

TRANSPORTATION

The Ledyard Board of Education shall provide an appropriate transportation system, within the guidelines set forth in this policy and in compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, which will enable all qualified children of school age to be transported to Ledyard Public Schools, state technical high schools, and points of service for special education programs as delineated in student individualized education programs.

The Board is not required to provide transportation for students choosing to attend charter schools or inter-district magnet schools that are located outside the Town of Ledyard. The Board may choose to provide such transportation when economically feasible. The Board reserves the right to modify such transportation within five (5) school days of notifying the affected student's parent(s)/guardian(s), or the student in the case of an emancipated minor or student eighteen (18) years of age or older. As participation in these programs is a matter of choice, the Board may make use of centralized drop-off points for transportation to/from out-of-district magnet and charter schools. In such situations, the walking distance limitations specified below are not applicable as the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to transport their student to/from the drop-off locations.

Transportation by private carrier or through District owned or leased buses shall be provided at the discretion of the Board. The Board will not reimburse parents for transporting their children to/from school nor participate in the State Department of Education's program whereby parents can receive funds for transporting their children to/from magnet schools since such action would make the District legally liable for events occurring when the parents are transporting their children.

Eligibility for School Transportation

Students shall be eligible for school transportation if one or more of the following criteria is present:

1. The walking distance for the student to school or to their designated bus stop is in excess of the following maximum distances:
 - For students enrolled in grades kindergarten through third grade, up to one (1) mile.
 - For students enrolled in grades four through eight, up to one and one-half (1.5) miles.
 - For students enrolled in grades nine through twelve, up to two (2) miles.
2. The walking distance for the student does not exceed the limits specified above, but the route is deemed unsafe for walking by the District administration.
3. The student is physically or mentally handicapped.
4. The student, per the provisions of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, is classified as a homeless student, attends a school identified as in need of improvement, is a victim of a violent criminal offense, or attends a school identified as persistently dangerous.

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Guidelines for Establishing Bus Routes

Student safety is the primary concern in determining the location of student pick-up and drop-off locations (i.e., bus stops).

District administration shall develop bus routes that provide the safest, shortest routes which will get all students to school in the most economical way. Routes shall be arranged in such a way as to equalize, as nearly as possible, the length of routes and bus loads and to provide for the full use of buses. Bus routes shall not overlap unless absolutely necessary. When more than one bus travels on an arterial highway, each bus shall be assigned a certain portion of the route and all children within this section shall ride the bus to which they are assigned. Only one bus shall cover one particular road unless overloading occurs.

Buses shall not go off the main bus route to pick up children unless the distance is one-half mile or more or the District administration determines that there is a safety concern.

Students are expected to walk to school or to their designated bus stop up to the maximum distances previously specified in this policy based on the student's grade.

Bus stops may be located at more frequent intervals to reduce student congestion at the bus stop or for other reasons of safety as determined by District administration.

District administration shall take into consideration the student's health and physical fitness and the presence of unsafe conditions along the walking route when determining the location of bus stops. A note from the student's medical provider or assessment by the school nurse shall be used to establish any limitations on a student's ability to walk the distances specified in this policy.

At the start of each school year, a list of the bus routes shall be posted on the District's website at least five (5) business days prior to the first student day of school.

Bus routes shall only be changed by the District administration, not by the bus driver.

Procedure for Appealing Decisions Regarding Transportation

A student's parent(s)/guardian(s), or the student in the case of an emancipated minor or student eighteen (18) years of age, shall file an initial complaint about school transportation with the Business Manager or the staff member coordinating transportation. Should the matter not be resolved, the next step is to discuss the matter with the Superintendent.

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The parent(s)/guardian(s) of any child who is denied school accommodations (in this case proper transportation as required by state or federal law) in Ledyard Public Schools, or an emancipated minor or a pupil eighteen (18) years of age or older who is denied such school accommodation, or an agent or officer charged with the enforcement of the laws concerning attendance at school, may, in writing, request a hearing by the Ledyard Board of Education.

