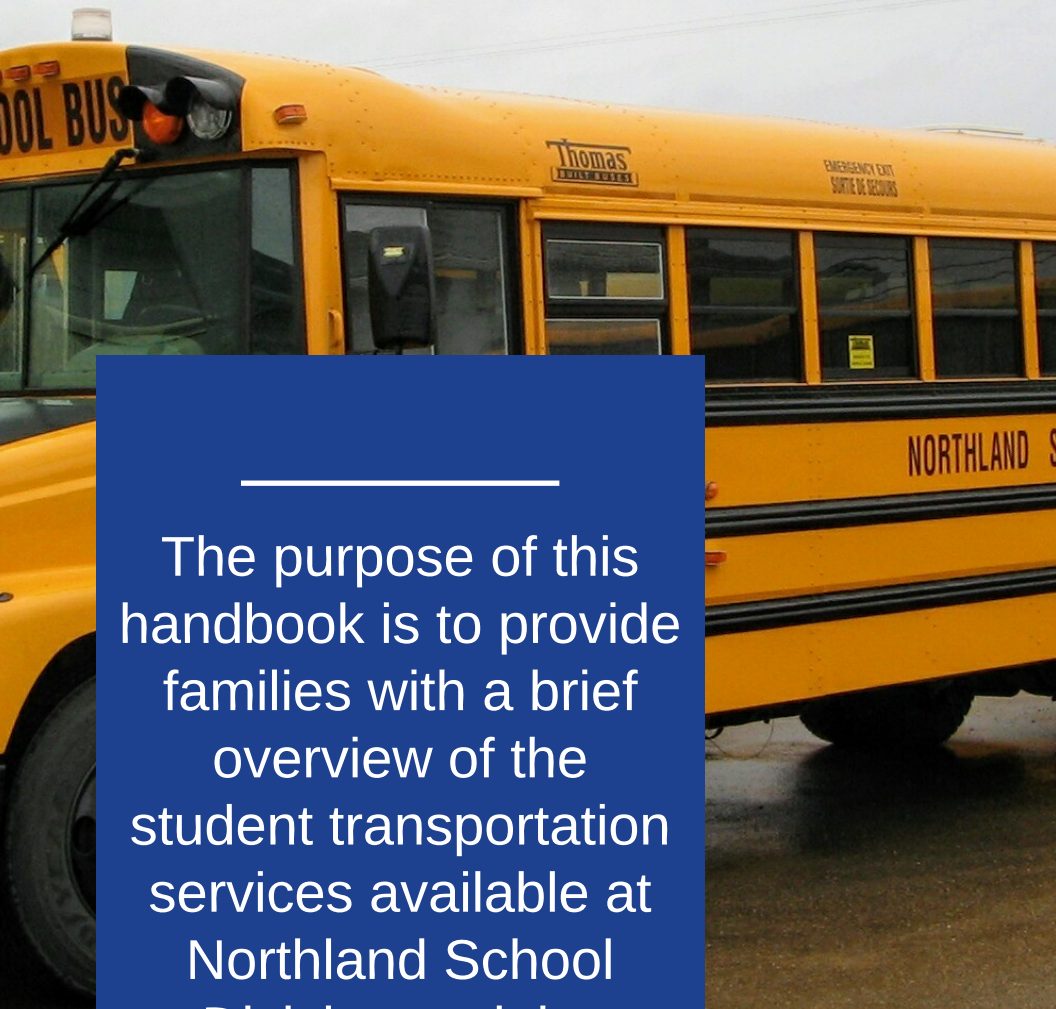
A student with a red backpack is walking towards a yellow school bus. The bus is partially visible on the left side of the frame. The background shows some trees and a clear sky. The overall scene is outdoors, likely at a school bus stop.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK

**a guide for
parents and
guardians**

Future versions of this guide can be found by visiting:

www.nsd61.ca/departments/transportation/student-transportation-handbook



The purpose of this handbook is to provide families with a brief overview of the student transportation services available at Northland School Division and the responsibilities of everyone involved.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES POLICY 17

The Board believes the priority of transportation services is to provide safe transportation for student to Board-designated programs within the Northland School Division. School bus transportation service is provided in accordance with provisions of the Education Act and the specifications outlined in this policy. Responsibility for students' safety and well-being is retained by the parents or guardians of the student up until the students are picked up by the school bus and after they are dropped off by the school bus.

