

# Series 5000

## Students Transportation

**5131.1(a)**

### **General.**

The Board of Education will provide transportation for students under provisions of state law and regulations. In determining the provision of transportation, the superintendent of schools shall consider the guidelines contained in this policy and shall administer the operation so as to:

1. Provide for the safety of students.
2. Supplement and reinforce desirable student behavior patterns.
3. Assist disabled students appropriately.
4. Enrich the instructional program through carefully planned field trips as recommended by the staff.

### **Definitions**

1. "School transportation" means the procedure, program, or implemented plan by which a pupil is transported to and/or from school from his/her residence or the 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 municipality or private roads approved pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-220c.
2. "Walking distance" means the linear measure of a prescribed or authorized pedestrian route between the pupil's residence and his/her school from a point at the curb or edge of a public or private road nearest the pupil's residence to a point at the entrance of the school, or a safe entrance to the school grounds located within one hundred feet of the school building entrance or the bus pick-up area, or the route from the point on the public thoroughfare nearest the residence to the school bus or vehicle embarkation point established by the Eastford Board of Education.
3. "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..
4. "Grades Pre-K and K" mean respectively kindergarten, or a school program appropriate to a beginning student under age six, and pre-kindergarten, or a school program for a preschool student under grade five.

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"Hazard" means a thing or condition, as prescribed in this policy under "Hazardous Conditions" that affects the safety of pupils walking to and from school and/or a designated bus pick-up area.

5. "Sidewalk" means a portion of the landscape right of way approximately three feet wide, usually parallel to the traffic lanes which may be paved or unpaved, and marked by curbing, drainage ditch, grass area or fencing; apart from and independent of any white line safety markings along the street pavement.
6. "Raised walk area" means a portion of the landscape right of way approximately three feet wide, usually parallel to the traffic lanes which may be paved or unpaved, distinguished by some elevation above the street pavement level and marked by curbing, drainage ditch, grass area or fencing; apart from and independent of any painted safety markings along the street pavement.
7. "Pupil" means any individual of school age enrolled in a public or nonprofit private school located within the school district or contiguous school district as the case may be.

### Provision of Transportation

Transportation by private carrier may be provided whenever such practice is more economical than using school district-owned/leased facilities.

1. If parents volunteer to drive their own child(ren), and the administration permits, parents may be reimbursed for transportation of eligible students whenever such practice is more economical or convenient for the school district.
2. Use of parent drivers for school field trips is not allowed. Teachers will make arrangements for buses, school vans, etc., through the School Office.
3. In determining the provision of transportation for resident public and eligible private school students, the following guidelines regarding walking distances will be considered. Distance measurements will be based on the most direct route from the student's home beginning at a point at the curb or edge of a public road or highway nearest the home to the edge of the school property or bus pickup areas.

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5131.1(c)

<u>Grade</u>	<u>District Practice</u>
PK, K	door to door service
1-3	1/2 mile
4-6	3/4 mile
7-12	1 mile

**Special circumstances and safety issues will be considered by the Superintendent and/or Board when interpreting these district practices.**

**There will be door-to-door service for students living on state routes 171, 244, 198 and 44.**

4. Students living within the stated practices will receive transportation when, in the opinion of the Board, it is in the best interests of the district to provide transportation.
5. Reasonable transportation or prescribed walking routes or the sum of both shall not exceed one hour each way from home to school or returning.
6. Students attending Eastford Elementary School or Woodstock Academy may ride an Eastford bus other than the one assigned only at the convenience of the school district. Each time a change is requested, a written request must be submitted by the parent or legal guardian to the Eastford District Office for official approval.
7. Each student request to get off at a stop other than the one assigned must be made in writing by a parent or legal guardian and approved in the Eastford District Office.
8. Transportation for Eastford students at non-designated public secondary schools shall be provided by the parents.

