LEDYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Transportation Regulations and Procedures



Regulation 3541/3541.5
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary of the Transportation Policy	3
Ledyard Public Schools Transportation System	3
District Responsibilities And Duties	3
Eligibility for School Transportation	3
Parent/Guardian Responsibilities	4
Out of District Transportation	4
Routes And Services	5
Distance Measurements	5
Establishing School Bus Routes and Bus Stops	6
Special Needs Transportation	7
Transportation Procedures For Elementary K, And Pre-K Students	7
Transportation Services For Magnet and Charter Schools	8
Transportation Services To Child Care Facilities	8
Non-Approved Riders	8
School Bus Emergency Evacuation Drills	9
Bus Conduct	9
Discontinuation Of Service	9
Procedure For Appealing Decisions Regarding Transportation	9
Video Camera Procedures	10
Accident Review Committee	10

Summary of the Transportation Policy

Ledyard Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and efficient school transportation service following the guidelines of Board of Education Policy 3541, and in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. The school transportation service enables all qualified school-aged children to be transported to Ledyard Public Schools, state technical high schools, and points of service for special education programs as delineated in a student's individual education program (IEP). The Board of Education is not required to provide transportation for students choosing to attend charter or magnet schools outside of the Town of Ledyard, but the Board may choose to do so when economically feasible.

Ledyard Public Schools Transportation System

Ledyard contracts with a third party, Student Transportation of America (STA) to provide 98% of our daily student transportation needs. Ledyard also contracts with other providers to transport some students to out-of-district specialized schools related to the student's disability.

In order to maximize operational efficiency, we currently operate a two-tier transportation system that is broken into secondary (6-12) and elementary (K-5) transit times. Each morning and afternoon, Ledyard Middle School and Ledyard High School students are transported, and then the buses transition to serving the next tier, to our two elementary schools: Gales Ferry School/Juliet W. Long School, and Gallup Hill School.

Technical, charter, and magnet schools operate on varied times and are located in several different towns outside of Ledyard. LPS only provides outside transportation to Norwich, Grasso, Marine Science and Three Rivers. Students attending those schools are transported to and from a single bus stop (Hub) at the Gales Ferry/Juliet W. Long/Ledyard Middle School (GFS/JWL/LMS) campus. Parents of students using transportation to schools outside of their district schools are expected to transport students to and from the district's designated hub location. Because of the varied start and dismissal times, locations, and attempts to maximize equipment use, the same bus may be utilized for an out-of-district run and an in-district run.

District Responsibilities And Duties

Ledyard Public Schools is responsible for establishing and administering school bus transportation services for regular education programs, special education programs, and alternative programs including:

- Determining students' transportation eligibility
- Establishing school routes and bus stops for each school.
- Providing on-time transportation service to schools

Eligibility for School Transportation

School bus transportation is provided under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education. Students are eligible for in-district 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;
    - or students enrolled in grades four through eight (8), up to one and one-half (1.5) miles;
    - for students enrolled in grades nine (9) through twelve (12), up to two (2) miles.

2. The walking distance for the student does not exceed the limit specified above, but the route is deemed atypical in Ledyard and therefore unsuitable by the district administration.

3. Specialized transportation is designated in an IEP or 504 plan.

4. The student is classified as McKinney-Vento.

5. Students enrolled in the Agriculture Science Program at Ledyard Highschool are legally entitled to transportation from their local Board of Education.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that their children travel safely to and from their assigned bus stop and are appropriately supervised while waiting for the bus. The level of supervision should reflect the student's age, maturity, individual needs, traffic conditions, and the location of the stop.

Parents and guardians are expected to:

- Review the safest walking route between home and the assigned bus stop with their child.
- Provide adult supervision or make other appropriate arrangements when a student cannot safely travel to, wait at, or return from the bus stop independently.
- Ensure students arrive at the stop at least five minutes before the scheduled pickup time and wait in a safe location away from the roadway.
- Reinforce safe and respectful behavior while walking to and from the stop and while waiting for the bus.
- Ensure that students can safely enter their home or have appropriate supervision available following afternoon drop-off.
- Develop an alternative plan in the event a student misses the bus or transportation is delayed.

Bus stops are generally not supervised by district personnel. The district's responsibility for a student's transportation begins when the student boards the bus and ends when the student exits the bus at the assigned stop. A parent or guardian's inability to personally observe or accompany a student does not, by itself, require the district to establish a different stop or provide service at the student's residence.

