



**WETASKIWIN REGIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



# Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools

## Transportation Handbook



Wetaskiwin Regional  
Public Schools

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For more information regarding the Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools Student Transportation Handbook visit our website at [www.wrps.ab.ca](http://www.wrps.ab.ca) or contact:

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# PREFACE

This Student Transportation Handbook was developed to assist in understanding Wetaskiwin Regional Public School's (WRPS) bussing system.

WRPS Policy 16 provides that a school board shall transport a student who:

- Resides within the attendance area of the school in which the student is enrolled;
- Resides within the division boundary; and
- Resides at a distance greater than 2.4 km from that school.

The Act also allows the Board to levy a fee for transportation services.

A board must establish an attendance area for each school. A WRPS resident student who resides in the attendance area for a school shall be enrolled in that school and shall be given priority over a student who does not reside in the attendance area.

Within the guidelines established by WRPS, the responsibility of the divisional transportation system is delegated to the Transportation Manager. WRPS has also adopted specific policies and procedures relating to the safe, efficient and effective delivery of transportation services, requiring the cooperation and understanding of students, parents, bus contractors, bus operators, school administration and central office administration.



# DEFINITIONS

**Attendance Area:** Boundaries such that the resources, programs and transportation systems of each school are fully and efficiently utilized for the utmost benefit of students.

**Designated School:** The school that the student has been directed to, within their attendance area.

**Transportation Service Area:** That area surrounding a school in which WRPS has established school bus routes, which may transport students to and from the school site.

**Eligible Passengers:** WRPS defines eligible passengers as those students who:

1. Live 2.4 kilometers or more from their designated school. This includes sidewalks, walkways, pathways, roadways, alleys, parks, ditches, etc.;
2. ECS to Grade 3 students who live less than 2.4 kilometers from their designated school but who would have to walk along a road with posted speed limits of 50 km / hr or higher without the benefit of a walkway or sidewalk; or
3. Grade 4 to 6 students who live less than 2.4 kilometers from their designated school but who would have to walk along a road with posted speed limits of 80 km / hr or higher without the benefit of a walkway or sidewalk.

**Sidewalk or Walkway:** That part of a highway especially adapted to the use or ordinarily used by pedestrians and includes that part of a highway between:

- The curb line, or
- Where there is no curb line, the edge of the roadway, and the adjacent property line, whether or not it is paved or improved.

**School of Choice:** The school that parents choose to send their children to, outside their school attendance area.

Reference: WRPS Board Policy 16, Student Transportation  
WRPS Administrative Procedure 305, School Attendance Areas

# GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION OF THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

## **Daily Administration**

Daily administration of WRPS bussing services is the responsibility of the Transportation Department. The Transportation Manager manages student bussing. The Manager and department staff monitors the safe operation and route efficiencies of student bus services on a daily basis.

## **Questions, Problems, Concerns**

Questions, problems and concerns relating to specific bus routes should be directed to the appropriate Bus Operator. If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily with the Bus Operator, concerned parties should contact their School Principal or the Transportation Department.

## **Route Design**

Transportation routes and schedules are designed in accordance with WRPS guidelines. Operators are not permitted to make changes to established routes.

## **Route Adjustments**

Changes in the design of a route may have an impact on all riders; therefore, requests for adjustments must be authorized by the Transportation Department.

## **Route Schedules**

At the beginning of each school year, parents/guardians will be provided with their bus route number, Operator's name and phone number as well as their child(ren)'s pick up and drop off times.

Operators shall operate routes according to the schedule provided. Adherence to the route schedule is critical to the safe, efficient and effective transportation of students. To maintain route efficiency, students should be at their bus stop 5 minutes before the scheduled pick up time. Scheduled pick up and drop off times may vary by 5 minutes on any given day.

