



Bus Handbook

**Greater St. Albert
Catholic Schools**






Table of Contents

How to apply for busing	page 3
How to cancel busing	page 4
Fees	page 5
Inclement weather policy	page 6
Link to Large Items on a bus (restrictions)	page 6
Pre-K transportation information	page 7-8
Student Conduct on buses	page 9
FAQ's / Questions	page 10 - 19

Please note applying for busing is a separate registration from your school application.

To Apply for busing please use the following link: [Parent Portal](#)

	<p>Click on Log In</p>
	<p>Log In or create a NEW account to access our online forms and requests</p>
	<p>Under Parent you can update and add your student's information by going to my students. Access the Bus Application under Online Forms and Requests.</p>

Go to Online Forms and requests then choose the Bus Application Form

New families to the Division applying for transportation, please access the Online Forms and Requests located on the main page banner under **PUBLIC** to access the bus application form

If you do not know your child's GSACRD ID # please fill in the GSACRD ID field with 7000899. This will only work for a **NEW** student who is not already in the system.

Example Below:

Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools	Bertha Kennedy Catholic School	1
Student Last Name	Student First Name	Birth Date
DOE	JOHN	2007-09-01
Alberta Education/ID #:		

If you need assistance, please call the transportation department at 780-459-7711

How to Cancel Your Child's Busing?

Step 1. Complete and submit the online Bus Cancellation form in Parent Portal

Step 2. Return your child's bus pass to the school office to return to Transportation

Please note that notification of cancellation can only be made by the above 2 steps being completed.

The notification to a bus driver and or the child not riding the bus, or not scanning does not constitute cancellation and will not result in a reduction of fees or a refund.

Cancellation has been communicated only upon completion of steps 1 & 2. After cancellation is completed transportation will evaluate if the student is eligible for a refund or reduction of the fees assigned to your child's [Parent Portal Online Account](#).

Will I receive a refund?

1. If your child is remaining in the Division and will no longer need to take the bus you **may** be refunded full months remaining if the following is met:
 - (a) You have completed and submitted the required bus cancellation form prior to the last day of January of any given school year.
 - (b) The bus pass has been returned to transportation via your child's school.
2. If your family is moving from the Division to attend another school outside of the Division, once both the physical bus pass and form has been submitted through the [Bus Portal](#), you **MAY** be refunded the full months remaining in the year.

2024 - 2025 Fee Schedule below.

URBAN & Rural K-12 Pass

Individual over 2.4 KM to designated school	\$175
Individual under 2.4 KM to designated school	\$245
*Access to 2nd bus fee = 50% of applicable fee	50%
Family (3 or more, does not include ineligible riders)	\$545
Cross-Boundary	\$300
Out of Division (Contact us for information on availability)	\$325
Replacement Pass with Sleeve & Loop	\$ 20
Replacement Sleeve & Loop	\$ 5

Please Note:

Kindergarten noon transportation will be provided to those schools where the transportation Department has received five (5) or more student transportation registrations for A.M kindergarten students who request noon busing.

*Cross-Boundary and Out of Division families are not eligible for family fee rates

INCLEMENT AND EXTREME WEATHER ADMIN PROCEDURE 132

Please use this [link to access AP 132 for INCLEMENT AND EXTREME WEATHER PROCEDURES](#)

located on the Division Website.

Provided below are the Contractor contacts by route.

St. Albert:

- Bus 1A - 25A: Cunningham Transport (1986) Ltd. – 780-458-3255
- Bus 40A, 42A - Golden Arrow Buses 780-447-1536
- kindergarten routes in St. Albert; Cunningham Transport (1986) Ltd.– 780-458-3255

Morinville:

- M05 - M10, Southland – 780-455-8222
- M01 - M04, Autobus Frechette 587-985-3714
- Kindergarten: MK1 & MK2 -Southland – 780-455-8222

Legal:

- Bus L1, - L3, L5 - Harold's Bus Lines 780- 939-2067
- Bus L4, L6, L7K – Southland 780-455-8222

*** In extreme weather conditions, the final decision to send a child to school or to the bus rests with the parents even though buses and schools may be operating.**

DIVISION LARGE ITEMS ON A SCHOOL BUS INFORMATION

Please use this [link to Large Items on a Division School Bus](#).