Specifically

1. The Board will provide transportation at no cost for students:
 - 1.1 Eligible for provincial transportation funding: over 2.4 km from their designated school.
 - 1.2 The Board will endeavor to provide transportation for students residing less than 2.4 km from their designated school.
2. The Board supports the use of congregated bus stops to facilitate efficient busing and ride times with consideration given to the safety and feasibility of walk distances for the age of the student(s).
3. The school bus is an extension of the classroom and the same rules and discipline measures apply to the student on the bus as in the classroom. The Bus Driver is in charge on the bus and the students must listen and comply with the bus driver's rules.
4. Transportation services for students on-reserve to Northland Schools shall be as per contract.
5. Non-resident students transported by Northland School division must be covered by a transportation agreement.
6. The Alberta Education transportation conveyance allowance may be forwarded to a parent of a student qualifying for alternative transportation services.
7. Funding received for a student may be forwarded to a parent of a student-directed by the Board to attend a school of another board or an organization or agency providing special education services, that requires the student to be absent from their home community.
8. The Board shall approve all school attendance and transportation service areas.
9. For safety reasons, where practical, student pick-ups and drop-offs, will be organized so that students who are picked up first in the morning are dropped off first in the afternoon.

WELCOME

This guide was developed to increase knowledge of our transportation system, so that student safety is upheld. It also outlines important responsibilities for riders, parents/guardians, bus operators, principals and Transportation Services to adhere to. We all play a role in maintaining a safe and reliable means of transportation for students.

The safety of riders is highly-dependent on their individual and collective behavior, so we have established a set of rules to serve as the standard for acceptable rider conduct (see Student Rules of Conduct). Being on board a school bus is considered an extension of being in a classroom, so the same rules apply as those used for classroom conduct and they must be obeyed at all times. We enforce the rules within this guide, so that we can maintain the safety of all student riders.

Bus operators are responsible for the students on their buses and must receive the respect, consideration and cooperation of each of them. Student riders are under the immediate supervision and authority of the bus operator from the time they board the bus until they exit the bus at school (and likewise on the return trip). Bus operators are required to enforce the rules established by our Board of Trustees, Executive Team and the Transportation Department.

COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

Anzac

Anzac Community School - K to 3
Bill Woodward School - 4 to 12

Calling Lake

Calling Lake School - K to 12

Chard / Janvier

Father R. Perin School - K to 9

Chipewyan Lake

Chipewyan Lake School - K to 9

Conklin

Conklin Community School - K to 9

East Prairie Metis Settlement

Hillview School - K to 6

St. Andrews School (HFCRSD) - 7 to 12

Prairie River Jr. High (HPSD) - 7 to 9

E.W. Pratt High School (HPSD) - 10 to 12

Elizabeth Metis Settlement

Elizabeth School - K to 8

Cold Lake Middle School (NLSD) - 9

Cold Lake High School (NLSD) - 10 to 12

Assumption Jr/Sr High (LLCRSD) - 9 to 12

Cold Lake Outreach (NLSD) - 10 to 12

Fishing Lake Metis Settlement

J.F Dion School - K to 6

Cold Lake Middle School (NLSD) - 7 to 9

Cold Lake High School (NLSD) - 10 to 12

Assumption Jr/Sr High (LLCRSD) - 7 to 12

Cold Lake Outreach (NLSD) - 10 to 12

Gift Lake Metis Settlement

Gift Lake School - K to 9

St. Andrews School (HFCRSD) - 10 to 12

E.W. Pratt High School (HPSD) - 10 to 12

Grouard

Grouard School - K to 9

St. Andrews School (HFCRSD) - 7 to 12

Prairie River Jr. High (HPSD) - 7 to 9

E.W. Pratt High School (HPSD) - 10 to 12

Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement / Keg River

Paddle Prairie School - K to 12

Peavine Metis Settlement

Bishop Routhier School - K to 6

St. Andrews School (HFCRSD) - 7 to 12

Prairie River Jr. High (HPSD) - 7 to 9

E.W. Pratt High School (HPSD) - 10 to 12

Sandy Lake

St. Theresa School (Wab) - K to 6

Mistassiniy School (Wab) - 7 to 12

Career Pathways Outreach (Wab) - 10 to 12

Susa Creek

Susa Creek School - K to 8

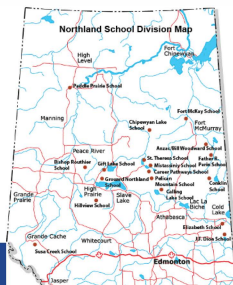
Busing for stuents in Gr 9-12 is organized and operated by Grande Yellowhead School Division

Wabasca

St. Theresa School - K to 6

Mistassiniy School - 7 to 12

Career Pathways Outreach - 10 to 12



PARTNERS IN SAFETY

STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Parental support and student cooperation are essential in ensuring that the school bus is a safe and enjoyable experience. It is important for a parent to emphasize the significant role a bus driver plays.

The primary objective of the school bus driver is to transport the students safely to and from school. The driver's attention must be on the road and traffic conditions, not on student behavior.

The school bus is considered an extension of the classroom; therefore, the driver should be treated like the teacher. Students are required to follow the rules and safety procedures at all times, including during transport and at bus stops. School administration will be advised of students in violation of the code of conduct.



PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Explain the danger zone that exists near school buses to your child(ren).
- Review and discuss bus safety with your child(ren) regularly, such as the following:
 - What to do if the bus does not arrive on time at the pick-up point,
 - What to do at the drop-off point,
 - What to do if the child(ren) miss(es) the bus at the end of the school day (report to school office).
- Familiarize your child(ren) with the pick up and drop-off point. Children must be fully aware of their stop locations since it is sometimes necessary to assign a spare
- Arrive at the designated pick-up point 3-5 minutes before the scheduled bus arrival time.

- Ensure your child(ren)'s safety while getting to and from the bus pick-up/drop-off points;
- Review the Student Rules of Conduct (see next page) with your child to ensure they understand what is expected of them and to promote safe bus travel.
- Demonstrate procedures for getting off school buses. See the Point, Pause, Proceed pedestrian safety rules in the Safety Rules section of this manual.
- Ensure that your child is dressed properly for current and anticipated weather conditions. Please be aware that the temperature on a school bus can drop dramatically in the event of mechanical problems.
- Supervise your child at the bus stop in the morning and be at the stop to take custody of them when they are dropped off in the afternoon. (The same is expected of daycare providers who have student riders in their care.)
- Do not ask the bus operator to drop off or pick up your child somewhere other than the designated stop, as assigned by the Transportation Department. Such negotiations are strictly prohibited.
- Collaborate with the principal and the bus operator to correct any problem your child may be causing or may be involved in while on the bus.

PARTNERS IN SAFETY

- Parents are advised that serious or ongoing student misconduct will be reported to the school principal. Concerns about drivers should be directed to the Transportation Department office at Northland School Division;

Notify the school (in writing/email) if your child no longer requires bus service (or a change in service is needed).

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents should work with students to ensure they are aware and mindful of their responsibilities. Students should:

- arrive 3-5 min before the scheduled arrival of the bus;
- Wait in an orderly fashion, well-back from the side of the road;
- recognize that a danger zone exists in the immediate vicinity around the school bus;
- behave responsibly at the bus stop, while on the bus, and during loading and unloading;
- board the bus in single file and use the handrail; and
- promptly obey the drivers directions;
- use the emergency exits only in the case of a genuine emergency;
- speak in a moderate and polite tone of voice; and
- never eat or drink on the bus.

