

BULKLEY VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL SOCIETY

Bus Transportation Policy

Last updated and approved by BGT Committee June 2024

1. Bus service

1. The operation of bus routes is at the sole discretion of the BVCS board.
2. Bulkley Valley Christian school may operate bus routes to serve BVCS students and those students who belong to schools with whom BVCS has a formal transportation agreement.
3. BVCS may elect, at its sole discretion, to form transportation agreements with other schools from time to time and as needs arise. Such agreements must be ratified by the board or its designated representative(s).
4. This policy will be amended from time to time at the discretion of the BVCS board or the Building, Grounds and Transportation Committee (BGT Committee)

2. Definitions respecting scheduled route service

1. "Eligible" riders are those who meet all of the following conditions:
 1. Are enrolled as part- or full-time students at Bulkley Valley Christian school or at a school with which BVCS has a formal transportation agreement;
 2. Have completed all steps in the established bus registration process;
 3. Have been assigned a bus route and bus stop;
 4. Have paid their transportation fees.
2. "Courtesy" riders are those who meet all of the following conditions:
 1. Are enrolled as part- or full-time students at Bulkley Valley Christian school or at a school with which BVCS has a formal transportation agreement;
 2. Parent/guardian has completed the bus permission slip for the student
 1. to get off the school bus at a scheduled stop other than his/her own as authorized by the student's parent/guardian;
 2. OR to ride the school bus to spend time at a relative or friend's house as authorized by the student's parent/guardian provided there is room on the relevant bus.

3. Priority

1. RIDERSHIP priority: The priority for determining school bus ridership on routes will be as follows:
 1. BVCS eligible riders
 2. Eligible riders from other schools
 3. BVCS courtesy riders
 4. Courtesy riders from other schools
2. TRIP AND USAGE priority:
 1. BVCS administration reserves the exclusive right to make ad hoc decisions about bus trip and usage priority. For example, in some circumstance administration may decide to allow an after-hours or overnight trip to take a bus, thus cancelling AM/PM routes for that time. Administration may make these decisions on a case-by-case basis. A decision in one situation does not set precedent for another situation. If administration makes a decision that affects field trips or AM/PM routes, they will ensure the decision is made with adequate time to communicate and allow affected parties to adjust their plans accordingly.
 2. In the absence of an administrative decision to the contrary, trip and usage priority will be in order as follows:
 1. Morning and afternoon routes
 2. After-hours and overnight trips (field trips, athletics, etc.)
3. Daytime overnight and after-hours usage
 1. Buses may be used for daytime, overnight or after-hours field trips and other uses provided such use does not violate the priorities set out above unless such use has the authorization of BVCS administration.

2. Any daytime or after-hours use should be booked in advance. Bus reservations can be made at the front office. It is the sole responsibility of the teacher or trip coordinator to book the bus, find a qualified driver (and submit appropriate documents to the office in advance...see below), ensure that the driver has been briefed by the Driver-Manager on bus operations, and ensure that the bus is fuelled and cleaned after trip completion.

4. Roles

1. Bus drivers and Driver-Manager are employees of Bulkley Valley Christian School.

2. Building, Grounds & Transportation Committee

1. aware of any ongoing maintenance or operational issues, bus condition and longevity including replacement timeline
2. consult with administrator on matter of policy and procedure, with the BVCS staff person assigned to bussing.

3. The Administration

1. Is responsible for hiring
2. will deal with all matters of discipline on the BVCS bus(es)

4. BVCS staff person assigned to bussing

1. must be knowledgeable with BVCS routes.
2. Per provincial regulation, must maintain a current list of students (from BVCS or other contracted schools) riding BVCS buses
3. should be informed of any possible or actual disruptions of bus service.
4. will be informed and responsible for maintaining close contact with the bus drivers regarding
 1. Any bus maintenance problems.
 2. Possible substitutions of bus drivers while regular driver(s) is (are) absent, must insure that the replacement driver is properly licensed, has provided a current abstract and is trained.
 3. Consult with administration on matters of policy and procedure, with the BGT Committee.
 4. Other issues as they arise.

