

# COVID-19 Courtesy Seating Protocol

## 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 vehicle direction requirements

## **ELIGIBILITY**

As per [Department of Education policy](#), a student is eligible for transportation if his/her civic address is:

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

The EECD mandates that bus routes are determined by the District based on the geographic location of all eligible students' civic addresses. Eligible students are then assigned to a specific bus stop and bus route, as determined by the District, based on their civic address. **A student is therefore only eligible for transportation on their assigned route and bus stop.**

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

## **COURTESY SEATING**

A courtesy seat is a seat on a bus route for a student who has not been assigned to this route based on his/her civic address i.e. not eligible for student transportation on that route.

### **Important:**

- 1) **Courtesy seat applications cannot be approved until the school's full service for normally eligible students is implemented;**
- 2) **Courtesy seat requests will only be considered for a student if it results in them only availing of a single bus route for the entire school year i.e. AM and PM stop can be different but **MUST be on the same bus route** (requirement resulting from Chief Medical Officer of Health guidance)**

Management of courtesy seating is the School Administrator's responsibility; this includes:

- Approving/denying applications in accordance with this Protocol
- Tracking up-to-date student lists for each of their bus routes and their assigned bus stop(s). This includes any students whose courtesy seat applications have been approved by the School Administrator. Note: school eligibility listings can be obtained by the School Administrator through the [BusPlanner \(routing software\) Professional Portal](#) using the Student Listing report
- Associated document management of courtesy seat applications
- Submitting a full listing of the courtesy seat applicants and their approval/denial status to the Regional Manager of Student Transportation by **October 31st of each year**

# COVID-19 Courtesy Seating Protocol

Schools are expected to accommodate students where possible by approving courtesy seat requests after all students who are eligible for transportation have been assigned to the appropriate route based on their civic address.

Regardless of whether or not an eligible student avails of the seat assigned to them, that seat is earmarked for them unless a courtesy seat request for that student is approved (seat on another bus route) for the remainder of the school year. The originally assigned seat then becomes vacant and available to be filled via a courtesy seat.

A parent/legal guardian seeking a courtesy seat or a change in bus stop along a student's assigned bus route is required to complete a Courtesy Seat Request Form (found on our [Busing/Transportation webpage](#)) and submit it to the school.

It is recommended that the School Administrator set a deadline date for parent submission of applications. School Administrators should wait until after this date before approving any applications thereby giving parents an opportunity to complete and submit an application.

Courtesy seats should be provided in the following priority:

1. a student who is eligible for transportation on Route "X" but has requested a courtesy seat on Route "Y" (youngest to oldest)
2. a student who resides within the FRZ (youngest to oldest)
3. a student who resides outside of the catchment of the school (youngest to oldest)

The following criteria will be considered prior to authorizing a courtesy seat:

1. There must be capacity on the bus. **Capacity of 2 students per seat (minus the seat directly behind the driver - ex. 46 students in a full-sized bus)**
2. An existing bus stop should be used as the pickup/drop-off location  
Note: An additional stop is permissible to accommodate a courtesy seat student as long as it:
  - a. is located outside of the FRZ (aside from 1 FMZ stop the District has established for each bus route which can be activated upon request by the School Administrator to the Student Transportation Division);
  - b. does not alter the route; and
  - c. is consistent with the District's [Bus Route & Stop Design Guidelines](#);

**Note 1:** Written authorization must be provided by the Regional Manager before a bus stop can be added

## Opting Out Procedure:

Schools can accept written documentation from the parent/guardian of an eligible student rescinding (opting out) their seat on the bus to create an extra seat on the school bus that can be allocated by the School Administrator through the Courtesy Seating Protocol. **Any such rescission would require the parent/guardian to rescind their seat in writing for the entire school year.** The rescinding parent/guardian **cannot** give their seat to another student of their choosing.

# **COVID-19 Courtesy Seating Protocol**

If a courtesy seat is approved by the School Administrator, the seat may be taken away (1 week's notice provided) if the seat is required for another student who is eligible for transportation on that route. Therefore, a courtesy seat cannot be taken away from a student for another courtesy rider, even if that student is higher on the priority list noted above.

If a seat which has been approved for a courtesy rider is needed for an eligible student on that route, then the priority when removing a courtesy rider is the reverse order of the listing noted above.

If a school shares busing with another school, courtesy seating must be coordinated between both schools in accordance with the procedures herein.

## **BUS STOPS**

All bus stops are determined by the District; any changes to a bus stop requires District authorization.

A student's designated bus stop is the stop closest to his/her civic address on his/her assigned route or otherwise approved in accordance with this protocol.

**A parent can only change their student's bus stop to another existing stop on the student's assigned route if it is a permanent change for the remainder of the school year.**

- 1. Written notice must be provided by the parent to the school (minimum 3 working days notice)**
- 2. Written notice must be provided by the school to the Contractor/Local District Student Transportation Representative for that route (minimum 2 working days notice)**
- 3. Documentation of points 1 and 2 must be kept on file**

The District establishes a single Courtesy Stop inside the FRZ for each bus route ("FRZ Courtesy Stop") where feasible/safe. The location of this FRZ Courtesy Stop is determined exclusively by the District and is based on the following criteria:

1. The location must fall along the direct path to school i.e. the bus does not deviate from its route
2. The location is typically within 800 and 1,100 metres of the school where safe/feasible
3. Primary consideration will be given to a licenced daycare within the FRZ (supporting documentation required)
4. The stop should not be located within 500 metres of the school
5. The location does not change year to year

## **DAYCARES**

The District can accommodate daycare providers (add a bus stop) provided the following conditions are met:

1. The daycare center must be a licensed facility in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Province (supporting documentation required)
2. The daycare must be on an established school bus route for the school
3. There has to be capacity on the school bus and in accordance with Courtesy Seating Priority outlined herein; and
4. Courtesy seating will only be considered with a request from the parent/guardian of the student(s)