### Access to Bus Stops/Transportation

Parents and/or guardians assume responsibility for ensuring the safety of their children up until the point when students board the school bus or other school provided transportation, and after students get off the bus after school. This responsibility includes the selection of walking routes to/from any bus stop and the provision of supervision that is appropriate to the student’s age, maturity and conditions at the bus stop at all times. Given that bus pick up times may vary, the Board expects that parents and/or guardians will ensure that their children arrive at the bus stop in advance of any scheduled pick up time.

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5131.1(d)

### Federal Compliance

Transportation will be provided for homeless students to and from the school of origin as required by the No Child Left Behind Act. These services shall be provided throughout the regularly scheduled school year and day as determined by the Board.

### Hazardous Conditions

The administration shall consider the following guidelines for hazardous conditions when making decisions regarding the transportation of children:

1. A street or road having an adjacent or parallel sidewalk or raised walk area shall be deemed hazardous when any one of the following conditions exist:
  - a) For pupils under age ten, or enrolled in grades K through 3:
    - (i) the absence of a pedestrian crossing light or crossing guard where three or more streets intersect; OR
    - (ii) street crossings where there are no stop signs or crossing guards and the traffic count during the time that pupils are walking to or from school exceeds sixty vehicles per hour at the intersection.
  - b) For pupils over age ten, or enrolled in grades 4 through 12, the absence of a traffic light or stop signs or crossing guard at an intersection where three or more streets intersect which has a traffic count which exceeds ninety vehicles per hour during the time that pupils are walking to or from school;
  - c) For all pupils:
    - (i) any street, road, or highway with speed limits in excess of forty miles per hour which does not have pedestrian crossing lights or crossing guards or other safety provisions at points where pupils must cross when going to or from school or the bus stop; OR
    - (ii) the usual or frequent presence of any nuisance such as open man-holes, construction, snow plowed or piled on the walk area making walkways unusable, loading zones where delivery trucks are permitted to park on walkways, commercial entrances and exits where cars are crossing walking areas at speeds in excess of five miles per hour, and the like, including such nuisances which are hazardous or attractive to children.

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2. Any street, road, or highway that has no sidewalks or raised walk areas shall be deemed hazardous if any one of the following conditions exist:
  - a) For pupils under age ten, or enrolled in grade K through 3:
    - (i) any street, road, or highway possessing a traffic count of sixty or more vehicles per hour at the time that pupils are walking to or from school; OR
    - (ii) any street, road, or highway possessing a speed limit in excess of thirty miles per hour.
  - b) For all pupils:
    - (i) the presence of man-made hazards including attractive nuisances, as stated in 1(c)(ii) above; OR
    - (ii) any roadway available to vehicles that does not have a minimum width of approximately twenty-two feet; OR
    - (iii) any roadway available to vehicles that, when plowed free of snow accumulations, does not have a minimum width of approximately twenty feet; OR
    - (iv) any street, road, or highway where the line-of-sight visibility together with posted speed limits do not permit vehicular braking/stopping in accordance with the Connecticut Drivers Manual or Department of Transportation, Division of Design Standard, or other reasonable standard.
3. Any walkway, path, or bridge in an area adjacent or parallel to railroad tracks shall be considered hazardous unless a suitable physical barrier along the entire pedestrian route is present and fixed between pupils and the track; and any crossing of railroad tracks carrying moving trains during hours that pupils are walking to or from school or to and from a designated bus pick-up area shall be deemed hazardous unless:
  - a) a crossing guard is present; OR
  - b) for pupil under age ten, an automatic control bar is present at crossings; OR
  - c) for pupils over age ten, a bar or red flashing signal light is operational.
1. For pupils in grades K through 4, the following conditions shall be deemed hazardous:
  - a) a lake, pond, stream, culvert, water-way, or bridge shall be deemed a hazard in the absence of a fence or other suitable barrier fixed between the pupil and the water; OR

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- b) any area adjacent to a roadway, sidewalk, or bridge having a drop of three or more feet per four feet of travel length on either side of the established lanes, in the absence of a fence or other suitable barrier.
- 5. For pupils in grades K through 8, walking to or from school or the bus stop at any time prior to one-half hour before sunrise or any time one-half hour after sunset shall be deemed hazardous.
- 6. For all students, walking along any street, road, walkway, sidewalk, or path designated as a walking route which passes through an area which has a history of aggressive acts of molestation resulting in actual or threatened physical harm or moral degradation during the hours when pupils ordinarily walk to or from school shall be deemed hazardous.

