

School District	Elementary (K-5)	Middle School (6-8)	High School (9-12)
West Hartford	1.0 Mile	1.5 Miles	2.0 Miles
Hartford	0.5 – 1.0 Mile*	1.5 Miles	2.0 Miles
Simsbury	0.5 – 0.75 Mile**	1.5 Miles	1.5 Miles
South Windsor	0.3 Mile	0.5 Mile	1.0 Mile
East Hartford	1.0 Mile	1.5 Miles	2.0 Miles

**Hartford uses 0.5 miles for K-1 and 1.0 mile for grades 2-5.*

***Simsbury uses 0.5 miles for Kindergarten and 0.75 miles for grades 1-6.*

Topic:

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION; BUSING;

Location:

SCHOOLS - TRANSPORTATION;

Scope:

Connecticut laws/regulations;

**OLR RESEARCH REPORT****Connecticut General Assembly**

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TO:

FROM: James J. Fazzalaro, Principal Analyst

RE: School Transportation

You asked if the state mandates how municipalities are to determine how far a child must live from school in order to get school bus transportation and if children with special problems, such as attention deficit disorder, fall under these requirements.

SUMMARY

School districts are required by state law to provide transportation for school age children whenever it is "reasonable and desirable" but the law does not specify minimum distances a child must live from school to get transportation. The Department of Education has guidelines that specify such distances and other conditions for school districts to consider in determining their transportation policy, but school districts can use or not use the guidelines at their discretion and each develops its own requirements.

The guidelines specify that pupils with physical handicaps or health conditions rendering them unable to walk to the bus stop or school, as determined by their physician or the school medical advisor, must receive appropriate transportation. The guidelines also state that special education pupils should be judged on an individual basis. A

child such as you describe could fall under these provisions of the guidelines, but it would be up to the school board to make such a determination.

DISTANCE REQUIREMENT

State law establishes numerous duties and responsibilities for local and regional boards of education (CGS § § 10-47, -220). Among them is a duty to "make such provisions as will enable each child of school age, residing in the district to attend some public day school for the period required by law and provide for the transportation of children whenever transportation is reasonable and desirable." Transportation arrangements can include the use of private roads with the owners' consent (CGS § 10-220c). School districts are also obliged to provide the same kind of transportation they provide for public school students to children enrolled in private nonprofit schools when the majority of the children attending these schools are Connecticut residents (CGS § 10-280a, -281).

Walking Distances

School districts are free to make their own decisions with respect to providing transportation, but the department provides guidelines that they can use in whole or in part if they choose to. Under these guidelines, the maximum walking distance from home to school or a prescribed embarkation point for a bus is: **one mile for children under age 10 or enrolled in grades K-3; 1.5 miles for children age 10-14 or enrolled in grades 4-8, middle school, or junior high school; and two miles for children age 14 or over or enrolled in grades 9-12.** Longer walking routes are considered hazardous.

Other Hazardous Circumstances

A walking route may be considered hazardous if it involves a street with an adjacent or parallel sidewalk or raised walk area (a paved or unpaved area at least three feet wide, usually parallel to the road, and distinguished by some elevation above the street level) if one of these conditions exists:

1. for children under age 10 or K-3, the absence of a pedestrian crossing light or crossing guard where three or more streets intersect, and at crossings where there are no stop signs or crossing guards and traffic volume during school walking hours exceeds 60 vehicles an hour;
2. for children over age 10 or grades 4-12, the absence of a traffic light, stop signs, or a crossing guard where three or more streets intersect and the hourly vehicle count during regular walking hours exceeds 90;
3. for all pupils, any street with a speed limit over 40 miles per hour which does not have pedestrian lights or crossing guards or other safety provisions where pupils must cross; or
4. for all pupils, the usual or frequent presence of any nuisance such as open man-holes, construction, plowed or piled snow making the walkways unusable, loading zones where trucks can park on walkways, commercial entrances and exits where cars are crossing at more than five miles per hour, and any nuisance that is hazardous or attractive to children.

Streets Without Sidewalks

A street without sidewalks or raised walk areas is considered hazardous if any of these conditions exists:

1. for pupils under age 10 or K-3, any street on the route has an hourly traffic count of 60 or more when the children are walking to or from school;
2. for all pupils, there are any manmade hazards including attractive nuisances;
3. for all pupils, any roadway has less than a minimum width of 22 feet;

4. for all pupils, any roadway when plowed free of snow accumulation has less than a 20-foot minimum width; and

5. for pupils under age 10, any street has a speed limit of more than 30 miles per hour.

Other Dangerous Situations

A street without sidewalks or raised walk areas is also considered hazardous if line of sight visibility and speed limits precludes vehicle braking and stopping in accordance with the Connecticut Drivers Manual and the Department of Transportation's Design Division design standards. Walkways, paths, or bridges adjacent to railroad tracks are considered hazardous unless a suitable physical barrier exists between pupils and the tracks along the entire pedestrian route. Routes that cross tracks carrying moving trains during normal school walking hours are considered hazardous unless there is a crossing guard, an automatic control bar used by pupils under age 10, or a bar or red flashing light operating when the crossing is used by pupils over age 10. Lakes, ponds, streams, culverts, waterways, or bridges are considered hazards unless a fence or other suitable barrier separates children in grades K-4 from the water.

These situations are also considered hazardous for walking students:

1. for pupils in Grades K-4, the area adjacent to the roadway, walkway, sidewalk, or bridge drops off by three or more feet for each four feet of travel distance on either side and there is no fence or other suitable barrier to protect the children;
2. the street, walk, or path designated as a walking route for all pupils passes through an area which has a history of "aggressive acts of molestation resulting in actual or threatened physical harm or moral degradation" during normal student walking hours; or
3. for children in Grades K-8, walking to or from school or the bus stop occurs 30 minutes before sunrise or 30 minutes after sunset.

The guidelines provide discretion to boards of education to provide exceptions when any peculiar condition or combination of conditions creates a hazard based upon reasonable judgment.

JJF:tjo