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It shall be the policy of the Watertown Unified School District to provide transportation for students who reside within the WUSD boundaries under provisions of Wisconsin laws and regulations and in accordance with this transportation policy. In addition to normal school day transportation for students, the board may provide for transportation of students for extra-curricular activities. The WUSD is also required to provide transportation service to other students as outlined in the law.

The Director of Business Services shall be responsible for the supervision of the student transportation program, conducting appraisals of such program and making recommendations for its improvement in terms of maximum service, safety, economy and efficiency.

For purposes of this policy, the term bus shall mean any school bus type vehicle or smaller vehicle that is used for transportation of students by the WUSD.

### **Eligibility Guidelines**

- A. The WUSD shall provide transportation for all resident students who attend public and nonpublic schools (unless parent contracts are provided pursuant to B) located within the boundaries of the school district, to and from the school of attendance, as determined by the WUSD, as follows:
  1. The WUSD shall provide transportation services to and from school for all students in the district who reside outside the city limits.
  2. Transportation shall be provided for all resident students living four or more miles from their school of attendance, as measured by the usual traveled route.
  3. Transportation shall be provided for all resident students living within areas of unusual hazard. Areas of unusual hazard must be officially designated by the local law enforcement authority or designee.
  4. Children with disabilities shall be transported in accordance with state law.
  5. Private school students shall be transported in accordance with state law.
  6. Any student who is homeless or an unaccompanied youth, as defined under federal law, and who has a legal right to District-provided transportation.
  7. If a student is living outside the [WUSD](#), but is enrolled in the WUSD as a resident student because the student's parents or guardians have joint legal custody, the WUSD will transport the student to and from an agreed-upon location with the District upon request from the student's parent or guardian.
- B. Pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes 121.54(2)(b)(1) and 151.55(1)(b), the WUSD may issue parent contracts to parents of resident students who attend public or nonpublic schools located within the school district boundary; or who attend nonpublic schools located outside the WUSD but within five miles of the school district boundary by the most usually traveled and direct route to that nonpublic school.

- C. Ineligible resident students may request an agreement with the WUSD providing the bus does not leave its normal bus route and there is adequate room on the bus. In the event that an overload occurs as the year progresses, the last ineligible student added to the bus list will be first taken off. Payment in full for this service, or alternate arrangement for full payments as authorized by the Director of Business Services, must be made before the student will be permitted to ride the bus. When there is no cost to the WUSD, the WUSD reserves the right to waive payment for students that are ineligible for transportation. This decision will be made by the Superintendent and/or the Director of Business Services.
- D. The reimbursement rate for parent contracts will be determined in accordance with provisions of Wisconsin Statute 121.55(3).

### **Routes and Services**

- A. The bus transportation contractor (bus contractor) shall annually establish bus routes (including pick-up and drop-off points) and schedules, utilizing school rosters and school starting and ending times provided by the WUSD.
- B. The bus contractor is responsible for coordinating and directing all bus schedules and routes. The bus contractor will be responsible for maintaining an electronic database of students and routes. The electronic database of students and routes will be a current/up-to-date listing that will be made available to the Superintendent or his/her designee upon request. In directing the bus services, the bus contractor shall make decisions, which further the interests of the students and the goals of the WUSD. The bus contractor shall develop rules and procedures for the safe and efficient operation of the bus and transportation services. These rules and procedures shall be reproduced and distributed to the parents/guardians of all students attending school in the WUSD. All rules and procedures are subject to the approval of the Director of Business Services.
- C. The WUSD shall annually approve all routes established by the contractor. When changes in routing and/or scheduling become necessary during the school year, such changes must be authorized by the Director of Business Services. When changes in routing or scheduling become necessary, parents of the affected students will be notified by the transportation contractor as soon as practical before the change is placed into effect.
- D. The bus contractor shall use the following criteria to establish pick-up points:
1. Bus capacity
  2. Number of students
  3. Distance to pick-up points without substantially extending student time on the bus
  4. Concern for student safety
- Students may be required to walk up to .5 of a mile to an established bus stop. Walking distance will be determined by the transportation contractor and Director of Business Services, based on safety considerations and related traffic conditions.
- E. The WUSD's responsibility for individual students begins at the designated pick-up point and ends at the designated drop-off point.
- F. A parent/guardian, older sibling or other designated responsible adult must be present with 4K - 2nd grade students at the designated pick-up/drop-off point. Transportation services for a 4K 2nd grade student may be suspended or terminated should a parent or guardian repeatedly fail to be present at the designated pick-up or drop-off point.
- G. Subject to the maximum one-way walking distance (D above) buses will not be routed on dead-end streets, cul du sacs or courtyards unless a hazardous walking condition exists and then only if an adequate and safe turnaround area for the bus exists.
- H. A student who is eligible for busing may be picked up and dropped off at a point other than at or near the student's residence if the alternative stop is within the student's school attendance area, the alternative stop is used every day, and space is available on the bus without additional cost to the school district. The parent/guardian must submit in writing his/her request for a change in the designation of his/her child's permanent stop to the bus contractor no later than August 1. Changes requested after August 1 will be considered on a space available basis. All requests are subject to the approval of the Director of Business Services.

