

AC Transit

Policy No. 560

BOARD POLICY

**Category: SERVICE
DEVELOPMENT**

STANDARDS FOR OPERATION OF SUPPLEMENTARY SERVICE

PURPOSE:

As a public transit agency, the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) provides basic fixed route bus service to most public and private junior high/middle schools and high schools within its service area. In addition, supplementary trips are also provided in order to meet the demand for increased system capacity at bell times. AC Transit relies on fares received from passengers at an established discounted rate at the Board's discretion for this service. In general, no additional monies are paid by school districts for supplementary service.

AC Transit intends to continue providing supplementary service to the extent it has the resources to do so. However, as a result of reduced operating subsidies at the state and federal levels, changes in operating policies and procedures have become necessary. In order to increase the efficiency of basic and supplementary bus service, operating costs must be reduced and use of dwindling resources extended to the maximum level possible.

INTER-AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS:

To continue to provide cost-effective supplementary transportation, AC Transit must enter into partnerships with all public school districts and private schools benefitting from such service. The purpose of these partnerships is to meet the common goal of offering safe, reliable, efficient transit service of sufficient capacity to meet the needs of AC Transit's customers while recognizing the resource limitations facing the District. These inter-agency partnerships are intended to address and resolve the items of mutual concern explained within this policy.

AC Transit staff will provide school districts and each individual school with specific information regarding AC Transit's capabilities and requirements. AC Transit staff will include a range of time within which bell times should be set if AC Transit is expected to deliver passengers on-time. Bus trips linked with two or more schools will be discussed so that the schools concerned can coordinate their bell times to reduce the number of buses required. AC Transit staff will be available to assist schools as needed to attain our common goal.

STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS:

AC Transit must comply with state and federal regulations when operating supplementary service. AC Transit is prohibited from operating exclusive 'school bus' service. AC Transit may only supplement its existing route structure in order to provide needed capacity. Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 605 and Section 545 of the California Vehicle Code provide the authority under which AC Transit operates supplementary service.

In part, these regulations and statutes require AC Transit to publish all supplementary schedules in order that the service is available to all potential passengers. Once distributed, AC Transit cannot deviate from the published schedule without providing advance public information. AC Transit may operate supplementary service only over established routes or combined segments of established routes and serve existing bus stops. AC Transit is expressly forbidden from customizing 'school bus' service to provide home to school transportation.

OPERATIONAL STANDARDS:

- **School Bell Schedules**
An agreement on proposed school bell schedules will be developed with AC Transit Schedule Department staff in order to maximize equipment/driver use. A shift in bell times may allow one bus to serve two schools. Without such an arrangement, it may no longer be possible for AC Transit to provide supplementary service.
- **Minimum Days/Early Dismissals**
AC Transit will provide service for not more than five minimum days/early dismissals per academic year without compensation. Service for additional minimum days/early dismissals will be provided only if it is compensated by the school or school district receiving such service.
- **Weekly Schedule Deviations**
AC Transit will provide service to the extent possible, based upon driver and equipment availability, for recurring schedule deviations, e.g. late starts, early outs. However, AC Transit cannot guarantee full service as provided for regular school days. In order to maximize efficiency of human and vehicle resources and minimize the cost impact, these short days should be consistent throughout the school system. Schools scheduling a regular short day are requested to do so on Wednesday afternoon. These early dismissals should occur every Wednesday rather than alternate days or other irregular practices.
- **In Service and Non School Days**
Whenever possible, in service or non school days should be coordinated within the affected school district. In the case of two schools being served by the same bus or buses, these days should be coordinated whenever possible in order to

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maximize savings. In service and non school days are defined as any day during the academic school year in which students do not attend school for any part of the day.

- **Unused Service**

AC Transit will bill schools and/or school districts for any unused service resulting from a change in the school calendar or bell schedule. Such service is defined as that service operated in accordance with the published school schedule but rendered unnecessary by a schedule change on the school or school district's part.

- **Summer School Sites**

Agreement on the proposed summer school campus sites shall be reached to ensure such sites are served by full time transit routes able to accommodate the increased demand for service. In the case of school sites where no midday service is provided, supplementary service for summer school cannot be offered until the basic route service resumes without full compensation.

- **Deadline For School Schedules**

Schedule information for the following academic year shall be submitted no later than the second Monday in May. If no information is received by the deadline, schedules will be assumed to be the same as the current school year. Bus schedules will be prepared on the most current information on hand at the deadline and may be difficult to modify. All of the above operational standards will apply to such service including billing for unused service.

- **Passenger Behavior/Vandalism**

Damage to District buses continues to be a major cost item as well as a safety concern for passengers and bus operators. Schools and school districts must assist AC Transit in controlling unacceptable behavior. If vandalism occurs at a specific school or on a specific route resulting in damage to a bus, AC Transit will request assistance from the school or school district concerned. If satisfactory assistance is not received, AC Transit may be required to cancel the affected service in order to ensure the safety of its passengers and employees.

Damage includes, but is not limited to, any damage necessitating a road repair by District maintenance forces, any damage necessitating replacement of the bus on the road in order to complete its scheduled commitments, or any damage requiring more than the normal daily bus cleaning procedures.

- Any instance of unacceptable behavior or vandalism aboard District buses will result in a school being required to develop an agreement with AC Transit to reduce vandalism.

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If implementation of the plan or other joint efforts fail to produce the desired results in reducing vandalism, and as a last resort, the following process will be initiated:

- ① As a result of continued vandalism to AC Transit equipment at a particular school or on a specific trip, the school principal, the school district and school security forces will be contacted. AC Transit will request assistance in supervising the passenger load and apprehending the responsible party or parties.
 - ② A second incident involving the same school or trip, the school principal, the school district and school security forces will be provided with notice that any further instances of such behavior may result in cancellation of service.
 - ③ Should a third instance of unacceptable behavior or vandalism involving the same school or trip occur, AC Transit reserves the right to cancel service upon notice to school officials, parents and students.
- In every instance, a bill will be prepared to cover AC Transit's costs resulting from such behavior. AC Transit will submit a claim for the cost of repairs, costs of lost employee time due to industrial injury and the costs of any claims against AC Transit arising from such behavior.
 - AC Transit will enlist the assistance of the school in identifying and apprehending the responsible party or parties. AC Transit will seek full compensation from that party or parties.

CONFLICTS WITH EXISTING POLICIES:

In order to facilitate timely response to the changing needs of schools, the service operated under this policy is exempt from Board Policy 163.

If any provisions of this policy conflict with any other policy in effect, this policy shall prevail.