When getting off school buses, students must:

- be familiar with their assigned stop;
- have belongings organized and adequately secured before arriving at their stop;

- remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop and the door is open;
- walk to the front of the bus and use the handrail while exiting;
- get off the bus only at their designated stop and
- immediately move away from the bus to the sidewalk, recognizing the danger zone close to the bus.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

The school is responsible for:

- arranging adequate supervision at the school for students utilizing transportation by the Division
- addressing and resolving student conduct concerns on the bus;
- complying with Northland School Division and Alberta Education requirements for collecting and reporting transportation-related information.

DIVISION RESPONSIBILITIES

The division is responsible for:

- developing policy, and operating guidelines for student transportation services
- disseminating information to students,



PARTNERS IN SAFETY CONTINUED

- parents, schools and carriers;
- arranging contacted services with qualified carriers;
- providing necessary student information to carriers; and
- addressing parental questions and concerns about the operation of the student transportation system.

BUS DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

The bus driver is responsible for:

- following Division policies, procedures and contractual obligations
- transporting student to and from school safely, courteously, and reliably;
- orientating students on procedures and safety;
- Post the Student Code of Conduct in the bus.
- developing seating plans and assigning student to specific seats;
- following the route and schedule provided.
- Never enter private property unless there is written permission from the Transportation Department or a safety concern is relevant.
- Only pick up or drop off students at designated stops as assigned by the Transportation Department. Negotiations between the bus operator and a parent/guardian requesting pick up or drop-off at any location other than the designated stop, as assigned by the Transportation Department, is strictly prohibited.
- picking up or dropping off students only at the designated stop on the bus route. This practice will ensure that student are not missed when new or spare drivers operate the bus route.
- Check the bus after completion of the

- route or field trip for any students, damage and/or lost articles.
- maintaining discipline among students on the bus following the guidelines set out by the Division;
- reporting student behavior on an infraction report to the school principal as necessary;
- driving students to the school or the after school drop-off location once they have boarded the bus;
- completing route and ridership information forms as requested by the Division; and
- conducting bus evacuation drills.
- Bus operators are not permitted to use their cell phone during their bus route - even when stopped. And exception will only be made in the event of an emergency.

CONTRACTED CARRIER RESPONSIBILITIES

All our contracted carriers must:

- operate routes according to the schedules provided;
- provide an effective bus driver training program;
- provide statistical information as required by the Division; and
- fulfill all requirements outlined by law and the Division contract and as directed by the Division



STUDENT RULES OF CONDUCT

- Dress adequately for current and anticipated weather conditions.
- Be at the designated bus stop 3-5 minutes prior to your bus arriving. The times indicated by the bus operator are departure times, not arrival. The bus will not wait.
- Maintain respect for public and private property while you wait at the bus stop.
- Line up properly as the bus is coming to a stop.
- Be seated promptly and safely in your assigned seat for the duration of the ride.
- Respect and obey the bus operator at all times.
- Follow rules of classroom conduct, with the allowance of ordinary quiet conversation.
- Take responsibility for your personal property (books, backpacks, electronic devices, etc.).
- Exit the bus at your designated stop. Cross the road only when it is safe to do so and under the guidance of the bus operator. Upon exiting, only cross in front of the bus if you live on the opposite side of the road.
- Treat the bus, bus operator and other riders with respect and refrain from engaging in the following activities. (Engaging in these activities may result in disciplinary actions. The degree of seriousness of the offenses listed below may warrant immediate suspension and/or referral to enforcement services.)
 - Failing to follow the bus operator's instructions or unnecessarily distracting the operator
 - Displaying or performing disruptive behavior (e.g. bully, yell/scream, hit/push/spit, profane gesture/words, vandalism, etc.)
 - Possessing a potentially dangerous item (e.g. guns, knives, etc.)
 - Possessing tobacco, e-cigarettes, lighters/matches or other smoking items
 - Possessing or using controlled substances (e.g alcohol, drugs etc.)
 - Consuming any food or beverages while on board (unless medically required)
 - Using a recording device, such as cell phone or camera while on board the school bus
 - Playing any electronic devices without earphones and/or earbuds
 - Extending any part of the body/throwing objects out of the window (or on the bus)

Other rules:

- A student may be allowed to get off the bus at a different stop along their designated route provided that they are a registered student rider and their parent/guardian has given written consent to the School.