PRE-KINDERGARTEN / PRE-SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS TRANSPORTATION

The Board of Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools does not transport young students to pre-school age programs due to the following reasons:

1. School busses have been designed for school-age children, not for young children (2 ½ to 5 years old).
2. The latest findings of NHSTA (National Highway Safety Transportation Administration) indicate that pre-school-age children should always be transported in car seats.
 - (a) Recent school bus crash tests with pre-school age children indicate that these young children always be transported in car seats.
 - (b) Pre-school age children are too small for compartmentalization (see 3)
 - (c) They often cannot climb up the steps onto the bus
 - (d) They often cannot climb up into the seats
 - (e) They cannot see out the window
 - (f) They often do not stay in their seats
 - (g) There can be management and safety problems if the students do not remain seated
 - (h) School buses were never designed for these young children
3. School busses are designed using compartmentalization as the means of protection for school-age children. This is information from Transport Canada:

“Federal standards currently call for high –backed seats made of soft, energy-absorbing materials to retain occupants in their place in the event of an accident. Information from all types of school bus collisions demonstrates that the current school bus design provides a high level of protection to occupants. Based on its accident research analysis, Transport Canada has determined that seat belts may actually adversely affect the safety of children on school buses. For example, school bus crash tests conducted by the department revealed that lap belted occupants would be more likely to sustain serious head and neck injuries than would unbelted occupants in frontal collisions. The department also believes that combination lap and shoulder belts could pose problems because they cannot be adjusted to safely restrain smaller children and any slackness could injure a child. In addition, these seat belts would require the presence of stiff seats for installation, which could cause injury to an unbelted child.”

www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety/bus/schoolbus/BUSBELTS_e.HTM

4. Adding seat belts to buses manufactured without them would not be CMVSA (Canadian Motor Vehicle Standards Association) approved and presents the following concerns:
 - a. The manufacturer of the school bus would have to be contacted to see if retrofitting lap belts is plausible and safe and that the installation is in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications
 - b. If a school bus is retrofitted with seat belts, the school bus owner must ensure that seat spacing is sufficient for the CSRS (Child Safety Restraint Seat) to be used. Compartmentalization calls for the bus seats to be spaced close together. If a seat belt/car seat assembly is used, the seats should be farther apart.
 - c. The school bench seat does not have the same construction due to compartmentalization than passenger cars have which are firmer to accommodate seat belts and car seats.
 - d. Car seats must be correctly installed, i.e. rear anchor points, and must be the correct size for the child's height and weight.
 - e. . Someone must be responsible for ensuring the child is secured in the car seat and the car seat correctly installed according to the manufacturer's instructions. Due to the number of car seat manufacturers, this poses a problem for drivers to be knowledgeable about all brands of
 - f. car seats.
 - g. No students should be placed in the seats directly behind students who have been secured.
 - h. A written safety plan must be in place on how to evacuate pre-school-age children in CSRS in the event of an emergency.
5. The Alberta School Board Insurance Exchange provider for vehicle insurance, Lloyd Sadd, has indicated they highly recommend a monitor be assigned to the bus if it is transporting pre-school age children.

School Boards are not obligated to provide for the transportation of students to preschool programs within their divisions. However, as there is some transportation funding available Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools will access the funding if parents wish to enter into a Transportation Agreement with the Board. A number of school divisions within Alberta are also reviewing their policies and procedures regarding transporting pre-school age children in school buses that are manufactured without proper tether attachment ready seats.

STUDENT CONDUCT

A safe ride depends on the bus driver being able to give his/her full attention to watching the road. Distractions and disturbances make it increasingly difficult for drivers to concentrate on safely transporting students to and from school.

Students riding on the bus must remember that they will be held accountable for their conduct on the school bus. Continued violation of any of these rules may lead to the loss of riding privileges.

