, stay in line. Enter in an orderly fashion.
4. Wait until the bus comes to a full stop and displays its flashing lights and the driver signals to the student that it is safe to cross before attempting to cross the road from the designated bus stop.

##### B. When boarding busses upon leaving school, students should:

1. Follow directions of the principal or teacher.
2. Obey the directions of the bus driver.

##### C. While riding in the bus, students should:

1. Remain properly and quietly seated and facing forward while the bus is in motion.
2. Not jeopardize the safety of others. Usual rules of good conduct should be observed. Be courteous to fellow passengers and bus driver.
3. Keep all parts of their body inside the bus at all times.

4. Secure permission of driver before opening windows of the bus.
5. Obey instructions of the bus driver promptly.
6. Not eat, drink, smoke, or use foul language.
7. Refrain from defacing or marring the school bus in any manner.
8. Refrain from distracting the attention of the bus driver from his/her duties at any time.
9. Never throw objects in the bus, out the bus windows, or, when off the bus, at the vehicle.

D. When departing the school bus, students should:

1. Stay in line. Do not crowd or push; do not lag behind; leave in an orderly fashion.
2. Go directly home, and not loiter.
3. Walk directly in front of the bus only if it is necessary to cross a street after leaving the bus until the bus driver, who has checked carefully in both directions, signals that it is safe to cross. Proceed directly across the street after checking in both directions, as an added precaution.
4. Stand aside on the shoulder of the road, if it is not necessary to cross the highway, until the bus has moved on; walk on the shoulder of the road (or sidewalk) to their destination when traffic can be seen in both directions.
5. Walk on the left side of the road facing traffic, if there is no sidewalk and it is necessary to walk on the roadway.
6. Obey the instruction of the adult in charge when at the destination of a trip away from school.

E. Students who fail to observe rules and regulations may be denied bus transportation.

X. Parents' Responsibility

- A. Parents should make sure that children arrive at the school bus stop at least five minutes prior to the scheduled bus pick-up.
- B. If a school bus or transportation vehicle is at a designated pick-up location on time and the student is not there and misses the ride, then it is the parent or guardian's responsibility to secure transportation to school.
- C. Parents should accompany younger children to the bus stop for the first few days of school.
- D. Parents should instruct children:
  1. To walk facing traffic, if they must walk on the roadway.
  2. To look both ways before crossing the street.

3. To wait on the roadway shoulder, off the pavement.
  4. To wait in one group at a distance of 25 feet away from the main thoroughfare.
  5. To behave responsibly at the bus stops and on the bus.
- E. If student behavior is a problem at the bus stop, parents should provide supervision until the school bus arrives.

**XI. Regulations: Bus Discipline and Vandalism**

The following procedures will be followed by all bus drivers and school administrators in all cases involving bus discipline and/or vandalism.

**A. Bus Discipline**

All drivers must present a written report of discipline problems to school administration. School administrators will investigate any discipline report.

Except in emergencies, when conditions would not allow sufficient time, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The driver will present, at the end of the morning or afternoon route, a written report to the school administration.
2. The bus contractor will contact the school administrator as soon as possible and report, over the phone, problems encountered on the bus runs.
3. The school administrator will investigate any written discipline report and meet with the parents and students regarding the incident. The school administrator will then notify the bus contractor and the parents of the disposition of the case.

**B. Offenses and Penalties**

**1. Minor Offenses**

- loud talking
- shouting repeatedly
- use of vulgar or obscene language
- minor pushing or shoving altercations
- not staying seated properly
- putting things outside window
- opening window without permission
- throwing objects on/or at the bus
- unauthorized rider on wrong bus
- eating, drinking or smoking on the bus
- not following the driver's directions
- violation of any other rules or regulations for bus students as approved by the Avon Board of Education

**2. Major Offenses**

- disrespect for the bus driver (after "not following the bus driver's directions" under minor offenses)
- fighting - major incident
- bus vandalism
- use or possession of alcohol, drugs, explosives, flammables, weapons, or other hazardous materials
- assaulting the bus driver
- any other major incident that violates bus rules and regulations as approved by the Avon Board of Education or any action by a student that occurs on or about the bus where there is a risk of injury or is criminal in nature

**3. Penalties:**

The penalty will depend on the frequency and severity of the offense. Penalties can range from a verbal warning to suspension of bus privileges.

- For elementary students, grades K-6, one warning by the school principal followed by up to five day of suspension from transportation for subsequent offenses.
- The same penalty will apply to secondary students in grades 6-12, except that secondary students may be immediately suspended from transportation for up to five days by the principal for the first offense if they have been previously warned by the bus driver. Students must be suspended for up to five days for the second offense and subsequent offenses. The principal will contact the parent or guardian by phone or letter for each suspension and/or warning.

**4. Hearings**

The school administrator will conduct a hearing with the students and parents in cases in which suspension is a possibility. After a hearing, students may only be suspended from transportation privileges and not suspended from school in accordance with Connecticut State Statutes and Board of Education policy.

**XII. Bus Vandalism Procedures**

Parents or guardians of students found guilty of bus vandalism will be expected to make restitution consistent with the Connecticut General Statutes to the bus company for actual damages. The bus contractor may take legal action against the parent and the student if deemed appropriate.

Procedure:

- A. A suspension letter will be mailed by the principal to the parents of the suspended student.

**TITLE: TRANSPORTATION**

**POLICY NO: 3120**

**ADOPTED:**

**AMENDED: 5/17/77, 6/12/84, 5/19/98**

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- B. Along with the suspension letter, each parent will be mailed a copy of Section 52-572 of the Connecticut General Statutes (Parental Liability for Willful Acts of Minor Children).
- C. A copy of the suspension letter will be sent to the bus company.
- D. The bus company will be responsible for notifying the school principal if and when payment for damages is received.
- E. If the school principal is not notified within 30 days by the bus company that payment has been made, the principal will send a copy of the suspension letter and a memo will be sent to the Director of Finance. The Director of Finance will again request payment, by letter, from the parent.
- F. If no response is received, the Director of Finance may decide to turn the matter over to the Town attorney for assistance in collecting the cost of actual bus damage.

**XIII. Transportation Hearing Procedure**

Transportation hearings will be conducted in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-186, and with Connecticut General Statutes, Sections 4-177 to 4-180, inclusive upon written request.