DISCIPLINE

The bus is an extension of the classroom and school officials will handle any misconduct. Our buses may be equipped with video cameras and may be used for safety and corrective actions only. The principal may suspend a student from riding the school bus for violation of the Student Rules of Conduct and regulations subject to Section 24 of the School Act.

Guidelines for dealing with behavior problems on the school bus:

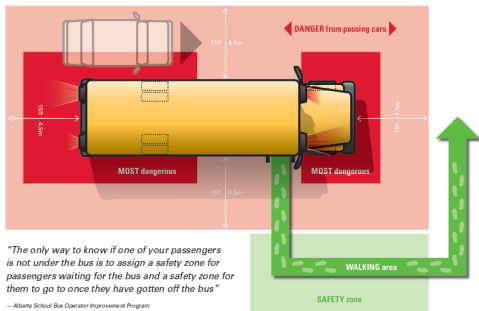
Minor problems

- **First Infraction:**
 - The bus operator talks to the student, asks for a commitment to change their behavior and contact the parent/guardian.
- **Second Infraction:**
 - The bus operator repeats the conversation from the first infraction and informs the principal through the completion of a misconduct form.
- **Third Infraction:**
 - The bus operator informs the principal (who would escalate this to a major problem) and completes a misconduct form.

Major problems

- **First Infraction:** The bus operator stops the bus, calls the student to the front, gives a warning and records details of the incident on a conduct form. The bus operator gives a copy of the conduct form to the principal, who meets with the student and advises the parent/guardians. Police may be informed if a law has been broken. The school sends a copy of the conduct form to the Transportation Department.
- **Second Infraction:** The bus operator, principal and the student meet. The student may be suspended from the school bus. Return depends on an agreement between the parents/guardians and the principal for behavior change. Police may be informed if a law has been broken. The school sends a copy of the conduct form to the Transportation Department.
- **Third Infraction:** The bus operator, principal, student and parent/guardian meet. Permanent suspension from the school bus may be recommended. The school sends a copy of the conduct form to the Transportation Department.

AROUND THE SCHOOL BUS



"The only way to know if one of your passengers is not under the bus is to assign a safety zone for passengers waiting for the bus and a safety zone for them to go to once they have gotten off the bus"

...Alberta School Bus Operator Improvement Program

The area directly around a school bus, even when it is parked, is called the **DANGER ZONE**.

When waiting for the school bus to arrive, everyone must stay safely within the walking area (see pictured).

The danger zone is the area extending three meters from the bus on all sides.

If anyone drops an item in the danger zone, they must wait until the bus drives away to safely retrieve it.

GETTING ON THE BUS

Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the bus driver opens the door before you step towards the bus. You have to walk through the danger zone to get on the bus - so no running and no pushing - hold on to the handrail every time you get on or off the bus. And watch your step - it's a big one!

Students that live on the opposite side of the road shall:

- line up on the side of the road in your safe zone
- maintain eye contact with the bus driver
- The bus driver will hold their hand up telling the students to wait.
- The bus driver will check to make sure all traffic has stopped

When it is safe for the students to cross, the bus driver will gesture with their hand that it is safe to cross.

GETTING OFF THE BUS

Stay in your seat until the bus has stopped and the door is open. Leave the bus in a single file, do not push or shove. Don't forget to use the handrail and watch out for that big step. And remember, you have to walk through that danger zone again, so as soon as you step down, take five giant steps away from the bus. Never, ever go back into the danger zone for any reason.

Students that live on the opposite side of the road shall:

- Exit the bus safely
- line up on the side of the road near the end of the crossing arm (10 large steps from the door)
- maintain eye contact with the bus driver
- The bus driver will hold their hand up telling the students to wait.
- The bus driver will check to make sure all traffic has stopped
- When it is safe for the students to cross, the bus driver will gesture with their hand that it is safe to cross.