1. The driver is in full charge of the bus and his/her directions must be obeyed.
2. The driver will report any misconduct to the school principal, who will take appropriate action.
3. Students must always scan their bus pass every day to board their assigned bus and are only permitted to ride the bus they are registered to.
4. The driver may assign specific seats to students at anytime. Kindergarten and Grade1 students sit in the front seats.
5. Students must not extend arms or heads out of windows, try to get on or off the bus, or move around within it while the bus is in transit.
6. Students must not throw paper or other waste materials floor or out of the windows of the bus.
7. While on the bus, students must conduct themselves in a quiet and courteous manner, showing consideration for the comfort and safety of others.
8. Scuffling, fighting, eating, drinking, smoking and the use of obscene language on the bus are prohibited.
9. Students causing willful damage to a bus will be held fully accountable.
10. Articles that cannot be stored in a gym bag or backpack, such as snow skis, skateboards, tubas, hockey sticks, guitars, etc., will not be transported. Parents are responsible for the transportation of these items. Ice skates are to be in a gym bag or backpack with the blades covered. A plastic or paper bag is not acceptable.
11. Loose articles such as baseballs, golf balls or marbles cannot be transported on the bus. If a student wants to bring these types of articles to school, the articles must be securely contained within a gym bag or backpack. Coat pockets or cloth sacks are not acceptable.
12. No animals will be transported on a bus unless a service animal.

13. No firearms or knives will be transported.
14. Students should go directly home from the bus stop at night.
15. Kindergarten and Grade 1 students must be met by a parent/guardian, in the safety zone, at the bus stop, in order to be let off

GREATER ST. ALBERT CATHOLIC SCHOOLS TRANSPORTATION FAQ'S & QUESTION

What does “designated school” mean?

A designated school is one in which the Board has directed the student to attend; based on where they live (school attendance boundary) or by a program they are enrolled in. All students within the Division boundaries are designated to a school.

What are Provincial Regulations regarding walk distances for students?

The School Act states that students who reside more than 2.4 km from their designated school are eligible for school bus transportation to their designated school.

Who is eligible to ride the bus?

Alberta Education defines eligible students for transportation funding as those residing greater than 2.4 km from their designated school. The Division may provide transportation to students who require special programming, or those who reside outside the walk boundary for the school. If you live outside of the Division boundaries you may be able to meet a bus within the Division to access transportation if space and time allow.

After I have applied for transportation how long will it take before my child ride

the bus? After your child is registered at the school and is in the student information software (PowerSchool), the transportation department requires 3 to 5 school days from the date the registration is received in the transportation office before your child will be permitted to ride the bus. This time is needed to ensure that the driver has your child's information to ensure the safety of your child. To avoid any delay in service, it is recommended that you contact the transportation department prior to the date your child requires transportation to ensure your application has been received and processed.

How are bus stops determined?

School bus routes are developed annually based on registrations received by June 1st prior to the start of a school year. Student pickup and drop-off locations and timing may change from year to year based on registrants and geographical distribution. School bus routes are developed to allow the most efficient and equitable route through neighborhood streets or rural areas. This reduces ride time and allows trips to run in combination with the trips serving other schools. Every additional stop impacts the length of time students are on the bus and the number of buses required to provide transportation service. Students are expected to cross neighborhood streets and walk within guideline distances to and from the school bus stop.

Rural students may be expected to walk to and from the entrance of a rural subdivision to the main road. In the City of St. Albert buses will be routed to city transit stops whenever possible. These stops have been reviewed and approved to be a safe location for a bus to stop and load/unload a bus

The walk guidelines are as follows:

Distances for eligible riders to a bus stop	Distance in Meters
Elementary	400 Meters
Junior High	600 Meters
Senior High	800 Meters

*These distances are guidelines

*Rural gate service is provided to those living outside of rural subdivisions in the county

*Division routing software measurements are used to determine distances and will be the defining measurement

My family lives within the Walk Boundary of their designated school can my child ride the bus? Walk boundaries around an Elementary school is 1KM and for Jr. /Sr. High the walk boundary is 1.6KM. Your child may still be able to ride the bus by meeting a stop already on the route outside of the walk boundary to the school. A fee will apply.

Why can't the bus stop at my house, it drives right by?

School bus transportation is not intended to be a door-to-door service. Student transportation must be diligent in keeping ride times to a minimum and therefore cannot stop at each student's house. The transportation department takes into consideration the age of children, the proximity of stops, and the accessibility of roadways. To create efficiencies, walk distances are utilized in planning bus routes and bus stops.

Why does my child have to cross a busy road to access the stop location?

School bus stops are established on the most current information available at the time the route is planned and are normally designed to serve multiple students residing near the stop. Yellow bus service ride times can be longer due to geography. Minimizing student ride times is a high priority and therefore the necessity to maintain routes along collector / main roads (which are often busy) is a necessary practice. We realize that in order to access the yellow bus service roads will have to be crossed and that an escort for the children is prudent. Student Transportation encourages and promotes the practice of all students being escorted to and from the stop locations by a parent or guardian.

