

Policy Statement: The Western School District shall make every effort to eliminate all unnecessary idling of vehicles and exposure to exhaust system emissions during student transportation.

1. Application

This policy applies to the operation of every district-owned and/or contracted school bus as well as private or public vehicles while on school grounds, in school zones, and on any site where buses are used for transporting students. This also includes locations of field trips, extracurricular activities, or other locations when students are transported off school grounds.

2. Rationale

The exhaust from idling school buses and all other vehicles poses an unnecessary health risk for children, drivers, and the community at large. Vehicle idling also wastes fuel and impairs air quality.

3. Definitions

Vehicles - All motorized modes of transportation including school buses, cars, trucks, vans, motorcycles, snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles.

Idling - The continuous running of a vehicle's engine while in a parked state.

4. Procedures

4.1 Policy Notification

- a) All schools shall have "Idle Free" signage posted in a visible location in school parking areas to alert bus drivers, parents, guardians and vendors that engines shall be turned off when a vehicle is in a school zone.
- b) The Manager of Student Transportation shall ensure that all school bus drivers are made aware of this policy at the beginning of every school year, and as deemed necessary throughout the year.
- c) Principals shall inform companies who frequently provide deliveries to the school, that engines shall be turned off while in school zones.

- d) Principals shall ensure all parents receive notice of the Western School District’s policy on School Bus and Vehicle Idling at the beginning of each school year, and as deemed necessary throughout the year.

4.2 Vehicle Operation – Normal Weather Conditions

- a) Idling time shall be limited during early morning warm-up, to manufacturer recommendations (generally 3-5 minutes), in all but the coldest weather.
- b) When school bus drivers arrive at loading/unloading areas to drop off or pick up passengers, they shall turn off their buses as soon as possible. The school bus shall not be restarted until students are dismissed from school. Exceptions include conditions that could potentially compromise passenger safety, such as:
 - i. Extreme weather conditions
 - ii. Other traffic, safety, or emergency situations
 - iii. Requirements around the transportation of special needs students

4.3 Vehicle Operation – Cold Weather Conditions

- a) Buses shall idle no longer than is necessary to bring engines to proper operating temperature for safe driving. If the warmth of a bus is an issue, the bus shall be warmed up while outside the school zone, reducing idling time within the school zone.
- b) The “warmed” bus is to enter the loading area as close to pick-up time as possible and then shut down, restarting when students are being dismissed.

4.4 Location of Parking Zones

- a) School buses shall park a reasonable distance from building entrances, windows, and air-intake systems whenever possible and where student safety is not compromised.
- b) The Western School District shall, where practical, keep school bus loading zones and public parking a reasonable distance from entrances, windows and air-intake systems of school buildings in the planning of new schools, balanced with consideration of student, staff and public safety.

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