BUS STOPS



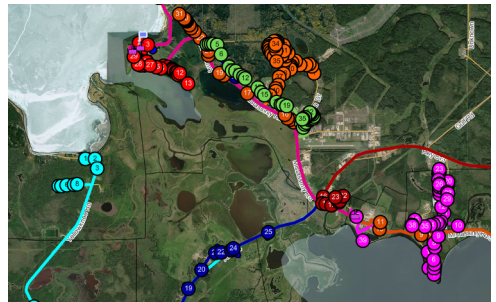
Northland School Division typically provides door to door service. Which means that your bus stop is typically at the end of your driveway. There are some circumstances where students may be required to walk a short distance to another location.

Bus routes / stops are designed over the summer by the Transportation Department. Lists are given to the bus drivers before school starts.

It is imperative that you notify the school or the Transportation Department if you move so your information can be updated.

ROUTE DESIGN

Transportation routes and schedules are designed following Division guidelines. Carriers and individual drivers are not permitted to make changes to the established routes.



ROUTE CHANGES



Changes in the design of a route will have an impact on all riders. Therefore, requests for adjustments must be authorized through the Division Transportation Department.

SCHEDULES



All route information, including route number and pick up time will be communicated with you prior to the beginning of the year and any time there are changes to your route.

Make sure you update your contact information with the school so we can contact you.

ROUTE ACCESS

The student must be registered at the school to ride the school bus.

The school and bus driver must know which students are on the bus; this is a best practice to ensure the safe transportation of all students.

Please see the section on School Bus Registration for students attending Northland operated schools and for students attending outside schools.



RETURNING STUDENTS

For students attending Northland Operated Schools, please ensure you complete the Re-Registration form that will be sent out in the spring. This will ensure the school has the proper information to enter into our computer program that notifies the Transportation Department which students need bus service.

Students that attend school in High Prairie or Cold Lake, please register annually by visiting:

<https://www.nsd61.ca/departments/transportation/school-bus-registration>

Our systems are not connected with High Prairie School Division, Holy Family Catholic Regional School Division, Northern Lights School Division or Lakeland Catholic School Division.



VIDEO/AUDIO SURVEILLANCE

Some school buses within our district are equipped with video/audio surveillance.

- to promote safe and efficient school transportation practices
- to encourage good behavior in students through deterrence;
- to decrease the potential risk of injury or damage to students and Division property;
- to deal with student discipline
- to deal with inquiries and proceedings relating to law enforcement
- to detect or deter criminal offenses which occur within view of the cameras;
- or for any other reason deemed appropriate.



Carry-on items are permitted on school buses; however, safety is top priority. The maximum allowable dimensions for approved carry-on items is 33 x 33 x 59 centimeters (13x13x23 inches) and items must be able to fit on the lap of the student. All loose items must be in a sealed bag/case. Items blocking the aisles or emergency exits on a school bus are in violation of Alberta Transportation regulations and are not permitted.

Larger items that cannot be adequately secured and stored are considered to be hazardous, as they could seriously harm someone in the event of sudden acceleration or a collision. Large unsecured items are not permitted and must be transported in a separate vehicle.

NOTIFICATION AND USE OF DIGITAL VIDEO RECORDERS

Recordings of events will not be shared with parents/guardians as the recordings are protected by the Freedom of Information Act. Designated Division administration and school administration may have access to and review the video.

Note:

If a bus is equipped with video surveillance, it is in operation continually.

Video recordings of passengers are the property of the Division.



CARRY-ON ITEMS

✓ CARRY-ON ITEMS THAT ARE ALLOWED ON THE BUS

- Skates (skate guards on, inside a sealed bag which meets the above allowable dimensions)
- Small musical instrument (meets allowable dimensions - flute, clarinet, alto sax, trumpet)
- A certified and registered guide animal

✗ CARRY-ON ITEMS THAT ARE NOT ALLOWED ON THE BUS

- Hockey or ringette sticks, golf clubs, snowboards, toboggans, scooters, longboards, skateboards, or any other large item
- Large musical instruments (tuba, tenor saxophone, guitar, drums, French horn or trombone)
- Any kind of animals

SCHOOL BUS REGISTRATION FOR STUDENTS ATTENDING NORTHLAND OPERATED SCHOOLS

Each year, parents/guardians are required to register their child to receive school bus transportation.

