

Bus Route & Stop Design Guidelines



PURPOSE

To outline guidelines for the development of bus routes and bus stops for eligible students transported by NLSchools.

SCOPE

These guidelines apply to all regular student transportation within NLSchools, including:

- Contracted Services
- Government-operated Services

RELATED GUIDANCE

These guidelines should be read and applied in conjunction with:

- NLSchools [policies](#) and [procedures](#)
- [Department of Education's School Bus Transportation Policies](#)
- Individual contracts entered into between NLSchools and a given contractor

DEFINITIONS

Capacity of Regular School Bus

K to 6	70 passengers
K to 12 (mixed load)	70 passengers
7 to 12	63 passengers

Note: This is in relation to a conventional full size school bus.

School's Catchment

The geographic area where students are eligible to attend a specific school

Alternate Transportation Student

A student who has been approved for Alternate Transportation in accordance with the NLSchools Alternate Transportation Policy.

ELIGIBILITY

A student is eligible for transportation if their civic address is located within the boundary of the school's catchment area.

Note: if a student lives in an unincorporated area with no publicly maintained services, distance is measured from the entrance of the community (where it intersects with the publicly maintained roadway) to the nearest school access point.

Distance is typically measured via NLSchools BusPlanner (routing) software or Google Earth/Maps. However, in instances where distance is too close to accurately measure remotely, the Regional Manager or designate will physically measure using an NLSchools-approved vehicle.

Bus Route & Stop Design Guidelines

BUS ROUTE DESIGN

Bus routes are determined by NLSchools based on the geographic location of all eligible students. Eligible students are then assigned to a specific route, as determined by NLSchools, based on their civic address. Therefore, a student is only eligible for transportation on their assigned route.

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

Responsibility for the design and management of bus routes rests with the Regional Manager of Student Transportation. Each Regional Manager may designate specific tasks to a suitable Student Transportation representative.

Travel Time

Every effort should be made to keep routes below 60 minutes where possible.

- Some routes may periodically run beyond 60 minutes due to weather or construction delays
- Where timing of routes is questionable, an NLSchools representative may be required to audit a route via ride-along to ensure bus stop times are as efficient as possible. An inquiry should be made on the NLSchools [Public Inquiry Form](#) to request an audit.

Every effort should be made to balance routes to minimize travel time without implementing additional routes or adding significant distance. For example, if it is possible to reduce one route from 60 minutes to 45 by increasing a 15 minute route accordingly, this option should be considered.

Publicly Maintained Roadway

Roads that are maintained by either a Municipality, Local Service District or the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Priority Snow Clearing

Roads that are not priority maintained pose significant challenges for winter operation. Every effort is made to keep routes on priority maintained roads to avoid potential incidents and delays.

Slope of Road

Sometimes the shortest possible route is not a safe option. If a road is too steep to travel along and a more moderate option is available, a route should be designed to avoid unnecessary grades.

Unpaved Roads

In some cases, even publicly maintained roads are unpaved and they can pose significant additional concerns in bad weather and spring conditions. NLSchools will review each circumstance on an individual basis.

Traffic Congestion

In some cases, the shortest route can take significantly longer due to traffic flow. Traffic congestion increases idling time and reduces efficiency. Where possible, routes should avoid highly congested areas.

Bus Route & Stop Design Guidelines



Speed Limits

While unavoidable in many areas, NLSchools does attempt to avoid bus routes from traveling on roads where the speed limit is greater than 80 km/hr.

School Purpose Vehicle Accessibility

Considerations should be made to ensure roads are equipped to handle the type of vehicle providing student transportation services. At times, school buses will not be able to accommodate narrow streets or streets that require a school bus to back up.

BUS STOP CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to route design, each stop should be evaluated for safety and efficiency. In areas where Contractors provide student transportation service, as per the Contract template, the Contractor is responsible to review all routes and bus stops provided by NLSchools before the beginning of the school year and report any safety concerns to the Regional Manager.

Speed Limits

In such situations where speed limits are over 80 km/hr, consideration should be given to contact the entity responsible for that particular road to request "School Bus Stop Ahead" signs to be installed on either side of the stop location (if the stop is anticipated to be a long-term stop).

Traffic Lanes

Many bus stops exist in areas where there are 3 lanes of traffic or more. When stops are implemented on such roads, every effort should be made to implement right hand pick-up and drop-off.

Intersections

In most cases, bus stops are identified by intersection as they are easy for parents and students to identify. However, buses should never stop directly in an intersection. A safe corner, slightly beyond an intersection is recommended and should be clearly communicated to drivers as well as parents at any new stop.

Crosswalks

Stops should be placed in front of crosswalks whenever possible (nose of the bus nearest to the crosswalk - 5 feet before crosswalk), rather than on or behind them (rear of the bus nearest the crosswalk).

Line of Sight

Ensuring motorists have time to spot a bus stop is extremely important. The following line of sight distances should be considered when evaluating bus stop locations:

Speed Limit	Line of Sight Required
<50km/hr	70m
50km	110m
60km/hr	130m
70km/hr	180m

Bus Route & Stop Design Guidelines

80 km/hr	210m
90km/hr	265m
100km/hr	330m

Note: While Stops and routes are the responsibility of NLSchools, paths traveled by students from their home to a bus stop should not be reviewed/evaluated by NLSchools. Parents/ guardians are responsible for the safety of students until they board the bus/once they disembark the bus.