SafeStop Bus Tracking

SafeStop is provided as a supplemental tool to help families estimate a bus's location and anticipated arrival time. The information is not guaranteed to be exact and may be affected by traffic, weather, connectivity issues, route adjustments, mechanical problems, substitute buses, or other operational changes. Families should not rely solely on SafeStop to determine when a student should leave for the bus stop. Students should be at their assigned stop at least five minutes before the scheduled pickup time and follow their normal transportation plan unless the district communicates otherwise. Detailed information about subscribing to SafeStop can be found on the district website.

Students Ineligible for School Transportation
Any students residing outside of Ledyard are not eligible for transportation, including:

- Any student residing outside of the Town of Ledyard who has special circumstances allowing them to attend Ledyard Public Schools must provide their own transportation to and from school each day
- Students who move out of Ledyard during the school year and are granted permission by the superintendent to complete the current school year in Ledyard must provide their own transportation to and from school each day.
- Ledyard students who are granted enrollment waivers to attend a Ledyard elementary school other than their assigned school must provide their own transportation to and from school each day.
- Students living outside of the Town of Ledyard who pay tuition to attend Ledyard Public Schools are the responsibility of the sending school district.

Out of District Transportation

Charter and Magnet School Transportation
The Board is not required to provide transportation for students choosing to attend charter or magnet schools located outside the Town of Ledyard. The Board currently provides transportation only to Marine Science Magnet and Three Rivers Magnet.

The Board will use a designated central drop-off point for transportation to and from out-of-district schools. The designated pick-up and drop-off location will be the Juliet W. Long/Gales Ferry School campus. This location may change based upon the needs of the district transportation program. Walking distance limitations specified in this policy are not applicable as the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) are expected to transport their student to and from the designated drop-off location. The designated time for pick-up and drop-off will be based on the district routing needs.

The Board will not reimburse parents for transporting their children to and from school

Technical High Schools
Under CGS 10-97, towns are required to provide "reasonable" transportation to technical high schools. The local Board of Education has the latitude to define how transportation will be provided. While the law cites reimbursement at a defined percentage of transportation cost over $800, this reimbursement has not been funded in the State Budget since 2015-2016.

Routes and Services

School bus service will be provided consistent with the distance and age eligibility criteria outlined in Board of Education Policy 3541. District administration shall develop bus routes that provide the safest and shortest routes for transporting all students to school in the most economical manner.

Routes shall be arranged to equalize, as nearly as possible, route lengths and bus loads and to provide for the full use of available 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 portion of the route, and students within that section shall ride the bus to which they are assigned. Only one bus shall cover a particular road unless overloading occurs.

Buses shall not leave the main bus route or travel down dead-end roads to pick up students unless the distance is more than one-half mile. Students may be expected to walk to school or to their designated bus stop up to the maximum distances specified in Board policy based on the student's grade.

Regular routes and bus stops will be established with consideration given to:

1. Students' eligibility for bus service within the school boundary.
2. The location of students' homes and the number of students in the areas to be served.
3. The availability and full use of buses.
4. Road conditions
5. The safety of students already on the bus, students boarding or leaving the bus, and other motorists.
6. The length of routes and distribution of bus loads.

Bus stops may be located at more frequent intervals to reduce student congestion or for other safety reasons as determined by District administration. As each stop takes approximately 3-4 minutes, clustering is sometimes necessary to keep the total transit time for students as reasonable as possible. Bus stops will be at the same location 5 days a week.

Students may use different bus stops in the morning and afternoon, but those stops must remain the same Monday through Friday.

Service will be provided within acceptable levels of safety, efficiency, economy of operations, and equity of service; however, safety will be the primary consideration. Bus schedules will be established to provide for the full use of all buses.

Before the opening of school each year, and as needed during the school year, bus routes, stops, and schedules will be reviewed to determine whether changes are needed to improve safety or operational efficiency. Bus routes may be changed only by District administration, not by a bus driver. Changes may be required due to enrollment or other factors and may be made at the discretion of District administration. In such cases, parents and guardians will

be provided one day's notice of the change.

Distance Measurements

The residence of the parent or guardian will be used to determine eligibility for transportation. For the purposes of establishing school bus service, day care centers will be treated as individual residential addresses.