To register your child for the school bus, you must contact your school and provide the following information:

- The CIVIC Address of where you live
 - Whether you require AM & PM transportation to and from your home
- If you require *secondary* transportation service due to shared custody
 - The CIVIC address of this location will be required
 - Whether you require AM & PM transportation to and from the secondary location
- If you require *alternate* transportation service due to daycare/day home requirements
 - The CIVIC address of this location will be required
 - Whether you require AM & PM transportation to and from the alternate location

Don't forget to update your address and contact information with the school if it changes throughout the year.

SCHOOL BUS REGISTRATION FOR STUDENTS ATTENDING SCHOOLS IN HIGH PRAIRIE OR COLD LAKE

Each year, parents/guardians are required to register their child to receive school bus transportation.

To register your child for the school bus, you must complete the online form available at:

www.nsd61.ca/departments/transportation/school-bus-registration

- Ensure you have the CIVIC Address of where you live
 - Whether you require AM & PM transportation to and from your home
- If you require *secondary* transportation service due to shared custody
 - The CIVIC address of this location will be required
 - Whether you require AM & PM transportation to and from the secondary location
- If you require *alternate* transportation service due to daycare/day home requirements
 - The CIVIC address of this location will be required
 - Whether you require AM & PM transportation to and from the alternate location

SEVERE WEATHER

when the safety of transporting student riders is at risk due to weather conditions, school bus service may be suspended. if bus service is suspended/cancelled, an official notice will be sent via the Bus Status App.

SUSPENSION OF SCHOOL BUS SERVICE

Weather guidelines that support the decision to suspend bus service:

- Temperature of -35 or windchill of -40
- Impassable rural roads
- Freezing Rain
- Other road conditions that interfere with the safety of the students and staff.

The final decision to send a child to the bus stop or to school rests with the parents/guardians, even though buses may be operational. Parents should ensure that their child is dressed appropriately while traveling to and from school during inclement weather conditions. Temperatures on a bus can drop dramatically in the event of mechanical problems.

IMPASSABLE ROADS

If known in advance that roads are impassable, parents/guardians should contact their bus driver. Bus drivers will arrange for a safe pick up and drop-off location.

Except in very special circumstances, Northland School Division school always remain open on school days.

BUS STATUS

The Transportation Department maintains an active Bus Status page that includes all bus routes. To view bus status (e.g. On Time, Delayed, Cancelled, Early etc.), visit

www.nsd61.ca/departments/transportation/bus-status or click the bus icon on the top-right corner of the homepage. The bus status also shows on all of the individual school web pages.

Parents can download the free **Bus Status App** to receive bus status notifications. The app is available on Google Play (Android) and in the App Store (Apple iOS), simply search "bus status".

The bus status is updated as soon as the Transportation Department becomes aware of any changes to the bus status.



Download the Bus Status App by Rally to receive instant notifications about your bus status.

CONTACT US

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

OFFICE LOCATION

Northland School Division

9809-77th Ave

Peace River, AB T8S 1C9

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (weekdays)

EMAIL

transportation@nsd61.ca

ONLINE

www.nsd61.ca/departments/transportation

MAIN TRANSPORTATION PHONE

780-624-2060



Northland
SCHOOL DIVISION

It shouldn't be this dangerous to get to school



REDS FLASHING... NO PASSING!

IT IS ILLEGAL TO PASS A
SCHOOL BUS WHEN THE
RED LIGHTS ARE FLASHING.

**\$567 Fine +
6 Demerit Points!**

School bus safety...
It's everyone's responsibility!



Parking in a school bus zone is illegal and presents a serious safety hazard. Such parking forces buses to double park when loading and unloading students. Parking in a School Bus zone creates a highly unsafe situation for students.