

## STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

School busses shall be owned, operated, and maintained by the Gorham School Department for the transportation of eligible resident children within the district. These busses shall be operated within the limits of the laws of the State of Maine.

Transportation to scheduled school events will normally be provided by school department owned vehicles. In the event that use of such vehicles is impossible or impractical, students may be transported in private cars, provided that proof of insurance is on file with the School Department, a minimum of one week in advance of said event.

### Definition of Terms:

**Assigned Vehicles:** The vehicle assigned to a geographic area for the transport to and from the area.

**Bus Stop:** The pick up and drop off location determined to be a safe, accessible, and central location for a student or a group of students.

**Care Provider:** A parent, guardian, relative or assigned child-sitter or day care center that is responsible for the care and well-being of a student.

**Walking Distance:** The distance determined to be safe and reasonable for a student to walk to school or to a designated (pickup/discharge) location used as a central stop.

**Attendance Area:** The area within which the student resides and attends school.

### Walking Distances:

**K-5:** Students in grades K-5 will not be required to walk more than .3 of a mile to school or the nearest central bus stop.

**6-12:** Students in grades 6-12 will not be required to walk more than 1 mile to school or the nearest designated central bus stop.

Required walking distances may exceed distances stated due to safety concerns, remote locations, or near proximity (+/- 500 feet) to actual distances stated.

### Considerations:

**Safety:** Safety and not sidewalks will be the determining factor for a student to walk to school or to a central bus stop.

**Responsibility:** It shall be the responsibility of a student's care provider to ensure the safety and proper behavior of students to, from, and at designated bus stops.

**Limitations of Bus Access:** No Gorham school bus shall enter any private way. No Gorham school bus shall enter any public way that is determined to be unsafe for bus passage or does not provide adequate turnaround facilities. No route change shall be altered to accommodate student care providers, but students may be picked up or discharged in the following circumstances:

1. The pickup or discharge location is on existing bus route that normally serves the student's school; and
2. The determination as to whether or not a Gorham school bus will pickup or discharge students at a location other than the nearest central bus stop shall rest

solely with the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, specifically the Director of Facilities & Transportation.

3. Special Education Transportation: Special Education Students shall be provided bus transportation in accordance with Chapter 310, Title 20-A MRSA Transportation guidelines.

### **Assignment of Busses:**

**Bus Assignments:** The student's place of residence designates their school attendance area.

**Request to Ride Alternative Busses:** Any student requesting to ride on a bus (pickup and discharge) may do so only if the location is on an existing bus route that normally serves the student's school attendance area. The student's care provider must contact the Transportation Department in a timely manner, in advance, to request permission for their student to ride on an alternative bus. The care provider must also provide written permission to the student's school prior to final approval for alternate transportation.

**Right of Refusal:** The Transportation Department reserves the right to refuse a request for alternate bus transportation for students if such transportation may infringe on the mission of the Transportation Department. Any student(s) alternate transportation needs are the sole responsibility of the student's care provider.

### **Appeal Protocol, Request for Variance/Exception:**

A request for a variance/exception to the established policy governing transportation of students to and from school must be made in writing to the Director of Facilities and Transportation.

Each request must demonstrate that it is a unique circumstance and/or a hardship that cannot easily be resolved through other options. The decision of the Director of Facilities and Transportation and the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will be final. Further, each request

1. will be reviewed and assessed on a case-by-case basis.
2. if granted, be for a maximum of that present school year.
3. if granted, will be "locked-in" for that present school year
4. will be dependent upon availability (educational program & capacity/load of bus route).

Legal Reference: Title 20-A MRSA Section 5401

Cross Reference: EEAI-R – Accident Reports and Procedures

Adopted: August 27, 1973

Amended: November 29, 1978

May 21, 1980

August 13, 1980

January 11, 1984

June 23, 2010

Reviewed: May 8, 2002

February 11, 2015