

32. SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Rhode Island law requires school committees to provide transportation to all children attending public or private non-profit schools within the city or town limits if the children reside so far from the school as to make their regular attendance impractical. School districts have considerable latitude in establishing local policies to meet this requirement. Also, school committees must provide transportation to children attending public or private non-profit schools beyond city or town limits providing the school is located within the region in which the children reside and is consolidated, regionalized, or otherwise established to serve a specific area of the state. All special needs children must be provided with transportation to and from special education programs; and clinical, diagnostic, and therapeutic facilities.

Rhode Island law specifies that a school bus must meet specific safety measures before that bus can be used to transport children to and from school. School districts are required to provide school bus monitors on all school-bound and home-bound buses carrying students in grades K-5. In addition, all school bus drivers must possess a valid operator's certificate and successfully complete a school bus driver training course. School committees must adopt and disseminate written rules explaining the disciplinary action to be taken against students who misbehave on the school bus.

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| <p>a. Within city or town limits, school committees shall provide suitable transportation to and from school for pupils who reside so far from the public or private school which the pupil attends as to make the pupil's regular attendance at school impractical ..." (General Laws of Rhode Island, 16-21-1; and Commissioner's Decisions on Appeals, 1963-72 and 1972-76).</p> <p>b. School committees shall provide transportation for pupils attending public or private non-profit schools beyond city or town limits and within the region in which the pupil resides, including ... schools which are consolidated, regionalized, or otherwise established to serve residents of a specific area within the state (General Laws of Rhode Island, 16-21.1-1).</p> | <p>Bus routes and schedules indicate busing is provided for pupils residing beyond minimum busing distances established by the school committees and/or for purposes of their health and safety, such as lack of sidewalks, conditions of roads, busy intersections, lack of traffic signals, designated hazardous areas of the community, physical condition of pupils, etc.</p> <p>Bus routes and schedules to schools beyond city or town limits provide evidence that students receive these services.</p> |

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| <p>c. All handicapped children shall be provided free transportation as determined by the evaluation process and described in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) to and from home (door-to-door, if necessary) to the educational program in which they are enrolled. Free transportation shall also be provided to and from clinical, diagnostic, and therapeutic facilities when the clinical, diagnostic, and therapeutic services are necessary ... (Section One, VII-1.0, Regulations of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Governing the Special Education of Handicapped Children).</p> | <p>Special education students' IEP's, bus routes and schedules, and other transportation records show evidence that these services are provided.</p> |
| <p>d. Vehicles used for the transportation of handicapped children shall comply with all safety regulations required for pupil transportation ... (Section One, VII-2.0, Regulations of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Governing the Special Education of Handicapped Children).</p> | <p>A certificate of inspection is on file in the school district from the Division of Motor vehicles.</p> |

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| <p>e. The school district shall provide school bus monitors on all school-bound and home-bound buses serving students in grades K-5. (Variances to the requirement for a school bus monitor may be granted by the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education if he or she finds that an alternative plan provides substantially equivalent safety for children. General Laws of Rhode Island, 16-21-1).</p> <p>f. All school bus monitors shall be sixteen (16) years of age or older (General Laws of Rhode Island, 16-21-1).</p> | <p>Recruitment efforts, training programs, personnel records, and work schedules show that individuals are employed as school bus monitors and are assigned to buses carrying students in grades K-5.</p> <p>A copy of the variance granted by the Commissioner, to the school district, is on file in the Superintendent's Office.</p> <p>Personnel records indicate that all bus monitors are at least sixteen (16) years old.</p> |

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| <p>g. Prior to assignment, a school bus monitor must receive instruction that shall include, but not be limited to, crossing guard procedures; pupil loading and unloading procedures; behavior management techniques; danger zones; emergency procedures; and familiarization with handicapped and regular buses.</p> | <p>A program of instruction for new school bus monitors is in place and includes all the areas indicated in the standard.</p> <p>Records indicate that a new school bus monitor receives instruction in the areas identified in the standard before he/she begins his/her assignment.</p> |
| <p>h. Prior to assignment, a school bus monitor must successfully demonstrate the duties of a school bus monitor.</p> | <p>Records indicate that a new school bus monitor has successfully demonstrated the duties of a bus monitor before he/she begins his/her assignment.</p> <p>A process is in place which ensures that all new school bus monitors successfully demonstrate the duties of a school bus monitor, prior to assignment.</p> |

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| <p>i. The school bus monitor must get off the school bus at every school bus stop and check the danger zones before advising the school bus driver that it is clear for the driver to proceed.</p> | <p>A visual inspection provides evidence that the school bus monitor follows the procedure in the stated standard.</p> |
| <p>j. All school bus monitors will be equipped with a reflective crossing guard belt or vest.</p> | <p>A visual inspection provides evidence that every school bus monitor is equipped with a reflective crossing guard belt or vest.</p> |

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k. Whenever a child/ren are required to cross the street on school-bound or home-bound routes, the following procedures will be followed:

- o the bus driver will signal the bus monitor when all traffic has stopped and the monitor will disembark;
- o the child/ren will disembark and the bus monitor will instruct the child/ren to take TEN (10) GIANT STEPS to the front of the bus;
- o the monitor will instruct the child/ren to wait for the bus driver to signal them to cross the street;
- o the monitor will walk to the center of the street;
- o the bus driver will signal the child/ren to cross the street by using the P.A. system;
- o the monitor will remain in position until the child/ren are in an area of safety;
- o the monitor will then check the danger zones before he/she gets back on the bus.

