OUR LADY OF LA VANG
POLICY REGARDING SCHOOL BUSES

Context
Our Lady of La Vang provides Catholic Education and pre vocational training for students with intellectual and multiple disabilities in a co-educational setting. Staff, students and parents at Our Lady of La Vang work together to promote a safe and caring Christian environment where each student is treated as an individual, with the utmost respect for his/her dignity and personal rights. We recognise that our students have complex and varying individual needs. We support parents in the monitoring and development of appropriate student behaviour and health needs, and encourage development opportunities to practise student independence.

Definition
Our school provides the service of three buses to transport students to and from school each day and for use as part of the school’s curriculum. This policy relates to circumstances regarding students travel to and from school. The buses, in so far as is practicable, operate in a defined geographical area, so as to include as many students as possible requiring our service. The service operates as a user-pay system as the school does not receive any direct financial support for this service from the current Government.

Students are picked up from their home or designated points (as negotiated with the parents/caregivers) each morning and delivered to the school prior to the beginning of the school day. The bus run returns students to their home or designated point at the end of each school day.

Parents/caregivers are responsible for payment of appropriate fees as decided by the School Board. Fee reductions will be negotiated individually and confidentially with the Principal and/or Finance Officer.

Safety
The school recognises that the primary responsibility of the bus driver is to ensure the safe passage of the students in his/her care. While the driver is expected to provide support for students when appropriate, a second adult is assigned to each bus to manage and support students on the journey.

It is the policy of the school that the driver and the support staff member will not leave the bus at any point in the journey unless there is an emergency situation. In the case of an emergency, the support staff member will provide appropriate assistance for the student(s) and the driver will remain in the bus and make contact with relevant agencies/emergency services and the School Principal or his/her delegate. A mobile phone will be carried on the bus at all times.
GUIDELINES

Parents choosing the school’s bus service to transport their child to and from school are required to cooperate with, and observe, the following guidelines:

1. With assistance and scaffolding, students are expected to keep themselves and others safe while travelling on the bus.

2. The support staff member will inform the Principal of any inappropriate student behaviour. The Principal or delegate will notify the parents so that an appropriate approach towards behaviour management can be implemented. This may involve excluding the student from travelling on the bus for a period of time.

3. In the case of a medical emergency, an ambulance will be called to take the student to the nearest hospital and the support staff member will notify the parents as soon as possible. If possible the support staff member will accompany the student in the ambulance but he/she may be required to supervise the remaining students on the bus.

4. Parents are expected to notify the school, or relevant bus driver, of any changes to their child’s travelling arrangements. Where possible this should be done in writing.

5. The Bus Coordinator will decide pick-up and drop-off times and places after appropriate discussion with the bus driver and parents. Arrangements cannot be changed without the Principal’s approval. On occasion, the Principal may authorise changes to bus routes and times to accommodate changes to enrolment patterns. In the event of such changes, parents will be notified accordingly.

6. The school will notify parents of the nearest pick-up and drop off point, if the student’s home is not on the direct bus route.

7. The school cannot guarantee a continuation of the service if a family moves house. The proximity of the new house to the bus route will need to be considered. Parents contemplating moving house are advised to discuss this with the Principal.

8. A tight schedule is followed on all routes. Parents are expected to be very punctual, as the driver will wait for only 2 minutes before moving on to the next pick up/drop off point. Students will not be left un-supervised at the drop off point and if parents are not home the students will not get off the bus unless prior arrangements have been made. Refer to Guideline 11.

9. In the event of a parent/care giver unexpectedly not being able to meet the afternoon bus run, they are expected to make alternative arrangements, eg. have the child dropped off at another place which is on the bus route. Clear instructions need to be given to both the driver and the school. Contact via the school’s mobile
phone will facilitate this process. The mobile phone numbers are printed in the school's weekly newsletter.

10. Should someone other than the agreed parent/care giver meet the bus to collect the child, such arrangements should be conveyed to the school in writing before hand. In an emergency this can be done by telephone.

11. Parents can make arrangements for a student to move from the bus to their house without acknowledgment from the parent to the driver. Where practical, such arrangements should be in writing. In such circumstances the school advises that neither the school nor the driver can be held responsible for child’s safety after the student has left the supervision of the bus.

12. The school supports students becoming more independent. Parents and school staff may negotiate a written arrangement to allow a student to let him/herself into a house.

13. Students travelling on a part-time basis on the school bus will receive a pro-rata reduction in fees depending on the number of times per week the service is used.

14. If there are insufficient places on the bus, priority will be given to students who require full time placement for this service. This will be the decision of the Principal in consultation with the student’s parents/carers.

15. References to “The Principal” include any authorised deputy acting in lieu.

PARENT CONSENT

I have read and I understand the Policy Statement and Guidelines for school buses and I agree to my child………………………………………..travelling on the bus under the conditions outlined above.

NAME…………………………………………………

SIGNATURE………………………………………

DATE………………………………………………

Policy ratified by the School Board on………………