Reference: Administrative Procedure 341: School Bus Transportation – Parent Responsibilities

# APPLICATION FOR TRANSPORTATION

## No Charge Transportation

Bus service will be available at no charge to eligible students who:

1. Live 2.4 kilometers or more from their designated school. This includes sidewalks, pathways, roadways, alleys, parks, ditches, etc.;
2. Are enrolled in ECS through Grade 3 and live less than 2.4 kilometers from their designated school but who would have to walk along a road with posted speed limit of 50 km/hr or higher without benefit of a sidewalk; or
3. Are enrolled in Grade 4 through 6 and live less than 2.4 kilometers from their designated school but who would have to walk along a road with posted speed limit of 80 km/hr or higher without benefit of a sidewalk;

## Ineligible Students

Bussing **may** be made available to ineligible students who live **less than** 2.4 km from their designated school and/or to students whose parents/guardians have made a “school of choice” decision. Alberta Education’s *Student Transportation Regulation* considers students who live less than 2.4 km from their designated school and school of choice students to be ***ineligible passengers***.

Bussing of ineligible students is reviewed on an annual basis and may change due to the elimination of a route, decline in the number of registrants, or for any other reason deemed by WRPS to necessitate such a change.

## School of Choice Bussing

When students attend a school other than the one they have been directed to attend, transportation becomes the parent’s/guardian’s responsibility. A student’s designated school is the school that lies within their Transportation Service Area. The Board **may**, however, make transportation service area exemption bussing available to ineligible students who reside 2.4 km or more from the school they have chosen to attend provided that:

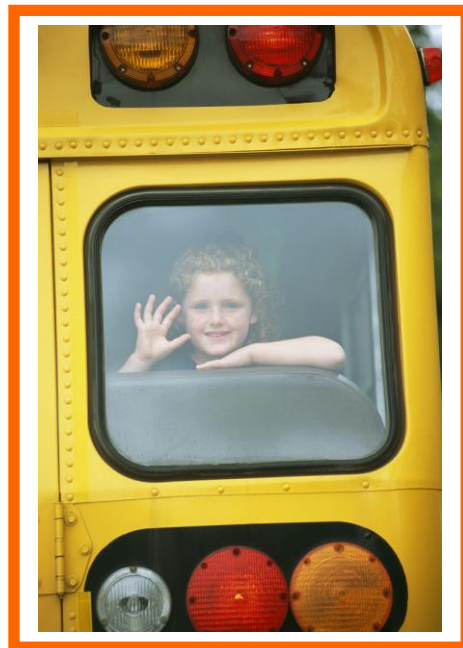
1. The school of choice has accepted the student(s);
2. There is space available on an existing bus route;
3. There is no diversion from regular routing;
4. Parents accept responsibility to meet the bus at a designated stop on the route;
5. Where there is insufficient space on an existing route to provide transportation to all parents requesting School of Choice bussing, priority shall be given to those who have attended the school of choice the longest; and
6. Available seats shall be provided on a first come first serve basis to new school of choice applicants.
7. The applicable fee as set by the Board is paid.

# APPLICATION FOR TRANSPORTATION (continued)

Transportation privileges may be revoked at any time if space availability becomes an issue, because priority is given to the eligible passengers in that designated Transportation Service Area.

To apply for service, parents must annually submit to the Transportation Department the Application for Transportation Form 16-1. This form is available at all WRPS schools, on our website at [www.wrps.ab.ca](http://www.wrps.ab.ca) or at the transportation office.

Please contact the Transportation Department for your designated stop as it may change from year to year.



**Reference:** WRPS Administrative Procedure 305, School Attendance Areas  
FORM 16-1 Application for Transportation

# TRANSPORTATION FEES

Ineligible passengers, whose parents/guardians wish to access bussing services provided by WRPS, are required to pay a transportation fee and complete the Application for Transportation Form 16-1.

Transportation fees are set by the Board yearly. Please refer to [Form 16-1 Application for Transportation](#) for the current transportation fees.

## FEE COLLECTION

Fees not received by October 31<sup>st</sup> of the school year will result in bussing privileges being revoked as of November 1<sup>st</sup> of that school year.





# PARENTS' GUARDIANS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents or guardians must share in the responsibility for the safe, efficient, and effective transportation of their children.

