

# NLESD Bus Route & Stop Design Guidelines

## **PURPOSE**

To outline guidelines for the development of bus routes and bus stops for eligible students transported by the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (the “District”).

## **SCOPE**

These guidelines apply to all regular student transportation within the District, including:

- Contracted Services
- District-Operated Services

## **RELATED GUIDANCE**

These guidelines should be read and applied in conjunction with:

- District [policies](#) and [procedures](#)
- [Department of Education and Early Childhood Development \(EECD\) School Bus Transportation Policies](#)
- Individual [contracts](#) entered into between the District and a given contractor

## **DEFINITIONS**

### Family Responsibility Zone (FRZ):

Less than 1.6 kilometres (1 mile) from school. The area that is less than 1.6 kilometres from school is considered the FRZ. The distance to a school is defined as the shortest route by a publicly maintained roadway from the very end of the student’s driveway where it meets a publicly maintained roadway to the beginning of the nearest school access point (roadway or walkway) via a publicly maintained road. An access point is considered a vehicle entrance, vehicle exit or walkway to an entrance to the school facility. Traffic flow signage is not considered, as this measurement is based on general access, not specifically vehicle access; therefore, it is not restricted by traffic direction requirements.

### Capacity of Regular School Bus

K to 6	70 passengers
K to 12 (mixed load)	70 passengers
7 to 12	63 passengers

### Alternate Transportation Student

A student who has been approved for Alternate Transportation by EECD in accordance with their [Alternate Transportation Policy](#).

## **ELIGIBILITY**

A student is eligible for transportation if their civic address is located:

1. outside of the FRZ; and
2. within the boundary of the school’s catchment area

Note: if a student lives in an unincorporated area with no publicly maintained services, distance is measured from the entrance of the community (where it intersects with the publicly maintained roadway) to the nearest school access point.

# NLESD Bus Route & Stop Design Guidelines

Distance is typically measured via the District's Bus Planner (routing) software or Google Earth/Maps. However, in instances where distance is too close to accurately measure remotely, the Regional Manager or designate will physically measure using a District-approved vehicle.

## **BUS ROUTE DESIGN**

Bus routes are determined by the District based on the geographic location of all eligible students. Eligible students are then assigned to a specific route, as determined by the District, based on their civic address. Therefore, a student is only eligible for transportation on their assigned route.

*Note: proof of address may be required at the discretion of the School Administrator*

In Newfoundland and Labrador, Student Transportation is funded through the EECD. Funding is only provided for eligible students. As such, the District must follow guidelines set out by EECD when designing, maintaining and reviewing bus routes.

Responsibility for the design and management of bus routes rests with the Regional Manager of Student Transportation. Each Regional Manager may designate specific tasks to a suitable Student Transportation representative.

### **EECD Guidelines state that:**

1. Only eligible students are to be considered when designing routes;
2. Distance is defined as the shortest route from a student's driveway via publically maintained road to school property access point;
3. School arrival and dismissal times should be staggered to allow for double runs when possible.
4. Runs should operate at full capacity whenever possible;
5. There should be no more than 4 stops within 1.6 km unless authorized by the EECD; and
6. Every effort should be made to remain on main roads to minimize travel time.
  - a. Travel on side roads may be permitted if students live more than 500 metres from the main road and:
    - i. The street is maintained by either the municipality or the Department of Transportation and Works
    - ii. There is adequate room for a bus to turn around without backing up
    - iii. The street can accommodate large vehicles

In addition to EECD guidelines for route design, the District weighs several other factors when designing routes. These factors include:

### **Travel Time**

Every effort should be made to keep routes below 60 minutes where possible.

- Some routes may periodically run beyond 60 minutes due to weather or construction delays
- Where timing of routes is questionable, a District representative may be required to audit a route via ride-along to ensure bus stops times are as efficient as possible.

Every effort should be made to balance routes to minimize travel time without implementing additional routes or adding significant distance. For example, if it is possible to reduce one route from 60 minutes to 45 by increasing a 15 minute route accordingly, this option should be considered.

## **Priority Snow Clearing**

Roads that are not priority maintained pose significant challenges for winter operation. Every effort is made to keep routes on priority maintained roads to avoid potential incidents and delays.

## **Slope of Road**

Sometimes the shortest possible route is not a safe option. If a road is too steep to travel along and a more moderate option is available, a route should be designed to avoid unnecessary grades.

## **Unpaved Roads**

In some cases, even publicly maintained roads are unpaved and they can pose significant additional concerns in bad weather and spring conditions. The District will review each such circumstance on an individual basis.

## **Traffic Congestion**

In some cases, the shortest route can take significantly longer due to traffic flow. Traffic congestion increases idling time and reduces efficiency. Where possible, routes should avoid highly congested areas.

## **Speed Limits**

While unavoidable in many areas, the District does attempt to avoid bus routes from traveling on roads where the speed limit is greater than 80 km/hr.

## **BUS STOP CONSIDERATIONS**

In addition to route design, each stop should be evaluated for safety and efficiency. In areas where Contractors provide student transportation service, as per the [Contract template](#), the Contractor is responsible to review all routes and bus stops provided by the District before the beginning of the school year and report any safety concerns to the Regional Manager.