### Applicability and Exceptions

- 1. This policy is applicable to private roads approved for passage of school transportation vehicles in accordance with C.G.S. Section 10-220c.
- 2. Special Education pupils and pupils eligible for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act shall be judged on an individual basis, and appropriate transportation provided.
- 3. The Superintendent of Schools may grant an exception to any guideline set forth in this policy where a peculiar condition or combination of conditions renders such condition(s) a hazard based upon reasonable judgment; or where under the circumstances, other conditions exist under which the safety of students necessitates a variance with the guidelines within this policy.

**Duties of the Superintendent.** It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools or designee to manage and supervise the school transportation service and, in connection therewith, to do the following:

- 1. Establish school transportation routes and designate locations for pick-up points (bus stops). The superintendent shall direct the establishment of bus routes to provide the safest, shortest routes as economically as possible. Routes shall equalize, as nearly as possible, the length of routes and bus loads as close to bus capacity as possible and shall provide student transportation to and from schools within prescribed time limits.

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Generally, bus routes shall begin no earlier than 60 minutes before school opens and students shall not be in transit from school more than 60 minutes.

2. Develop, circulate and enforce codes of behavior for those children who are transported to and from school via school
3. Develop procedures for responding to requests pertaining to matters of school transportation or other school accommodations.
4. Give due consideration to requests for extension of school transportation service.
5. Perform all other duties and responsibilities related to the furnishing of school accommodations by school transportation or otherwise in a manner consistent with Section 10-186 of the Connecticut General Statutes or these guidelines.

### Eligibility for School Transportation

1. Students will be eligible for school transportation if they are residents of Eastford and one or more of the following criteria is present:
  - a. The walking distance for the student, either to school or to the nearest bus stop, is in excess of the guidelines established by the board.
  - b. The walking route presents a hazard which the Board cannot reasonably eliminate or adequately abate.
  - c. The student is physically or mentally handicapped.
  - d. The student is in preschool or kindergarten.
2. Nonresidents of Eastford requesting transportation on Eastford buses must obtain permission from the Board of Education.

### Eligibility for Out-of-Town Transportation

1. Any resident of the school district under twenty-one years of age who is not a high school or vocational school graduate and who is attending a state vocational school shall be eligible for transportation.

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**5131.1(h)**

A student who is placed by a Planning and Placement Team for special education reasons in either a public or private educational institution out-of-town shall be provided the necessary transportation.

### Complaint Procedure

All complaints concerning school transportation safety shall be made in writing to the Superintendent of Schools or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall maintain a written record of all such complaints, and shall conduct appropriate investigations of the allegations in a timely manner. The investigation shall include 1) the review of the complaint raised with appropriate personnel responsible for transportation of students and 2) the opportunity for the parent or other person making the complaint to meet with the Superintendent to discuss the complaint and any possible resolution thereof. If a complaint covered by Section 10-186 of the Connecticut General Statutes, and is not resolved by the Superintendent, the Superintendent shall inform parent or guardian, or an emancipated minor or a pupil eighteen years of age or older, of his or her right to request a hearing regarding the complaint. Such hearing, if requested, shall be held in accordance with Section 10-186 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as it may be amended from time to time.

#### Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

- 10-186 Duties of local and regional boards of education.
- 10-220 Duties of boards of education.
- 10-221c Development of policy for reporting complaints regarding school transportation safety
- 14-275b Transportation of mobility impaired students.
- 14-275c Regulations re: school buses and motor vehicles used to transport special education students.

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