1. Parents / guardians shall:
  - 1.1. Ensure that their children are at the designated pick-up point 5 minutes prior to the Scheduled pick-up time;
  - 1.2. Advise the Bus Operator, in writing if possible, when their children will not be riding the bus to school on any particular day;
  - 1.3. Inform the school, in writing, when their children will not be riding the bus home at the end of the school day;
  - 1.4. Advise the Operator, in writing, when their children are to be picked up or delivered to a location other than their home;
  - 1.5. Ensure that their children are properly dressed for the weather conditions;
  - 1.6. Ensure their children have a plan in the event that the bus does not arrive to pick them up;
  - 1.7. Provide the school with alternate drop-off or billeting information for inclement weather purposes;
  - 1.8. Accept responsibility for the proper conduct of their children prior to boarding the bus, during the daily bus trips and upon discharge;
  - 1.9. Assist the Bus Operator and Principal in the resolution of any discipline concerns;
  - 1.10. Report any safety concerns to the Bus Operator, Principal, or Transportation Manager;
  - 1.11. Construct and maintain a satisfactory and safe turnaround point at their own expense, in cases where no turnaround exists on their access road;
  - 1.12. Advise the Bus Operator of any medical condition(s) that might require health/safety intervention by the Operator;
  - 1.13. Be financially responsible, along with their children, for any damages that are the result of vandalism by their children.
2. The Bus Operator will stop to pick up all students but will not wait if students are not at the bus stop at the appointed departure time.
3. Where a pickup is on a primary or secondary highway, Operators will use discretion as to whether or not to come to a complete stop, if students are not waiting at the pick up point.
4. The Principal, after receiving notification from the child's parent of ECS to grade six students not requiring after school bus service, shall notify Bus Operators.

WRPS Administrative Procedure 341 Parent Responsibility Code of Conduct

# TRANSPORTATION STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

School Bus Contractors and the Operators they employ are responsible for the safety and conduct of students in their care. The Division considers the school bus to be an extension of the classroom and therefore all Administrative Procedures regarding student conduct in the classroom apply to busses.

1. Students are accountable for their behavior on the bus. Students shall:
  - 1.1 Conduct themselves in a manner to promote positive behavior and contribute to the safe conduct of all occupants on the bus;
  - 1.2 Understand that the School Bus Operator is in full charge of the bus at all times. Passengers must obey the Operator promptly and in a courteous manner;
  - 1.3 Be waiting at the pickup location 5 minutes before the expected arrival time of the bus and be ready to board the bus at the designated pick-up time. The Bus Operator will stop to pick up all students but will not wait if students are not at the bus stop.
  - 1.4 Enter and leave the bus in an orderly manner;
  - 1.5 Remain seated in the seat allocated by the Bus Operator except when boarding or exiting the bus;
  - 1.6 Stay on the bus for the entire trip, unless prior arrangements are made, exiting only as permitted at the appropriate designated location;
  - 1.7 Keep noise to an acceptable level;
  - 1.8 Refrain from the use of electronic devices, except those fitted with earphones;
  - 1.9 Not throw, hang or extend any object or body part out the bus window;
  - 1.10 Keep the aisle and exits clear at all times;
  - 1.11 Refrain from engaging in behaviors that are deemed intimidating, threatening, vulgar and/or that which constitutes an assault of other passengers;
  - 1.12 Be responsible, along with their parents/guardians, for any damages that are the result of vandalism; and
  - 1.13 Be dressed for unexpected severe weather conditions during winter months.
2. In the interests of safety, where a pickup is on a primary or secondary highway, the Operator will use discretion as to whether or not to come to a complete stop when students are not waiting at the pick up point.

### Transportation Student Code of Conduct (continued)

3. The Operator shall immediately deal with inappropriate behavior as follows:
  - 3.1 Attempt to solve the problem by dealing with the student(s) involved in the incident. Dealings shall be strictly verbal, as physical discipline by Bus Operators is prohibited;
  - 3.2 Where the student has not rectified their behavior, the Operator shall work with the parents to resolve the matter.
  - 3.3 Where the attempt to resolve the matter with the student and his/her parents has not rectified the student's behavior, the Operator will report the matter to the Principal and Transportation Manager making use of Form 340-1 School Bus Misconduct Report.
  - 3.4 The Operator must document the inappropriate behavior and all actions that have been taken beyond that of informal discussions
4. For extreme discipline matters like firearms, explosives, flammable materials, or anything of a dangerous nature where passenger health and safety has been compromised, the Operator must:
  - 4.1 Immediately refer the matter to the Principal for action; and
  - 4.2 Advise the Transportation Manager and the parent/guardian of the offending student, as soon as possible.
5. The Principal of the school where the student is registered will take the appropriate action to deal with the student misconduct. This may include contacting the parent/guardian(s), school suspension, suspension of school bus rider privileges or other disciplinary measures as deemed appropriate by the Principal. The School Principal shall complete and forward a copy of the report to the Operator and send a copy of the same report to the Transportation Manager.
6. Only the Principal may suspend a student from riding a school bus. Where suspension from the school bus is for longer than five (5) days, this recommendation will be referred to the Superintendent.
7. School Bus Contractors and Operators they employ are responsible to the Principal for any situation that arises concerning students riding their buses.
8. The Principal shall be responsible for ensuring that bus loading zones at school sites are supervised.