What time should my child be at the bus stop?

Please ensure your child is at the bus stop 5 minutes prior to the stop time recorded on your child's [Bus parent portal](#). This is to ensure your child does not miss the bus. The bus will depart at the time within your Parent Portal.

Why can't you come into my sub-division?

The length of the bus is one thing that limits school buses maneuverability in Cul-de-sacs, Crescents, closes and other tight places. School buses come in a various size ranging from 25 to 36 feet long, 20,000 – 26,000 pounds, 12 – 13 feet high and 6-9 feet wide. Smaller buses can turn in a shorter radius, while longer buses cannot maneuver the same circle without backing the bus, which is avoided in bus routing where possible. In the winter months, buses risk becoming stuck, resulting in longer bus rides or delays arriving at the school or home. Bus routes are planned for the entire school year; therefore, winter conditions are taken into consideration during the route planning phase. Whenever possible, the Division will remain on main roadways and not enter subdivisions without the subdivision roadway having the ability to enter and exit without the need to utilize a cul-de-sac to turn around to exit.

Routes are designed for safety and efficiency for the route as a whole. An exception **MAY** be made to enter a **RURAL** subdivision if your child meets the walk guidelines when the speed limit is greater than 50 Km per hour and 1 of the following scenarios is present:

1. If the entrance to the subdivision is located within 300 meters of a sharp curve reducing the visibility of traffic approaching the bus from the rear. This does not include street corners or intersections where speeds are automatically reduced to complete a turn from one roadway to another.

2. If a student is required to cross the roadway to access their bus stop opposite the rural subdivision entrance, and is located within 300 meters of a sharp curve reducing the visibility of oncoming traffic from either direction. This does not include street corners/intersections where vehicle speeds are naturally reduced to complete a turn from one roadway to another.

These exceptions allow for adequate time for traffic to stop when the Red lights and stop arm are deployed.

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Can I approach the driver to have a discussion at the door of the bus?

The primary role of the bus driver is to ensure the safety of students while loading and unloading students and driving the bus, therefore you should not approach the driver to have a discussion to ensure the driver is not distracting while loading and unloading students. Please contact the Division Transportation department for any requests or discussions regarding your child's route or any other concerns. If necessary transportation will contact the appropriate contractor to provide them with any information that is necessary.

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Who is responsible for my child before they load and after they unload from the bus?

Parents are responsible for their child's safety to, from, and while the student waits for the bus at their designated stop. Bus drivers may not permit students to unload at another stop. The school bus shall wait until the designated stop time before departing the stop location.

Why can't my child get off the bus wherever they want to in the afternoon?

To avoid multiple problems, the driver is not authorized to transport any student other than those registered and possess a valid bus pass to ride that particular route. This allows the driver to focus on driving and safety instead of having to decide whether a student should be allowed to change their routine and get off with a friend or without the parent's knowledge or permission. Students are only allowed to disembark at their scheduled stop location.

Can my child use the bus to transport to a job or after-school activity?

Division transportation is only available to families to transport their children from home to school and back home at the end of the day. Transportation cannot be used to access after-school or extracurricular activities or work access.

My child attends a day home or sitter can you stop the bus in front of the sitter/day home?

Bus stop locations for a sitter or day home location are located within the same walk guidelines as a home stop. The guidelines are as follows: Elementary student - 400 Jr High – 600M

Can my child bring a friend home after school with them on the bus?

To ensure the safety of our students only those who hold a valid bus pass for a particular route are authorized to ride the bus. The School Division operates a large and very complex school bus route system. Student safety is compromised when students ride on buses other than the assigned route or depart the bus at a location other than the authorized location. The school bus drivers are prohibited from accepting notes from parents, school staff, or students requesting to ride on any routes other than the assigned school bus route or to be picked up or dropped off at an alternate location.

Why can't last-minute busing changes be granted?

To ensure the safety of your child's transportation requires 3 – 5 school days' notice to ensure the driver has received written communication of any changes to your child's bus stop location.

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What if my child needs a replacement bus pass?

Bus passes are expected to last 5 – 7 yrs. If your child requires a replacement pass you may request one through the Parent Portal. Please visit the [Parent Portal](#) and fill in the appropriate forms for a Bus Pass Replacement. Note a fee may apply, see the website for details.

