

Transportation

Parent

Handbook

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YELLOW SCHOOL BUS COMPANIES

Southland Transportation 403-287-1335
Fax: 403-243-7188
Lost Items 65 Highfield Place SE Calgary, Alberta

Willco Transportation 32023 Springbank Road 403-242-1176

CONTACT INFORMATION

Director of Transportation 403-520-3206 ext 158
Central Office 240, 688 Heritage Drive SE 403-520-3206

FFCA CAMPUSES

Northeast Elementary	1140 Mayland Drive NE	403-520-5456
Northwest Elementary	719 – 44 Ave NW	403-282-5202
Southeast Elementary	9711 Academy Drive SE	403-258-2728
Southwest Elementary	898 Sylvester Cres SW	403-259-3527
North Middle School	211 McKnight Blvd NE	403-253-9257
South Middle School	8710 Ancourt Road SE	403-259-3175
High School	1919 - 76 Ave SE	403-243-3316

1.0 Bus Stops

1.1 Morning Pick Ups

Students are expected to arrive at the bus stop **five** minutes prior to the pickup time. The bus will leave as soon as all the students at that stop have boarded. If all the children who are normally at that stop are not there, the bus will **not** wait for them beyond the scheduled pickup time. Parents who arrive late to the stop can proceed to the next or alternate stop. Drivers will not pick up students at any unscheduled stops. Parents shall **not** phone the bus company to radio the driver to ask them to wait.

Drivers will report any parent who tries to stop the bus at an unscheduled stop; try to board at intersections; pull in front of the bus; or otherwise endanger the safety of the bus and/or the students. The safety of the children is our number one priority.

1.2 Afternoon Departure

The Supervising Teacher will signal the buses to leave 10 minutes after school dismissal. Once the bus has left the school, it will not return to pick up any students who have missed the bus. The Supervising Teacher will return the student to the office and the family will be contacted to come and pick up the student.

1.3 Afternoon Drop Offs

Parents must arrive 5 minutes ahead of the scheduled bus arrival time. Children in Kindergarten and Grade One will not be allowed off the bus if there is no parent or older sibling there to assist them. In the event you are late, the bus driver will not wait past the scheduled stop time. The driver will continue on with their route, returning to the stop after all other children have been dropped off. The driver will remain with the student until he/she is picked up. Parents are expected to be on time to pick up their children, and will only be given one warning. If the bus needs to continue on its route and return with your child to the stop, FFCA will bill the family the overtime fee that is charged from the Bus Company. If your older student is not allowed off the bus without you being present, this must be put in writing to the Transportation Coordinator at the beginning of each school year.

If a parent has an older child riding the bus, they may request, in writing, permission to allow a kindergarten or grade one student to disembark without a parent/guardian present, leaving them in the care of the older sibling. Upon receiving written permission to allow your child off the bus without an adult present, please be advised that if that sibling is not riding on your designated bus route one day, this permission still applies. The younger student will need to exit the bus.

2.0 Behavior/Discipline

FFCA has established the following expectations to ensure that a clean safe and friendly environment is maintained for everyone riding the bus:

- The driver may assign specific seats to students.
- Students will not board the bus without the driver present. Once on board, they will remain on the bus in their seats until the bus reaches their stop.
- Students must conduct themselves in a quiet and courteous manner, showing consideration for the comfort and safety of others.
- Students must not put their arms or heads out the windows, move through the aisle, or try to get on or off the bus while the bus is in motion.
- Students must not distract the bus driver, discard waste on the floor or throw anything on the bus or out the windows.
- Students must not yell, scream or use rude language.
- Students must not push, shove or otherwise engage in rowdy behavior.
- Students who are responsible for causing willful damage to a bus will be required to pay for damages.
- The driver is in charge of the bus and his/her directions must be followed. Any incidents of disrespect will be reported to the school.
- Students are not to throw garbage in the wastebasket while the bus is in motion. They are to either put their garbage in their knapsacks, pockets, or hold on it. Once the students have arrived at their designated stop, they can drop the garbage into the wastebasket while departing the bus.

Violation of the above will result in drivers issuing misconduct reports that are submitted to the campus administration. Continued violation could result in withdrawal of bus riding privileges.

In summary, students are expected to:

Stay seated, Obey instructions, Respect others, Talk quietly (SORT)

2.1 Student Consequences

Student consequences for any violation on the bus will be handled at each Campus by the Administration who will then inform the Parents/Guardians either in writing or by a phone call.

2.2 Bus Discipline Procedure

Although bus drivers will attempt to solve individual issues that may arise during a bus ride to or from a campus. On rare occasions a bus may need to return to a campus under the following conditions:

- The behaviour of riders on the bus poses a significant risk to the safe operation of that bus.
- The bus has not reached its first stop
- The decision comes and the school can be notified before 4:00 pm.