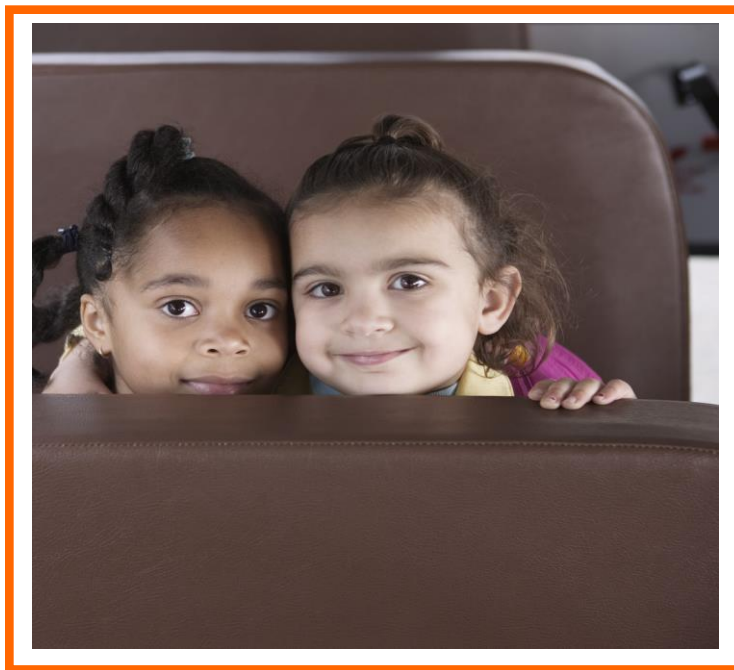
Reference: WRPS Administrative Procedure 340 Student Transportation Code of Conduct

# OPERATOR and SCHOOL GUIDELINES

Section 3 of Administrative Procedure 340 Student Transportation Code of Conduct outlines the duties of both the Operator and Principal when students misbehave on the school bus as follows:

3. In an effort to anticipate any possible problems or confusion associated with the duties and responsibilities of the Operator and school personnel the following guidelines are in effect:
  - 3.1 School Bus Contractors (and Operators they employ) are responsible to the Principal for any situation that arises concerning children riding their buses;
  - 3.2 The Principal shall be responsible for ensuring that bus loading zones at school sites are supervised;
  - 3.3 The Principal, after receiving notification from the child's parent/guardian shall notify Bus Operators of ECS to grade 6 students not requiring after school bus service;
  - 3.4 Student code of conduct related issues are the responsibility of the Operators. Incidents' reporting is made to the Principal and the Transportation Manager; and
  - 3.5 Only the Principal may suspend a student from riding a school bus. Where the recommendation of suspension from the school bus is for longer than five days, the recommendation will be referred to the Superintendent.

Reference: Section 16, 24, 25, 45, 51, 60, 61, School Act  
WRPS Administrative Procedure 340 Student Transportation Code of Conduct



# BUS OPERATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

School Bus Contractors and the Operators they employ are critical to the provision of a safe, economical and effective transportation system. Operators must conduct themselves in a manner that promotes positive behavior and contributes to the safe conduct of all bus occupants.

