

**Department of Education  
PROTOCOL FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF  
CHANGES TO SCHOOL BUS ROUTES  
WITHIN THE CITY OF WHITEHORSE**

**May 2002**

**Preamble**

The following is an explanation of the protocol followed by the Department of Education with regard to requests for changes to school bus routes serving Whitehorse area schools.

**Governing Legislation**

School Busing is governed by the “Student Transportation Regulations”.

**Authority**

The authority governing this protocol is the following:

1. Student Transportation Officer
2. Superintendent of Schools responsible for the school in question.
3. The Assistant Deputy Minister for Public Schools

**Bus Route Changes**

The protocol for changing existing bus routes is set out below. It must be emphasized that there are no concrete rules governing the extension of bus routes and that each request for changes must be dealt with in its own context. The decision on whether or not to approve the change is made on the merits of that particular situation, taking all factors into account.

1. Every Whitehorse area school council has a representative on the Whitehorse School Busing Committee. The parent or guardian of the affected student(s) would submit a written request for a change to their School Council.
2. The representative would forward the proposed change to the Student Transportation Officer at the Department of Education. They would include any additional information concerning the application that they might have available based on their knowledge of the area and of other related busing concerns or issues. The Student Transportation Officer would research the request and depending on its implications, might immediately approve the request. Factors which would be taken into consideration would include:
  - **Traffic Safety Concerns:**  
The proposed change might involve the bus driving on a section of roadway which does not meet school bus safety standards covering such factors as road width, clearing width, road bed strength, road grades, turning radii on intersections with highways and proper turnarounds. The essence of this factor is that buses must be able to safely drive the road in question. Minimum standards for roads on which school buses travel are discussed in the Department of Infrastructure document entitled: Rural Road Maintenance Policy under item 3b: “Minimum School Bus Standards for Existing Roads.”
  - **Effect on Total Time Spent on the Bus Route:**  
The proposed change might unreasonably extend the time students spend on the bus, particularly those at the extreme reaches of the route.

- **The Numbers of Students Involved:**  
The numbers of students residing in the area affected by the proposed change would be a major factor in the decision. If there are 20 students involved, then the Student Transportation Regulations would mandate that the change be made. If only two students were involved, then the decision would be less simple.
  - **Distance to Nearest Existing Bus Stop:**  
The distance from the student's residence to the nearest existing bus stop would be taken into account.
  - **Age of student involved:**  
The age of the student would be taken into account; for instance, a kindergarten student would not be expected to walk as far to an existing bus stop as would be the case with an older student.
  - **Cost Associated with the Proposed Change:**  
The proposed change might require that additional bus equipment/time be put in place. The cost of that equipment would be factored into the decision.
3. If the Student Transportation Officer concluded that the implications of the proposed change were sufficiently complex as to be beyond his/her mandate to resolve, then the issue would be referred to the School Busing Committee.
  4. The School Busing Committee would review the issue at their next scheduled meeting, which are typically held monthly. The Committee might make a recommendation at that meeting, or they might direct that additional information be collected regarding the issues discussed above.
  5. After due review of the issue, the Whitehorse School Busing Committee would submit its recommendation to the Department of Education.
  6. The Department of Education would review the recommendations of the Whitehorse School Busing Committee. This review would involve the Department personnel listed above under: "Authority". Depending on the complexity and the implications of the proposed change, it would be dealt with at the applicable level of authority.
  7. If the Department concurred with the Committee's recommendation, then it would be implemented. If the Department elected to overturn the Committee's recommendation, then a written explanation of the reasons for the rejection would be sent to the School Busing Committee and the parent/guardian of the student(s) affected.