A. Measurements will be from the residence property line to the nearest available door of the school

B. Measurements will be from the property of apartment complexes, condominiums,
and/or townhouses

C. Measurements will be made using road shoulders, pathways, right-of-ways, sidewalks or other surfaces where students can walk without being required to step on the portion of the road used by vehicles unless it is a residential street with little or no transient traffic or private. Private property, such as driveways, will not be used in measurement.

D. Measurements will be made using suitable crossings defined as:

1. Where students are not required to walk across railroads, bridges, tunnels, overpasses, or waterways, unless they have adequate pedestrian walkways

2. Where students are not required to cross a principal roadway or highway, unless a grade-separated crossing is provided

3. Where students are not required to cross a proliferation of business or commercial district entrances when using road shoulders or right-of- ways as a walkway

4. Where adequate sight distance, line striping, and crosswalk signing exists when warranted

5. Adequate sight distance as referenced above is defined as follows:
    a. 25 mph – 250 feet
    b. 30 mph – 300 feet
    c. 35 mph – 350 feet

The preceding statements of policy concerning walking distances of students to school will be adhered to except when circumstances and surrounding road conditions necessitate a change. In these cases, some students may be required to walk a distance in excess of the stated limits, or others who live within the limits may be transported. The Superintendent of Schools and the staff will individually consider such cases.

Special Needs Transportation

Transportation is an integral part of the delivery of educational services for students with special needs and such requests must be included in the student's IEP or 504 Plan.

If a student requires special equipment on the bus, that information should also be included in the IEP or 504 Plan. The office of Student Services will work closely with the transportation provider, school, parents, and IEP team to provide the approved equipment, including occupant restraints or support devices, as required for individual students.

Bus monitors may also be assigned to buses serving students with special needs based on recommendations of the IEP. The monitor's role is to assist with student loading and unloading, and with the care of students while on the bus, including the use of any required special equipment.

Bus Stop Location
Students with special needs are provided curb-to-curb transportation to and from the student's street address. Parents/guardians, or child care providers are responsible for meeting the bus at the pick-up and drop-off location.

Loading and Unloading Procedures

- All students must be outside and ready to board the bus at least five (5) minutes before the scheduled time.

- All students with special needs must be accompanied to and from the approved bus stop by a parent or guardian or approved adult unless the parents/guardians have provided prior written authorization for students to be picked up by and discharged from the bus without someone to receive them.

- If no one is at the approved bus stop to receive a student, the driver will contact
  the school bus terminal to receive further direction. The driver may return the student to school.

Length of Ride

- Every effort is made to provide the shortest and safest ride for all students; however, because of the individualized nature of special needs bus service and the distance from students' homes to their school placements, student ride times may vary significantly.

- Changes in the student population throughout the year may require route changes and may also alter the length of the bus ride.

Transportation Procedures For Elementary K, And Pre-K Students

Bus drivers are responsible for students from the time they enter the bus until the time they exit the bus. Drivers should only load and unload students at the bus stops to which they are assigned. Elementary students may use a different pick-up and discharge bus stop, but each will be at the same location 5 days a week.

In the afternoon, elementary students will be discharged at the bus stop when the bus driver is certain it is the student's assigned bus stop. Kindergarten students require an

approved adult at the stop, grades 1-12, a parent/guardian is recommended, but not required at the bus stop. However, when the bus driver is not certain the stop is the correct bus stop, or is concerned for the safety of the student for any reason, the driver will complete the route and then return the student to school. When the driver makes the decision to return a student to school, the driver should immediately notify their supervisor, who will notify the district Central Office.

The bus drivers and the schools should work cooperatively to see that kindergarten and pre- kindergarten students are seated in the front of the bus both on the ride to school and on the ride home from school.

Mid-day Dismissal Service for Special Education Pre-Kindergarten Students

Morning pre-kindergarten students must be met by a responsible, authorized person at each midday stop. If a student is not met, the driver will complete the route and return the student to school. The driver will immediately notify the school bus terminal when a student is not met.

Mid-day Bus Stops

- Mid-day bus stops for pre-kindergarten students will generally be established at the student's home or the nearest corner to the home.

- Group stops will be established in apartment complexes or when houses are so close together that individual stops at each address cannot be made safely.