The school bus is considered an extension of the school. As such student behaviour/discipline issues will be addressed through FFCA Policy and Administrative Procedure AP-I-201-1 which can be found at www.ffca-calgary.com > Board > Documents and Publications

3.0 Cameras

At the request of the school administration, a camera will be placed on the bus to record the behavior of the students. Cameras may be routinely rotated between buses as a regular means of monitoring behavior on the bus.

4.0 Delayed Service

From time to time, there may be a delay in bus service due to weather conditions, mechanical problems or traffic congestion. In preparation for delayed or cancelled service, parents are encouraged to develop a back-up plan:

- Parents are encouraged to sign up with www.yourschoolbus.com to receive text messages and/or emails regarding delays on your route. Please note this service is only available for Southland routes.
- Make arrangements to car pool. Get to know the other parents on your route, and have their phone numbers handy.
- Familiarize yourself with the other bus routes in your area. Choose a route with a stop that is convenient for you. Routes can be viewed on the website www.ffca-calgary.com. under the Parent Tab. If you need assistance in identifying an alternative stop, please contact the Director of Transportation.

5.0 Inclement Weather/School closures

POLICY

The Foundations for the Future Charter Academy (FFCA) Charter Board delegates to the Superintendent (or designate) the responsibility to make timely decisions that respond to emergencies which require cancellation of the operation of school or bus transportation.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

The safety of students and staff is of paramount importance at FFCA. The Board has delegated the authority to close a school building, several campuses, or the entire system where an emergency situation arises and presents a danger to students and staff, or where classroom conditions become intolerable due to mechanical failure, security threats, health risk or because of inclement weather.

PROCEDURES

1. The Superintendent (or designate) shall make the decision to close schools as early as possible, especially in the morning of **inclement weather**, to provide students, parents and staff as much notice as possible of the emergency school closure. Announcements of the emergency school closure shall be made through local media outlets. (For details see Appendix A.)
2. The Superintendent, in consultation with the Principal Educator(s), may close a campus or any portion of it, if classroom conditions are intolerable or unsafe due to mechanical failure or other reasons. If a situation arises at an FFCA campus necessitating the closure of a classroom or the entire campus, and if the Principal Educator is unable to contact the Superintendent or designate to make a decision for closure in a reasonable period of time, the Principal Educator is then authorized to make the decision to enact early closure.
3. If early school closure occurs, the Principal Educator must ensure that parents and/or guardians are informed.
4. If school has been closed due to inclement weather conditions, students will not be expected to attend; teachers should report for duty if feasible to travel. The school building shall be kept open to provide access to students and staff who are not aware of the emergency school closure. Once students arrive at school for the day, the campus must remain open until regular dismissal time since parents will believe their children to be at school.
5. The Principal Educator shall arrange with staff to provide supervision for students who arrive at school (when the school has been closed) until it is safe for the students to return home.

6. The Superintendent shall ensure that the school bus contractor is advised of the emergency school closure due to inclement weather so that bus runs for the day may be canceled.
7. The Superintendent shall advise all Principal Educators and the Board Chair of any non-weather related emergency school closure.
8. School administrators will be provided with updated contact information annually; contact information will also be available in the campus Critical Response binders.

For detailed information please view @ www.ffca-calgary.com Board Tab >> Administrative Procedures >> Category F - Facilities >> F-201.1 Emergency School Closure

6.0 Large Items

Items that are too large to fit under the seats or held on the students lap will not be allowed on the bus.

6.1 Musical Instruments

Musical instruments that can be held on the students' lap are allowed on the bus. Large instruments (for example the baritone sax) will not be permitted on the bus. Students need to make alternate arrangements to transport large instruments to and from school.

6.2 Skateboards/Scooters/Roller blades/Bicycles

These items are not allowed on the bus. They pose a safety hazard to other passengers on the bus; cause damage to the seats; and are generally too large for students to hold on their lap.

7.0 Noise

Please refer to section 2.0 on S.O.R.T behaviour and rules of the bus.

7.1 Personal Music Devices

Personal music devices such as iPods and MP3s are to be used with headphones even if the device has external speaker capabilities.

8.0 Parent Concerns

Parents are **not** to approach the driver with their concerns, as it is very difficult for the driver to properly address the concern of the parent with a bus full of students. With all bussing concerns parents are encourage to follow the protocol detailed in the "Being Heard" document.

Concern	Contact	Location
Routes, Schedules	Director of Transportation	FFCA Central Office
Student Behavior	Principal Educator	Applicable Campus
Driver Issues	Transportation Provider	Southland Office or Willco Office

9.0 Rider exceptions

Bus passes are given to students in the case of an emergency or similar extenuating circumstance at the discretion of their individual campus. Passes are not issued for social reasons. For further policies regarding bus passes, contact your student's campus. (See page 2 for contact information)

9.1 Parent as a Passenger

A parent wishing to ride the bus, must first receive permission from the school, and present the driver with a Boarding Pass before boarding the bus. Twenty-four hours notice is required for the school to issue a Boarding Pass, and to notify the driver of the ride-along.