1. Bus Operators shall maintain order and safety on the bus and will establish a seating plan. The Operator may amend the seating plan from time to time as required;
2. The Operator will document, any discipline infractions that occur on the bus. The Operator will contact the parent/guardian and/or Principal in accordance with WRPS Administrative Procedure 340: Student Transportation Code of Conduct;
3. The Operator must complete the Rural Bus Student Attendance Record in order to ensure that those ECS to grade 6 students who rode the bus to school in the morning are returned home at the end of the day, unless otherwise advised by school staff that alternate transportation arrangements have been made;
4. School bus contractors and/or Operators must ensure complete compliance with all terms and conditions of the *Freedom of Information and Privacy* obligations, as outlined in the Transportation Contract Agreement;
5. Operators shall exercise extreme caution when moving near a loading zone. The rate of speed in the vicinity of a school must not exceed ten (10) kilometers per hour;
6. Busses are to be parked and ready for loading before regular school dismissal time;
7. The Operator shall be in the bus or at the door of the bus whenever students are on the bus, embarking or disembarking the bus, excepting emergencies;
8. Operators must report to the Principal the reason for the late arrival or early departure of a bus;
9. The Operator shall have full authority to determine which windows are to be open or closed;
10. All regular and spare Operators must annually complete the Request for Driver's Abstract Form;
11. If a student is misbehaving, the student shall not be removed from the bus at any other location than the school or at their normal pickup or drop-off point;
12. When reporting motoring offences to the Transportation Manager, the Operator must complete the Traffic Violation Information form. Written notes recording details must be taken at the time of the offence to be used in court as evidence;
13. Bus contractors must ensure that all provincial legislation, division policies and administrative procedures (available at the Transportation Office or on the web at [www.wrps.ab.ca](http://www.wrps.ab.ca) ) respecting the transportation of students are observed.

Reference: WRPS Administrative Procedure 550: Bus Operator Responsibilities

# PRIVATE PROPERTY ENTRY

Private property will generally not be entered for the purpose of student pick-up or drop-off. Pickups and drop offs will take place at the residential gate immediately adjacent to the municipal road allowance or highway on the school bus route.

## Procedures

1. Exceptions to normal practice are:
  - a. The residence is located more than 0.8 kilometers from the municipal road allowance on which the bus route has been established;
  - b. There is no satisfactory turn-around point on the municipal road allowance; or
  - c. The student is not capable of walking as evidenced by a medical certificate issued by a qualified physician.
2. Whenever entry to private property is requested, the Transportation, Private Property Entry Form must be submitted to and approved by the Transportation Manager.

Reference: WRPS Administrative Procedure 343: Student Transportation: Private Property Entrance



# INCLEMENT WEATHER

The primary consideration in the event of inclement weather conditions shall be the health and safety of students and staff. When road or weather conditions jeopardize the safety of students and staff, bus routes may be cancelled, however schools will remain open. Bus route cancellations will not always be made on a system-wide basis due to the large geographical area of the Division,

- When road or weather conditions jeopardize the safety of students, bus routes may be cancelled.
- Bus route cancellations will not always be made on a system-wide basis due to the large geographic area of the Division.
- Parents are not required to send their children to school if, in their judgment, weather or road conditions are detrimental to the safety, or well being of their children.
- Any of the following factors, or combinations of factors, shall serve as guidelines for considering non-operation of buses or running buses early.
  - A temperature reported by the weather office for the area in question to be – 40 degrees or a wind chill factor of -50 degrees Celsius or lower consistently over a number of days;
  - Visibility of less than 30 meters;
  - Road closures by the R.C.M.P., municipal or other local road officials.

## Procedures

1. The decision to cancel bus routes will be determined by 6:30 a.m., once appropriate information has been gathered from each of the school areas.
2. The Transportation Manager shall notify School Principals via a fan out system regarding the early running of buses.
3. Once a decision is made to cancel a bus route or all bus routes due to road or weather conditions, the Transportation Manager shall notify local radio stations. Families have a responsibility to listen for bus cancellation announcements when inclement weather conditions exist. Media outlets, however, are not obligated to broadcast this information as they do so as a community service. Bus route status information is available on the WRPS website at [www.wrps.ab.ca](http://www.wrps.ab.ca) as well as each of our schools website.
4. Schools will remain open and Principals shall ensure that staff members are present at the school.
5. Parents are not required to send their children to school if, in their judgment, weather or road conditions are detrimental to the safety, or well being of their children.