The legal responsibility of the WUSD in transporting children to and from school is limited to providing services to their legal residence. The WUSD is not obligated to provide student transportation to and/or from locations other than the residence of a student. However, in recognition of the contemporary need for childcare services, the Board authorizes transportation to and/or from a location other than the student's residence subject to conditions listed in D above. The WUSD reserves the right to assign and transport students to schools not in their normal attendance area for purposes related to the educational program.

### **Rules of Conduct**

The Board considers school buses to be an extension of the school facility. Therefore, all rules and regulations concerning student conduct shall be enforced. Failure to observe such rules and regulations may result in revocation of transportation privileges.

### **Vehicles**

- A. Each vehicle used in the transportation of students with disabilities shall be in good mechanical condition. It shall at all times meet standards established by the Department of Transportation.
- B. The vehicle shall have a regular maintenance check, with special attention to exhaust system, brakes, tires, lights, heaters and other mechanical systems. Defects shall be corrected immediately.
- C. A daily check of the condition of the vehicle shall include brakes, tires, directional and stop lights and the interior cleanliness of the vehicle. The vehicle shall be cleaned each day prior to transporting children.

### **Bus Personnel**

- A. Drivers of vehicles transporting students with disabilities shall be 18 years of age and shall hold an appropriate license to drive such a vehicle.
- B. Drivers shall have a good driving record, free of violations for speeding, failure to stop or yield at intersections, driving too fast for conditions, or other citations indicative of lack of prudence in driving.
- C. Drivers shall be in good physical condition, possessing:
  - 1. At least 20/40 vision either normally or corrected in each eye and shall have a minimum horizontal form field of 70 degrees;
  - 2. Normal ability to hear the spoken voice;
  - 3. Normal use of both hands and both feet.In the event of a deficiency in one or more of the above, capability of driving shall be substantiated by competent medical proof and submitted by the operator to the district's transportation officer.
- D. Drivers are required to have a physical examination and tuberculin test or chest X-ray every three years, or as required by school district policies.
- E. Bus Personnel shall not smoke when children are being transported.
- F. Bus Personnel shall set an example of dignified personal behavior and cleanliness, and shall maintain a proper perspective of his/her function as a driver of a vehicle to transport students safely to school and back home again.
- G. Bus Personnel shall be friendly, fair and firm at all times, and shall maintain discipline among the passengers in his/her vehicle.
- H. Bus Personnel shall not use profanity or indecent language, threaten students, use corporal punishment, or evict a child along the route.
- I. Bus Personnel shall report any misconduct or behavior problems to the appropriate school officials.

### **While Students Are Being Transported**

- A. Children shall keep hands and head within the vehicle at all times.
- B. Loud talking and laughing or other confusion shall not be tolerated.
- C. Students shall not tamper with door latches, windows or other equipment in the vehicle.
- D. Students shall not be permitted to throw any articles out of the windows of the vehicle.
- E. Students shall remain seated while the vehicle is in motion.
- F. The fuel tank shall not be filled while passengers are in the vehicle.
- G. When carrying passengers, the vehicle shall be brought to a full stop at all railroad crossings.
- H. The use of electronic devices by student may be approved by the driver and/or aid. No use of video or photography may be used.

### **Parent/Guardian Responsibilities**

- A. Students will ride on assigned vehicles. Parents/guardians must request in writing any exception from these rules. Request shall be made to the district transportation officer.

- B. Students will board and debark from their assigned transportation vehicle at designated stops, unless written permission is granted that a child shall be let off at other than the regular stop. Parents/guardians will assume the responsibility for the child when such request is made and granted.
- C. Parents/guardians shall be responsible for children being ready five minutes before the transportation vehicle arrives.
- D. In the event a child is ill, the parent/guardian shall notify the transportation operator of this.

#### **Schedules**

- A. A time schedule shall be established and followed both as to pick-up and discharge time of students. However, at no time shall the safety of students transported be sacrificed.
- B. Drivers shall develop a schedule to arrive at the respective schools at a definite time. The order of pick-up or discharging of students shall not be changed without all parties concerned being notified.
- C. The driver shall not leave a pick-up point either at the passenger's home or at school before the scheduled pick-up time, unless all scheduled passengers are picked up.
- D. Parents/guardians shall be responsible for their children to be ready at the scheduled pick-up time. Passengers who habitually cause the transportation vehicle to wait shall be warned. The driver shall notify the Director of Business Services of the problem, who in turn will take the matter up with the parent/guardian.

#### **General Provisions**

- A. Drivers shall be required to maintain and complete such records as are required by the school district.
- B. The bus contractor shall provide on request to the Director of Business Services bus route lists including time of scheduled pick-up and discharge and a map of the route.
- C. Should a school transportation vehicle be involved in any kind of accident causing damage to said vehicle, damage to another vehicle, or other kind of property damage, an accident shall be reported immediately to the Director of Business Services.
- D. Drivers and vehicle owners shall cooperate at all times with authorized officers in carrying out inspection of equipment or examination of drivers pursuant to law or transportation department regulations.
- E. In the event of a student injury of any kind while being transported, a written report shall be sent immediately to the Director of Business Services.
- F. Confidential health plans will be provided to the District bus company and will be secured in a confidential/secure manner.

#### **Legal References:**

Wisconsin Statute, Section 115.76(5)  
Wisconsin Statute, Section 115.787(2)(c)  
Wisconsin Statute, Section 118.51(14)  
Wisconsin Statute, Section 121.51-121.56  
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act  
McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act  
Wisconsin Administrative Code P17