10.0 Accessing a different bus (occasionally or permanently)

In order for a child to board a bus they don't usually use, parents are required to request permission, **in writing**, outlining the details including the date(s); their usual routes; the route and stop they wish to use; and the reason for alteration. Requests are to be submitted to the campus office of the school the student attends with a minimum of 24 hours notice.

Parents are not to assume that permission will be granted, it depends if payment has been received, the number of students already on board that bus, and the capacity of seating available on the bus. If permission is granted, the school will issue a Boarding Pass, and the student will present this pass to the driver when boarding.

If a student attempts to board the bus without proper authorization, access will be denied and the student will need to return to the office to contact their parents, or board their usual bus. The bus will **not** be delayed while the student returns to the office to try to obtain a Boarding Pass.

If a family moves during the year, and will be riding a different bus, they are required to contact the Director of Transportation, prior to making the change. The Director of Transportation will assist the family in finding an **existing** bus stop for them to use, **please note that no bus stops will be added after Nov 30 of each school year**. All changes to address/phone numbers must be input on the contact page in the Family Login. www.ffca-calgary.com under Parent > Family Login.

11.0 Passenger information

A complete list of all passengers, who will be riding the bus, **the stops they are using**, along with their grade, will be given to the driver prior to the start of school.

11.1 Parent Responsibilities

Due to high volume of changes to routes and bus stops in the beginning of each school year we encourage parents to:

- Arrange to have someone (yourself or a caregiver) meet children at their bus stop.
- Make sure your children know to stay on the bus if they have missed their stop, or are on the wrong bus, or if no one is at their stop to meet them. Children should talk to the driver if they think something is wrong. They should not get off the bus.
- Review and discuss bus safety with your children.
- Discuss with your child (ren) different back-up plans in the event your child misses the bus in either the am or pm. In the case where you have two or more students on the same/different bus or different schools, have a plan in place for all children on what you would like them to do. Review this backup plan regularly throughout the school year.
- Familiarizing their children with the bus route and pick up and drop off location. Please keep your bus route and the Bus Company's phone numbers handy in case of delays or missed buses.
- Providing for their child's safety while getting to and from the bus stop.
- Assisting their child in organizing and securing belongings which will be taken on the bus.

12.0 Routes

FFCA bus routes strive to remain within the one-hour ride time **each way**. The bus will travel along the route path between stops that are determined by the bus company. However, under certain circumstances (i.e. road closures) the bus may be redirected at the discretion of the bus company; however stops may have to be missed that are not accessible. Routes for FFCA will only operate within the city limits.

12.1 Creating Routes

Community stops are created to service as many families in one area as possible, and to minimize a routes travel times. **These community stops may result in the need for parents so choosing, to drive their children to the bus stop.** It is impossible to provide door-to-door or at the end of the block due to the distance the buses have to travel.

12.2 Creating Stops

Bus stops are chosen based on the following criteria:

- safety
- roadway is passable for bus traffic
- time and distance of the route
- minimizes backtracking
- number of families in the community, and the size of the community

Bus routes will generally travel along major arteries utilizing Calgary Transit Stops wherever possible. In some cases, communities are not easily accessible by buses, and require more time than the route can allow, so these families will have to use the nearest neighboring community stop. The stop for that community will be chosen based upon the number of students who board the bus, and the most viable access point for all the families who live in that community.

We will address any concerns raised regarding safety of a particular stop location. Stop change requests will not be considered for convenience and/or proximity to residences as we locate stops to service a number of families.

Requests for a second bus stop or a bus stop at a day care will not be considered.

If a parent has more than one address, parents must choose which one they want to list as the primary residence for transportation purposes. FFCA cannot provide two or more bus stops for one child(ren), however students are allowed to use any bus stop that is convenient for them.

12.3 Route Inquires

Parents with questions about their community stops will put their inquiries **in writing** by submitting it by fax or email to the Director of Transportation at 403-520-3209 or susan.goldsmith@ffca-calgary.com.

12.4 Timeline For Changes To Route

There will be no changes to the FFCA Bus Routes during the first 15 school days of the school year, except to address the arrival times at the school and safety concerns. After the 15 school days, the Transportation Coordinator will review all inquiries, and decisions will be made based upon the criteria outlined in Sections 12.1 and 12.2. Routes will be changed in order of priority. This process will take two to four weeks. Parent requests will be reviewed and if implemented this changes will be done only after arrival times are adjusted, student counts are reasonable and that payment has been received for those students riding the bus. Not all requests can be granted, although we

try to respond to all requests in writing/email, due to overwhelm requests, this may not always occur.

No bus stop addition or changes will occur after November 30th of each school year.

Route changes will not be made for families with outstanding fees.

13.0 Bus Food or Bans

Allowing or disallowing food may be implemented at the bus drivers' discretion in order to effectively manage food and garbage on his/her bus. Decisions made by drivers regarding food ban policies are completely supported by each campus.