End of the Day Stops

Afternoon pre-kindergarten students with an IEP will be dropped off at their home curbside, with an authorized adult present. If no one is at the approved bus stop to receive a student, the driver will contact the school bus terminal and receive further direction. The driver may return the student to school.

Transportation Services To Child Care Facilities

Ledyard Public Schools may provide transportation to State-Certified child care centers with enrollment of 5 or more children. The child care center must be within the boundaries of the school the child is attending. The center's staff is responsible for overseeing the children boarding and disembarking the school bus. Parents are required to file a transportation of service form available at the district office and/or online.

Non-Approved Riders

The transportation of adults, except when serving as chaperones on field trips, is prohibited. Children of adult chaperones who are not enrolled in Ledyard Public Schools, and non-participants in the scheduled event, are also prohibited.

Parents may not board or ride school buses when they are being used to transport students to and from school on their regularly scheduled routes without prior approval of the Superintendent.

Students shall not be permitted to take transportation to and from other schools unless it is related to a district sponsored program.

School Bus Emergency Evacuation Drills

Ledyard Public School bus drivers are provided 10 hours of service training throughout the year, including student management and emergency evacuation drills.

Twice a year, each school will conduct school bus emergency evacuation drills on the school grounds. The drills are to be conducted with the school administrator and the bus driver. The drills are to ensure procedures and appropriate behavior for leaving a school bus in case of an emergency have been discussed and practiced with all students. Students K-8, must have practice in leaving the bus through the bus emergency door, as well as through the front door.

Bus Conduct

As outlined in Board of Education Policy 5131.1, school transportation privileges are provided to students contingent upon their satisfactory behavior while on the bus. Suspension of privileges will be for a defined period of time based on the offense.

Repeated violations that endanger the safety of the student or others may result in removal for the remainder of the school year. This includes unsatisfactory behavior to and from the bus stop or while waiting or receiving transportation to and from school which endangers persons or property or violates a Board policy or administrative regulation.

Non-Safety Related Route or Stop Concerns

Parents/Guardians that have non-safety related concerns with the routing or stop locations may contact the district's transportation provider STA at 860-464-8346. The terminal manager will review the request and make appropriate modifications in alignment with the district's routing guidelines and requirements.

Procedure for Safety Review of Assigned Bus Stop

The District recognizes that no bus stop or walking route can be entirely free from risk. A safety review shall determine whether a designated stop presents a specific, material, and reasonably foreseeable hazard when used as intended with age-appropriate student behavior and supervision. The review is not intended to identify the most convenient location or the location involving the least conceivable risk.

A parent or guardian may request a bus stop safety review through the District's online form:

Bus Stop Safety Review Request Form (Click Here)

Requests submitted through other means shall be directed to the online form to ensure that the District receives the information necessary to conduct and document a consistent review. Individuals who require assistance accessing or completing the form may contact the Superintendent's Office.

The request shall identify:

1. The specific bus stop involved;
2. The particular condition believed to be unsafe;
3. The time of day or circumstances under which the concern occurs; and
4. Any relevant supporting information, including photographs, traffic observations, police reports, or documentation of changed conditions.

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain a written record of safety complaints and their disposition in accordance with Connecticut law. The District may conduct a site observation and consult with the transportation provider, bus driver, police department, public works officials, or other appropriate individuals. When practicable, the stop shall be observed under conditions reasonably similar to those described in the request.

The review may consider:

- Posted and observed vehicle speeds and traffic volume;
- Available sight distance for the bus driver, students, and approaching motorists;
- Road width, grade, curvature, intersections, shoulders, and roadside conditions;
- Whether the bus can stop, load or discharge students, and reenter traffic safely;
- Whether students have a reasonably safe location to wait outside the traveled portion of the roadway;
- The number and nature of roadway crossings required;
- The ages and developmental levels of the students ordinarily assigned to the stop;
- Documented crashes, stop-arm violations, or other relevant incidents;
- The need for the bus to back, turn around, enter private property, or travel on an unsuitable road;
- The availability of a reasonably safer common stop; and
- The effect of a proposed change on the safety, capacity, and length of the entire route and on other students.

The absence of sidewalks, streetlights, a direct view of the stop from a residence, or adult supervision shall not, standing alone, establish that a stop is unsafe. Weather, darkness normally associated with school transportation hours, family schedules, childcare arrangements, personal convenience, a preference that a student not walk or cross a roadway, or a request that a student be picked up at the student's residence also shall not independently require relocation of a stop.