5. Driver-Manager

1. will be given a clear job description, updated as necessary. This position is primarily responsible for:
 1. Driving
 2. Route planning. The driver/manager will plan all AM/PM routes using student information supplied by BVCS administration.
 3. Fuelling. The driver/manager will fuel both buses, or delegate this to drivers.
 4. Maintenance and repair scheduling. The driver/manager will coordinate regular maintenance and repairs as needed.
 5. Vehicle licensing and inspections. The driver/manager will coordinate all compliance-related inspections.
2. must complete and submit all of the following before driving for BVCS:
 1. Current driver abstract;
 2. Current criminal record check;
 3. A copy of their drivers license (BC class 1 or 2)

6. Bus Driver

1. will be given a clear job description, updated as necessary.
2. must complete and submit all of the following before driving for BVCS:
 1. Current driver abstract;
 2. Current criminal record check;
 3. A copy of their drivers license (BC class 1 or 2)
3. may temporarily disrupt bus service when unsafe conditions occur due to weather or road hazards in consultation with the Bus Driver, Manager, road maintenance contractor or other authorities.

5. Operational Policies

1. General

1. All drivers shall abide by provincial laws, statutes and regulations pertaining to the operation of school buses, including but not limited to British Columbia Motor Vehicle Act Regulations and particularly (but not only) Division 11 (available here: https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/26_58_05#division_d2e10942). Regulations and procedures required by law are not repeated in this policy but drivers are nonetheless responsible for being familiar with and abiding by them.
2. The driver shall not, except with permission of BVCS administration in charge of transportation, use a society owned bus for any purpose other than that of transporting pupils to and from school.
3. Drivers must fill out daily written pre-trip inspections reports, which must be signed and completed prior to the first trip of the day. These reports must be kept on the bus.
4. The driver shall report to the BVCS administrator in charge of transportation immediately when the bus is overloaded.
5. Any disruptions to service will be posted to the school app and/or school website by administration and/or driver(s).
6. "Courtesy" riders may be permitted to ride BVCS buses provided that the parent/guardian give 24-hour notice to the school office by completing the bus permission slip. Permission is at the discretion of BVCS office staff and/or the bus driver(s).
7. BVCS does not rent or loan its buses to other organizations, schools or individuals.
8. The driver shall not permit anyone but himself/herself to operate the bus, except with the permission of the BVCS administrator in charge of transportation.
9. The driver shall only allow regular bus pupils, teachers on school business, and authorized Society Officials to ride on a school bus.
10. The driver shall keep the bus adequately ventilated and heated at all times so as to ensure rider safety and comfort.
11. A pupil may be removed from the bus at any time by his/her parents or guardians.
12. The driver may assign seats to pupils on the bus.
13. The driver must ensure that every pupil is properly seated before putting the bus in motion; he/she will also ensure that every pupil remains seated while the bus is in motion.
14. The driver should make every effort to ensure that the pupils riding his/her bus are properly accounted for before leaving the school.
15. The driver shall not leave the bus when students are in it until placing the bus into park, shutting off the motor, setting the parking brake, and removing the key from the ignition.
16. Upon completion of every trip, drivers must
 1. do a 'sweep check' of the entire bus prior to leaving upon the completion of a route or trip. A 'sweep check' involves going to the rear of the bus and checking in and below seats for any students who may be left on the bus.
 2. Ensure that all windows and doors on the bus are properly closed and secured.
17. The driver shall use discretion in allowing students to bring pets on the bus.
18. Pupils shall not bring large objects on the bus. (i.e. skis, poles, woodwork projects, ghetto blasters, band instruments, etc.). Objects permitted on the bus by the driver must be held in the lap or placed between the feet on the floor and should not obstruct the view out of any windows. Ice skates with guards on or those in a thick/strong pack or bag will be permitted on the bus.
19. If a school trip uses a school bus, the teacher or trip coordinator will ensure upon trip completion that the bus is cleared of garbage and cleaned of any excess dirt or debris brought onboard as a result of the trip, such that no extra cleaning work is required of the driver.

2. Insurance and Licenses

1. All drivers of the school bus must have a valid British Columbia "Class 2" or "Class 1" driver's license.
2. No unqualified person will be permitted to drive any of the Society school buses.

3. Storage insurance policies will be placed on any buses not in service.
4. The BVCS business office is responsible for managing all insurances.

3. Maintenance responsibilities of drivers

1. Minor maintenance issues, such as bulb replacement, fluid maintenance, mirror adjustments, and so on should be resolved by the driver or another qualified individual.
2. Major maintenance issues such as unidentified noises, mechanical concerns, electronic concerns and so on must be directed to a repair facility or qualified professional;
3. If in doubt about a maintenance or repair issue, the driver will contact the Driver-Manager, who will contact a repair facility or qualified professional and notify the school administration.
4. Under no circumstance shall a bus be operated unless the driver is confident of the unit's safety and that it has been properly inspected and licensed
5. It is the driver's responsibility to keep the bus interior and exterior acceptably clean at all times. It is the driver's responsibility to wash the exterior of the bus as needed, and to regularly clean the interior of the bus per BC regulations.