## **Speed Limits**

In such situations where speed limits are over 80 km/hr, consideration should be given to contact the entity responsible for that particular road to request "School Bus Stop Ahead" signs to be installed on either side of the stop location (if the stop is anticipated to be a long-term stop).

## **Traffic Lanes**

Many bus stops exist in areas where there are 3 lanes of traffic or more. When stops are implemented on such roads, every effort should be made to implement right hand pick-up and drop-off.

## **Intersections**

# NLESD Bus Route & Stop Design Guidelines

In most cases, bus stops are identified by intersection as they are easy for parents and students to identify. However, buses should never stop directly in an intersection. A safe corner, slightly beyond an intersection is recommended and should be clearly communicated to drivers as well as parents at any new stop.

## **Number of Students**

Stops with 10 or more students have the potential to create additional safety concerns. If possible, break stops of 10 or more students into multiple stops along the bus route. This may require implementing more than 4 stops within a 1.6 km distance in the eligible zone but is advisable to reduce overcrowding.

## **Crosswalks**

Stops should be placed in front of crosswalks whenever possible (nose of the bus nearest to the crosswalk - 5 feet before crosswalk), rather than on or behind them (rear of the bus nearest the crosswalk).

## **Line of Sight**

Ensuring motorists have time to spot a bus stop is extremely important. The following line of sight distances are from the Department of Transportation and Works' [Highway Access Management policy](#) and should be considered when evaluating bus stop locations:

<b>Speed Limit</b>	<b>Line of Sight Required</b>
<50km/hr	80m
50km	115m
60km/hr	135m
70km/hr	160m
80 km/hr	180m
90km/hr	205m
100km/hr	225m

Note: While Stops and routes are the responsibility of the District, paths traveled by students from their home to a bus stop should not be reviewed/evaluated by the District. Parents/ guardians are responsible for safety of students until they board the bus/once they disembark the bus. If a parent has a concern regarding the safety of the path from their residence to a bus stop, they should contact the municipality/organization responsible for that stretch of land.

## **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Alternate Transportation on Regular Routes**

Where a student who resides within the school's 1.6km FRZ, is approved for Alternate Transportation, and is able to ride a regular school bus, the District may implement a stop inside the FRZ to accommodate this student. This stop must be approved through EECD and the Student Support Services Division of the District via the [EECD's Alternate Transportation Approval](#) process. Additions of this nature must still meet the safety considerations listed above.

## **Stops Inside 1.6 km to Accommodate Eligible Students on Inaccessible Side Streets**

At times, buses cannot travel on side streets due to limitations described above or due to route inefficiency. In such cases, the District may implement stops inside the FRZ to accommodate the eligible students in the area. This does not mean students living near the stop who reside in the FRZ are eligible. They must apply for courtesy seating should they wish to avail of such stops.

## **Courtesy Seating**

While the District does not alter or design bus routes around courtesy riders, courtesy stops may be implemented beyond 1.6 km provided [Courtesy Seating Protocol](#) is followed.

1 courtesy bus stop inside the FRZ is permitted per bus run to accommodate courtesy riders in the area where there is space available on the bus. The FRZ courtesy stop can only be added, where feasible/safe, as the last stop before arriving at school. Only the Regional Manager has the authority to approve such a bus stop. If approved, this stop will not change from year to year.

## BUS STOP EVALUATION FORM

Name of Complainant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address of Stop: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Summary of Complaint:

2.  Existing Stop                       New Stop

3. Initial Assessment:

- Not valid safety concern (within guidelines)
  - Safety concern but can be resolved without site visit (contractor/driver has identified safe alternative)
  - Safety concern – site visit required
- Additional Notes

4. Site Assessment:

a. Traffic:

- Light (Rural streets)
- Medium (Highway and commonly used side streets)
- Heavy (Main street in metro area / 4+ lanes)

b. Shoulder:

- Sidewalk
- No sidewalk, but shoulder exists
- No sidewalk, No shoulder

c. Line of sight:

	Highway Speed KM/Hr	Line of Sight for Stop Meters
<input type="checkbox"/>	100	225
<input type="checkbox"/>	90	205
<input type="checkbox"/>	80	180
<input type="checkbox"/>	70	160
<input type="checkbox"/>	60	135
<input type="checkbox"/>	50	115

# NLESD Bus Route & Stop Design Guidelines

<input type="checkbox"/>	<50	80
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does not meet Line of Site requirements	

If does not meet guidelines, Line of Site recorded:

d. Proximity to Intersection:

- Stop located in intersection
- Away from intersection

e. Slope of Road:

- Flat
- Mild slope
- Steep incline
- Steep decline

f. Class of Road:

- Class 1 (Main road – priority maintenance/snow clearing)
- Class 2 (Secondary road – adequate maintenance/snow clearing)
- Class 3 (tertiary road – low maintenance/snow clearing)
- Class 4 (gravel – low priority maintenance/snow clearing)
- Class 5 (Privately maintained)

g. Number of students on stop:

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 15+

5. Stop Summary:

6. Recommendation:

Implementation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# NLESD Bus Route & Stop Design Guidelines



Date of Follow up with Complainant: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation Completed By: \_\_\_\_\_