Parents and guardians remain responsible for determining the supervision necessary for their child to travel between the residence and the assigned stop, wait appropriately, and be present at the stop at the designated time. A parent's inability or decision not to accompany a student does not convert an otherwise reasonable stop into an unsafe stop.

Following the review, the District may:

1. Maintain the existing stop;
2. Adjust the location or side of the roadway;
3. Change the route or sequence of stops;
4. Establish reasonable student or parent safety expectations;

5. Request traffic enforcement or corrective action by the responsible public authority;
6. Implement temporary measures while additional information is gathered; or
7. Relocate the stop when the District determines that a material safety concern exists and a reasonably safer and operationally feasible alternative is available.

The District is not required nor typically provides curb-to-curb, driveway, or residence-based transportation solely because such service would be more convenient or would reduce ordinary walking, waiting, supervision, weather, or traffic exposure. Such service shall be provided only when required by law, an individualized education program, a Section 504 plan, another formally approved accommodation, or when the District determines that no reasonable common bus stop is available.

Bus stops are components of an entire transportation route and shall not be evaluated in isolation. When two or more locations provide reasonably comparable safety, the District may select the location that best supports efficient routing, reasonable ride times, bus capacity, consistency, and equitable treatment of students.

The District's written determination shall explain whether the stop will be maintained or changed. A stop shall not be changed while a review is pending unless the District authorizes an interim change.

Repeated requests based on substantially the same facts need not be reconsidered during the same school year unless material conditions change or significant new information is provided. Any appeal shall proceed in accordance with applicable Board policy and law.

Procedure For Appealing Decisions Regarding Transportation

A student's parent or guardian, or the student in the case of an emancipated minor or student eighteen (18) years of age, may file an initial complaint regarding denial of school transportation services (not safety-related) with the Director of Facilities and Operations. If the matter is not resolved, the next step is to discuss the matter with the Superintendent of Schools.

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

The Board of Education shall designate a subcommittee composed of three (3) Board members to conduct the hearing within ten (10) days after receipt of the written request. The subcommittee shall make a record of the hearing, and make a finding within ten (10) days after the hearing. Hearings shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS). (See Board of Education Policy 3541)

Appeal of Hearing Findings

Any 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.

Video Camera Procedures

Parents and students are informed of the use of video technology on school buses via the Annual Notifications Manual and Signature Form distributed to all students and their families at the start of each school year.

The use of video technology on Ledyard Public School buses is intended to support a safe and orderly environment while transporting students to and from school and school-related activities.
The Board recognizes the value of electronic surveillance systems to monitor activity in school vehicles. The students and staff of the District should recognize that their security and safety depend upon the capacity of the District to maintain discipline and that a certain amount of restraint upon the activities of students is assumed and expected. The Board finds that it is appropriate to provide for the use of electronic monitoring, including but not limited to the use of video surveillance. For more detailed information on Video Surveillance, see Board of Education Policy 5131.11)

Privacy requirements do not permit the distribution or viewing of bus video by non-authorized personnel. Parents and Guardians are not permitted to review bus video in accordance with Board Policy.

Modifications to this Regulation

Bus routes, stops, schedules, and student assignments may be modified at any time to comply with changes in law, regulation, or Board policy or to address safety, enrollment, capacity, staffing, road conditions, construction, ride times, efficiency, or other operational needs. The establishment of a route or stop in one school year does not guarantee that it will remain unchanged in a subsequent year.

Parents, guardians, students, staff, and community members are encouraged to submit suggestions regarding transportation services. Suggestions should identify the specific route or stop involved, describe the proposed change, and explain how the change would improve safety or operations.

Suggestions may be submitted to:

- **Superintendent of Schools:** Jhartling@ledyard.net
- **Director of Facilities and Operations:** Jjake@ledyard.net

All suggestions will be reviewed, but submission of a suggestion does not guarantee that a route, stop, schedule, or assignment will be changed. Decisions shall consider the transportation system as a whole, including student safety, equitable treatment, available resources, bus capacity, ride times, contractual requirements, and the effect on other students and routes.

Concerns alleging that a particular bus stop is unsafe must be submitted through the District's **Bus** Stop Safety Review Request Form and will be evaluated under the safety-review process established in this policy.