

Westerly Public Schools will provide suitable transportation to each student eligible to attend kindergarten (age three for SPED students) and under twenty-one years of age who resides within the boundaries of the district and is not a high school graduate or is not otherwise legally excluded from school in a manner consistent with Sect.16-21-1 of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island. It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent of schools (or designee) to administer this policy. The school committee will approve bus routes prior to the start of each school year.

I. GUIDELINES

- a. Students shall be provided school transportation if one or more of the following criteria are present.
 - i. The walking distance from home to school exceeds the following:
 1. For pupils enrolled in K-4, one-half (1/2) mile
 2. For pupils enrolled in grades 5-8, all students will be transported.
 3. For pupils enrolled in grades 9-12, one and one-half (1.5) mile
 - ii. The walking route is within the limits set forth above, but presents a hazard to student safety.
 - iii. The student is handicapped or is a preschool student.
 - iv. Exceptions to the established riding limits may be made on a case by case basis as determined by the administration.
 - v. Exceptions to the established riding limits may be made by the School Committee if in its judgment a hazard exists that would jeopardize the safety of a student.
 - vi. Other exceptions to the transportation policy may be extended at the discretion of the Transportation Coordinator with the final approval of the Superintendent of Schools. Exceptions will include, but not be limited to, transportation for childcare arrangements and/or sponsored after-school and community activities. Requests for exceptions must be submitted in writing to the Transportation Coordinator.
 - vii. The Westerly Public Schools will provide transportation for the vocational education students and students in Special Education (other than residential care students) who require out-of-district placement.
- b. Students will arrive at schools no earlier than thirty (30) minutes before the opening of school, and be picked up for the return trip home not later than thirty (30) minutes after the close of school.

- c. Maps of walking areas and street lists will be made available at the schools, on the District web page and through Central Registration.
- d. Rules for student transportation are reviewed annually by the administration and are published in the student handbook.
- e. Annual school bus safety instruction will be provided for children in grades K-6. The instruction shall take place at least four (4) times a year; two (2) of which shall take place during the months of September and October.
- f. Pursuant to the requirements of state law, all new bus drivers will participate in the ten (10) hour training course. Experienced bus drivers will participate in the state required three (3) hour re-training course on an annual basis. Also on an annual basis, the Transportation Department will develop and implement additional training as mutually agreed upon by the transportation staff and administration for all transportation personnel.

II. BUS STOPS

- a. Bus stops will be located at intervals so that a student will not be required to walk to or from his/her residence any distance greater than:
 - i. For pupils enrolled in K-4, one-half (1/2) mile;
 - ii. For pupils enrolled in grades 5-8, three-quarters (3/4) mile;
 - iii. For pupils enrolled in grades 9-12, one and one -half (1.5) mile.
- b. Bus stops may be located at more frequent intervals to reduce student congestion at stops or for reasons of safety, as determined by the superintendent or his/her designee.
- c. Note: These guidelines do not apply to Late Bus Runs

III. WALKING DISTANCE

- a. All measurements for walking distance to school or to a bus stop will begin at the point of access to a public road nearest a student's residence or to a public road accessible to a school bus.

IV. ADJUSTMENT OF WALKING DISTANCES FOR PRE-SCHOOL STUDENTS:

- a. All pre-school students riding a bus must be picked up and dropped off at the closest point of public access to the property line. Weather and safety concerns may cause stop adjustment.

V. STUDENT REGISTRATION:

- a. Each school principal will forward to the current transportation supervisor, by June 1st, a listing of students by grade that includes student name, parent/guardian name, mailing, residence and day care addresses where applicable, home/work/emergency contact, phone numbers. The same information is to be provided the transportation office for each student who registers for school after the June cut-off date. All parents of students who will attend private schools and charter schools who are eligible for transportation must submit a written transportation request to the Superintendent of Schools or his/ her designee by August 1 of each year.
- b. Such request will include the student's name, grade, parent/guardian name, mailing address, residence, home/work/emergency contact, and phone numbers.