A visual inspection provides evidence that the school bus monitor follows the procedure stated in the standard.

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| <p>l. All school districts shall be required to maintain a daily record or log of each K-5 bus run to include the name of the school bus monitor assigned to that run, or the type of continuing or emergency variance used on the run. These records shall be made available to the Commissioner upon request.</p> | <p>For every K-5 bus run, written records provide evidence of the name of the school bus monitor assigned to that run, or the type of variance used on that run.</p> |
| <p>m. The school district shall provide school bus safety instruction for all children in grades K-6 at least four (4) times per year-two of which shall take place during September and October (General Laws of Rhode Island, 16-21-17).</p> | <p>School district records, lesson plans, curriculum guides or assembly schedules indicate that children receive this instruction.</p> |

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| <p>n. Any school bus driver must be twenty-one (21) years of age or older, unless exempted,* and hold a chauffeur license (General Laws of Rhode Island, 31-10-5).</p> <p>* Any person who has not attained the age of twenty-one (21) years, but who has been legally operating a school bus prior to June 27, 1986, shall be exempt from the age provision contained herein.</p> <p>o. Operators shall possess a valid School Bus Operator's certificate issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles and shall have successfully completed required school bus driver training (General Laws of Rhode Island, 31-10-5).</p> | <p>Each driver is able to show his/her chauffeur license which indicates the issuee's date of birth.</p> <p>Each operator is able to show his/her valid permit.</p> <p>The school district has on file each school bus operator's certificate number.</p> |

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| <p>p. No school bus shall stop to discharge or pick up passengers at any intersection where a traffic control device controls the movement of the bus (General Laws of Rhode Island, 31-20-10.3).</p> | <p>A review of bus stops on school bus routes indicate that no stops have been established at intersections where there is a traffic control device.</p> |
| <p>q. All school bus routes shall be reviewed by the local police chief of each city or town for safety hazards within ninety (90) days before the start of the school year (General Laws of Rhode Island, 31-20-10.3).</p> | <p>A letter from the chief of police confirming his/her review of all school bus routes is on file in the school district.</p> |

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r. No school bus shall stop to discharge or pick up passengers at any location which would require a child/ren to cross any road where the posted speed limit is greater than thirty-five (35) miles per hour. School bus stops will be on the child/ren home side of the road so that the child/ren does not have to cross the road to board the bus or to reach home. Rural communities (those communities in which there is a regionalized school district and the towns of Burrillville, Scituate, Little Compton, and New Shoreham) are exempted from the discharge requirements when:

- o a school bus is turning 180 degrees on a road, or
- o a school bus is backing up on a road, or
- o a school bus is stopping on a road of low traffic flow (any road designated as a road with low traffic flow by the state traffic commission). (General Laws of Rhode Island, 31-20-10.3 and 10.4)

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A review of bus stops on school bus routes indicate that on roads where the posted speed limit is greater than thirty-five (35) miles per hour, school bus stops are on the child/ren home side of the road.

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s. No school superintendent, school committee, contractor or school bus owner shall put into effect any school bus route which cannot be completed in the time allotted without exceeding posted speed limits (General Laws of Rhode Island, 31-20-10.3).

t. Every bus shall also bear on the right and left side the name of the school district for which the bus is transporting children in letters not less than four (4) inches in height and shall be painted black (General Laws of Rhode Island, 16-20-11).

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The time schedule for completion of a school bus route is within all posted speed limits.

Drivers indicate that the time schedule is appropriate for completing the bus route within all posted speed limits.

A visual inspection provides evidence that each bus bears the school district's name in black letters not less than four (4) inches high on the right and left side of the bus.

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u. All motor vehicles for the transportation of children to or from schools shall conform to the rules and regulations issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles (General Laws of Rhode Island, 31-22-10).

v. School bus drivers shall operate their vehicles in conformance with rules and regulations issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles (General Laws of Rhode Island, 31-22-10).

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A certificate of inspection is on file in the district from the Division of Motor Vehicles.

A review of school bus drivers' personnel performance evaluation records, on file in the school district's or contractor's personnel office, indicates drivers' conformance with rules and regulations.

Interviews with drivers indicate knowledge of rules, laws, and regulations issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles.