If I choose to send my child to a school of choice can I still have my child ride the bus?

Generally, there is no transportation available to a school of choice. The exception is Vincent J Maloney schools when there is a St. Albert Catholic High bus stop available. As there is no obligation to transport to a school of choice this is only available when an existing stop can be accessed. No new stops will be created to accommodate a school of choice student. The busing for the exceptions comes at a higher cost than a regular bus pass.

What happens if my child is temporarily on crutches?

If your child is temporarily on crutches and is unable to walk to the current bus stop, we will try to accommodate (whenever possible) within the parameters set out by the cities/towns we transport in. Closer stops may be accommodated if a) It does not disrupt the timing of the current route. B) Access to a closer stop is serviceable (no cul-de-sacs). Please note this accommodation can only be for a finite period of time and will revert back to the original stop afterward.

My child has left an item on the bus what should I do?

Please call your child's contractor of the route and they can check the bus for your item. To find the phone number to reach the contractor of your route log into your child's parent portal and beside the routing information is the contractor and a number to reach them.

How do I contact the contractor of my child's route?

To find the phone number to reach the contractor of your route log into your child's [parent portal](#) and beside the routing information is the contractor and a number to reach them.

My child has left an item on the bus. How can we get the item returned?

Please log in to your Parent Portal to find your child's route contractor. Call the number provided and they will be happy to look for your lost item.

Can my driver make a stop location change or route change?

Your child's bus stop location is determined by the Division. The driver is unable to modify the stop location or route as a whole without written approval from the Division's transportation department. The stop location and timing are subject to change if required, periodically during the school year at the Division's discretion.

Will I receive a reduction in bus fees if my child does not ride the bus?

No, unfortunately, the cost to deliver bus operations requires the division to pay contractors for the entire school year and all costs associated with transportation operations continue to remain unchanged. This is also true during the pandemic when school instruction moved Online this past year on several occasions. At the same time, bus operations were active for those students who did require in-person instruction. School divisions were directed by the government to compensate contractors for all routes and all educational days on the division calendar at their normal rate(s). Costs to deliver transportation services remain unchanged.

In the City of St. Albert, where are bus stops located?

In the City of St. Albert whenever possible, stops will be located at city transit stop locations. GSACRD does not stop at all city transit stops within the city. Transit stops that are utilized by GSACRD are based on walk guidelines and the registrations received by June 1st of any given school year.

The use of transit stops is a direct result of the Safe Journeys to School Initiative. The City transit stops are the safest location to stop a bus whenever possible and are researched by the City for safety as well as being maintained year-round.

Can I receive transportation from both my home and my sitter/daycare location for my child?

Yes, you can receive transportation from both your sitter and home location however if these 2 addresses require 2 buses then you will be assigned a 2nd bus access fee in addition to your regular busing fee. Please

note this is not available to have your child attend extra-curricular/after-school activities or work.

What size of items can I bring on a bus?

According to the School Bus Operation Regulation (16) of the Motor Transport Act, large items cannot be carried on school buses unless they can be secured and do not block the aisle. Seats are 39" wide and there are often 3 students in a seat therefore we only allow those items that are no more than 13" X 13" X 23" in size or those that can be fully zipped into the child's backpack. For additional information [please follow this link.](#)

I live outside of the Jurisdictional Boundaries of Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools can my child ride the bus?

Your child may be able to access transportation by meeting a bus stop within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Division and the Attendance boundary of the school you would like your child to attend. If available this will require you to fill in a Transfer of Student Transportation Funding Parent Declaration Form. To inquire if this is available to your family please contact the Division Office at 780-459-7711 and ask to speak with the transportation department.

Why Can't I have 2 Primary addresses for my child's transportation?

We understand some families have an agreement for the children with a 50/50 split time between 2 home addresses. Alberta Education states we can only use 1 home address as the primary address. The address that is used as the primary address is the one in the student information software PowerSchool. We encourage parents to have the discussion and decide who will be the primary address in the system. Please note this decision will decide the fees that may be assigned for busing your child(ren). The primary address will be based on the primary address in PowerSchool software on September 30th of the school year the fee would apply. If the primary address is changed in the system after the September 30th date, there will be no changes/refunds to the fees due to this change until the following school year.