VI. CHANGE IN LOCATION OF A SCHEDULED BUS STOP:

- a. A change in location of a bus stop for a Westerly school student is defined as follows: When a student is picked up or dropped off at a different stop than he/she would normally or when the student rides a different bus than he/she would normally.
- b. Changes in the location of a student's bus stop will be approved for the following reasons:
 - i. To accommodate daycare needs:
 1. Any request for day care cannot involve the pickup or drop off at more than two existing district bus stops.
 2. Long term relocation of bus stop requests to accommodate daycare received prior to August 1st will be processed and be in place when schools open provided this request does not cause a student to be bused to/from a location outside his/her designated school attendance area. These requests should be filed annually. All requests by a parent/guardian should be done by contacting the transportation office.
 3. Daycare request changes during the year must be made by the parent/guardian one week prior to the change. This change cannot involve more than two separate locations within bus routes.
 4. Emergency requests will be considered if presented in writing to the school office.
 - ii. To accommodate group school activities:
 1. All requests must be in writing and submitted to the school office.

- iii. To accommodate student work placement:
 - 1. Parents of high school students may request changes in their afternoon bus stop location to accommodate a work placement. Such a request must be submitted to the transportation supervisor. The student will be dropped off at the regularly scheduled stop nearest to the business.
- iv. To accommodate a temporary change:
 - 1. Requests for a temporary change of location of a bus stop due to a planned reason by a parent/guardian will be considered if requested forty eight hours in advance.
- v. To accommodate an emergency:
 - 1. In the case of an immediate emergency situation (one day only) requiring the change in the location of a bus stop, the parent/guardian should contact the school so that the student can be notified. The school will notify the student and the transportation office of the matter. In the case where time does not allow for the contacting of the transportation office, a written note, with the student's name and other pertinent information must be provided to the bus driver. The note must be signed by the school official approving the request.
- c. Changes in the location of a student's bus stop will not be approved for the following reasons:
 - i. If it causes a student overload on the bus in question.
 - ii. If it causes additional time or mileage to accrue to the bus run.
 - iii. If it causes rescheduling of a bus route or the addition of bus stops
 - iv. If it causes a student to be bused to/from a location outside of his/her designated school attendance area.
 - v. If the privilege is abused.
- d. Procedures for change will follow what is outlined in section 1. In addition, during the school year all requests for changes must be submitted in writing to the transportation office. Parents should contact the transportation office to verify the request has been approved.
- e. All new registrations and student address change must go through the Central Registration office. Only verified address change approved by central registration will be accepted by the transportation office. In most cases there is a 48 hour work window from the time Central registrations receives the student's information until assigning the student to a bus.

- f. The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee reserves the right to deny transportation privileges to any persons not adhering to the policy.

VII. STUDENT DROP POLICY

- a. **It is the policy of the Westerly School System not to drop off any child in grades K-4 at their designated bus stop unless a designated adult or sibling is present to accept the child. A parent or legal guardian of a student in grades 3 or 4 may direct the District, in writing, to drop their child at the designated bus stop without parental supervision.**
- b. It is the parent / guardian responsibility to insure the district has all current telephone and emergency contact information and numbers.
- c. When no responsible party is available, the bus driver will:
 - i. Make every attempt reasonable to drop off the student at their designated bus stop before returning them to the school. Notify school principal or designee.
 - ii. Return the student to the school if before 4:30 p.m.
 - iii. The transportation office will work with the school to contact a parent, guardian, or an emergency contact to inform them where the child is, and location to pick their child up.
 - iv. If no emergency contact can be reached by 5:00 p.m., the Westerly Police Department will be contacted.
- d. For Parent Pick Up, the school will:
 - i. Make every attempt to contact a parent, guardian, or an emergency contact to inform them to pick up the student.
 - ii. If no emergency contact can be reached by 5:00 p.m., the Westerly Police Department will be contacted.
- e. Documentation of parent failure to meet child and/or pick child up at school in a timely fashion will be documented. More than three occurrences may warrant a call to DCYF 1-800-RI-CHILD.

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