### **Inclement Weather (continued)**

5. An individual Bus Operator may make the decision not to transport students during inclement weather. An Operator who decides not to transport students due to weather or road conditions shall contact the Transportation Manager no later than 6:30 a.m., and shall make every reasonable effort to contact all parents of students transported on his/her route.
  - 5.1 When individual Bus Operators make the decision not to transport students during inclement weather schools will remain open.
  - 5.2 When a parent makes the decision to transport their child(ren) to a school that is open but their Bus Operator has decided not to transport students, the parent shall also be responsible to pick-up their child(ren) at the end of the day.
6. An individual Bus Operator may make the decision to run their bus early due to weather or road conditions. The Operator shall contact the Transportation Manager and the School Principal. The Principal shall make every reasonable effort to contact all parents of students transported on that route.
7. If the Operator encounters impassible roads and is not able to complete the route, he/she shall immediately:
  - 7.1 Advise the Transportation Manager who will immediately call the school.
  - 7.2 The school will make every effort to notify the parents of the students on that route; and
  - 7.3 The Operator shall deliver those students on the bus back to their residence and advise the Transportation Manager of the safe return of those students.
8. A check-in process will be utilized during periods of inclement weather to monitor the completion of each bus route and initiate follow-up action if a bus is overdue.
9. Normally busses will not run early if inclement weather conditions develop during the day. Students will remain at the school until the end of the day, unless picked up by their parents.
  - 9.1 If the Transportation Manager decides to run all busses early, the Manager will contact all Operators to begin their routes early and notify the local media;
  - 9.2 The Transportation Manager shall notify Principals who will make every effort to contact the parents regarding early bus delivery of students;
  - 9.3 Bus Operators shall ensure that students have accessed their residence prior to continuing on their route; and
  - 9.4 Schools shall remain open to students whose parents or older siblings are not home, until such time as alternate housing arrangement can be made.

Reference: WRPS Administrative Procedure 132: Inclement Weather



# TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

WRPS provides transportation for students with special needs to designated schools upon authorization from the Director of Educational Services and/or Support Services.

Requests for the transportation of a student with special needs must be directed to the Principal who will consult with the appropriate Director. Where authorization is given, appropriate transportation will be arranged.

# TRANSPORTATION OF LARGE OR RESTRICTED ARTICLES

Safety is the prime consideration in student transportation; therefore it is important that goods transported on school buses are securely stored.

1. Personal effects and equipment may be carried in the interior of the school bus if they:
  - 1.1. Are stored under the seats;
  - 1.2. Do not block the aisles or emergency exits; and
  - 1.3. Are stored, lodged or secured in such a manner so that they cannot be dislodged in the event of an emergency.
2. Skates are permitted provided that blade guards protect the blades or they are carried in a heavy tote bag and stored under the students' seat.
3. Band equipment and other items may only be carried on the bus if they can be stowed under the bus seat.
4. Animals, firearms, explosives, flammable materials or substances and anything of a dangerous or objectionable nature shall not be transported on a bus.
5. Appeals regarding this procedure shall be directed to the Transportation Manager, and
6. The responsibility for administering this procedure is delegated to the School Bus Operator.

Reference: WRPS Administrative Procedure 342: Transporting Goods on School Buses

Reference: Alberta Regulation 437/86 School Bus Operation Regulation

# VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

The Division believes video cameras may be used on school property and on school buses to help ensure the safety and security of students and staff on school property and transportation vehicles.

## Notification and Use of Video Surveillance

1. Parents, students and staff will be notified that video surveillance may occur; notifications will also be posted on the school bus;
2. The use of surveillance equipment will respect individual right to privacy as deemed reasonable in the circumstances; and
3. Video surveillance shall be used to promote order, safety and security of students, staff and property.

## Viewing Requests

1. Requests for viewing video recordings will be limited to the appropriate Division personnel, parent, guardian or student 18 years of age or older and others as deemed appropriate by Division personnel;
2. Requests for viewing video recordings taken on school buses may be made to the Transportation Manager within five school days of the date of the recording;
3. Only the portion of the video concerning the specific incident(s) will be made available for viewing;
4. Approval / denial for viewing will be made within five school days of receipt of written request and so communicated to the requesting individual(s);
5. Viewing will be made available within 3 (three) school days of the approved request;
6. All viewing will include the Associate Superintendent: Instruction (or designate) and others as deemed appropriate by the Associate Superintendent: Instruction;
7. A written log will be maintained of those viewing the video, including the date, reason for viewing, the date the recording was made, location of the video and the signature of the viewer(s); and
8. Video recordings are the sole property of the Division.

Reference: Administrative Procedures 357: Surveillance Technology