The Board shall designate a subcommittee of the Board composed of three Board members to conduct the hearing. The Board subcommittee shall give such person a hearing within ten (10) days after receipt of the written request, make a stenographic record or tape recording of the hearing and make a finding within ten (10) days after the hearing. Hearings shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of sections 4-176e to 4-180a, inclusive, and section 4-181a of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS).

The party (i.e., the District administration) claiming ineligibility for school accommodations shall have the burden of proving such ineligibility by a preponderance of the evidence.

Appeal of Hearing Findings

Any such parent, guardian, emancipated minor, pupil eighteen (18) years of age or older, or agent or officer, aggrieved by the finding of the Board hearing shall, upon request, be provided with a transcript of the hearing within thirty (30) days after such request and may take an appeal from the finding to the State Board of Education. A copy of each notice of appeal shall be filed simultaneously with the Ledyard Board of Education and the State Board of Education.

If an appeal is not taken to the State Board of Education within twenty (20) days of the mailing of the finding to the aggrieved party, the decision of the Board subcommittee shall be final.

The Superintendent, on behalf of the Board, shall, within ten (10) days after receipt of notice of an appeal, forward the record of the hearing to the State Board of Education.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Superintendent

It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent or her/his designee to manage and supervise the school transportation service and, in connection therewith, to do the following:

- Determine eligibility for school transportation in accordance with these guidelines and Section 10-186 of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) and in compliance with applicable portions of the *No Child Left Behind Act* pertaining to homeless students and school choice.
- Establish school transportation routes and designate locations for pick-up points (bus stops) in accordance with the guidelines in this policy.

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- Develop, circulate and enforce codes of behavior for those children who are transported to and from school via school transportation.
- Develop procedures for responding to requests pertaining to matters of school transportation or other school accommodations.
- Consider requests for extension of school transportation service.
- Implement the Board’s policy for the reporting of all complaints relative to school transportation safety as required by CGS Section 10-221c .
- Develop procedures to be followed in the case of a bus accident, unexpected early closing of the schools or other such emergency situation.
- Perform all other duties and responsibilities related to the furnishing of school accommodations by school transportation or otherwise in a manner consistent with these guidelines and applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes:

10-54. Transportation grants.

10-66ee. Charter school funding. Special education students. Transportation. Contracts. Cooperative arrangements.

10-76d. Duties and powers of boards of education to provide special education programs and services. Determination of eligibility for Medicaid. Development of individualized education program. Planning and placement team meetings. Public agency placements; apportionment of costs. Relationship of insurance to special education costs.

10-97. Transportation to technical high schools.

10-158a. Cooperative arrangements among towns. School building projects. Student transportation.

10-186. Duties of local and regional boards of education re school attendance. Hearings. Appeals to state board. Establishment of hearing board. Readmission. Transfers.

10-187. Appeal from finding of hearing board.

10-220. Duties of boards of education.

10-220c. Transportation of children over private roads. Immunity from liability.

10-220i. Transportation of students carrying cartridge injectors.

10-221c. Development of policy for reporting complaints re school transportation safety. Reporting of accidents at school bus stops.

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10-221e. Intradistrict student assignment programs.

10-233c. Suspension of pupils.

10-233d. Expulsion of pupils.

10-253. School privileges for children in certain placements, nonresident children, children in temporary shelters, homeless children and children in juvenile detention facilities.

10-264/. Grants for the operation of interdistrict magnet school programs. Transportation. Special education. Tuition.

10-266m. Transportation grants.

10-273a. Reimbursement for transportation to and from elementary and secondary schools.

10-277. Reimbursement for transportation of high school pupils from towns or regional school districts not maintaining high schools. Transportation to nonpublic schools.

10-280a. Transportation for pupils in nonprofit private schools outside school district.

10-281. Transportation for pupils in nonprofit private schools within school district.

14-281d. Duties of operators of student transportation vehicles re receipt or discharge of school children.

Title 20, United States Code, Section 6316 – Academic Assessment and Local Educational Agency and School Improvement

Title 42, United States Code, Sections 11431 – 11435 – Education for Homeless Children and Youths

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