4. Routes

1. The number of routes, stops on the routes and assignment of bus units to routes shall be determined by BVCS staff and the Driver-Manager. Given our limited number of buses and the broad geographic area that we serve, it is recognized that we will not be able to serve all families.
2. Registration and Payment
 1. Families wishing to use the bus for AM/PM routes will be provided with a bus registration form. This must be completed before the children may ride the bus. Fees are payable per arrangements made and published by the BVCS business office.
 2. Families who use the bus will be charged the annual fee. The fee will be set by the finance committee and/or the business administrator. The bus fee is for per-term enrolment and not per-ride service. Therefore, BVCS will not pro-rate this amount for missed days (weather, mechanical issues, etc), school vacations, student absences, professional development days etc. BVCS does not provide refunds (full or partial) if a family cancels their bus enrolment early.
3. Parents (and/or students) are to notify the bus driver, preferably in writing, if the student(s) will not be riding the bus for extended periods to help ensure that all riders are accounted for at all times.
4. All drivers are to drive routes as assigned without deviation. When a route should be adjusted on a permanent basis, drivers will consult with administration before permanently adjusting their route. When a route needs to be temporarily altered (construction, weather, or other reasons) the driver shall exercise good judgment.
5. The driver shall adhere closely to the established schedule.
6. The driver shall not make additional stops or extend his/her bus route without the permission of the administration.
7. A bus student permitted to ride the bus must be taken to their regular stop unless otherwise authorized.
8. Drivers are required to make judgment calls regarding route timing, route safety, weather and road conditions, and so on. Drivers will use good judgment with a view to student safety. If a driver is not fully confident that a route can be carried out safely, he/she will contact BVCS administrative staff to cancel, delay or alter their route.
9. When a route is delayed, altered or cancelled due to weather, mechanical issues or any other influence the driver will communicate this to designated BVCS administrative staff who will then inform the ridership using whatever means have been established.

5. Student Discipline

1. Bus rider rules are defined in the document 'Student Conduct on Buses'. This document will be available on the BVCS website and updated as needed.
2. Drivers have responsibility for student safety while students are on board the bus. Therefore, drivers have authority to expect and require student conduct that does not cause undue noise, confusion or chaos on a bus. Drivers who encounter disciplinary issues with students will

1. Step 1: Using proper discretion the driver will give a verbal warning to the offending student.
2. Step 2: A student and their parents will be issued a written Bus Disciplinary Warning form (booklets on each bus).
3. Step 3: Depending upon severity of offence or frequency of offences, if a discipline issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the driver or student, or the discipline issue creates a serious threat to the safe operation of the vehicle and/or the safety of other bus riders, the driver will refer the issue and student to their respective school principal. School discipline policies and procedures will be employed. A student may be removed from the bus temporarily or permanently, and other disciplinary measures may be employed.

6. Safety Drills

1. The driver shall ensure that once during the first week of the school year, and once during the first week after Christmas vacation that students are instructed in the following:
 1. Use of emergency doors.
 2. Safe operation of windows.
 3. Proper use of the fire extinguisher.
2. Bus evacuation procedure is specified in our Bus Evacuation Procedure document. Bus evacuation drills will take place twice per year.

7. Accidents and Violations

1. Depending on the incident's degree of severity, the driver will immediately contact emergency services for reporting and assistance.
2. The driver must immediately report all incidents, no matter how large or severe, to a Commercial Vehicle Safety Enforcement (CVSE) officer and the bus will not be permitted to operate until it has been cleared by CVSE to do so. Procedure will follow applicable law.
3. All students' accidents shall be reported to the school administration in charge of transportation at once.
4. Each driver is responsible to complete a "Vehicle Failing to Stop for School Buses" form when a vehicle passes a bus when its warning lights are flashing. The original copy goes to the RCMP and a copy BVCS administrator in charge of transportation.

8. Driver Conduct

1. Drivers are employees of BVCS, and are therefore required to sign and adhere to the "Community Standards of Conduct" document.
2. School bus drivers will exercise professional conduct in their driving (including defensive driving techniques, courtesy to other road users, etc.) and in their interaction with students, parents and other drivers. The use of profane language is unacceptable.
3. The driver shall keep his/her person clean and neat.
4. Drivers are prohibited from any physical contact with students.
5. In the instance where a conflict or significant concern arises between the bus driver and student, parent or other person, the matter will be referred to the administration.