

File: EEAA

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Student Transportation Management

The School Committee shall provide transportation service for eligible students based on efficiency, adequacy and economy.

Walkers and Riders

Transportation at town expense shall be furnished to **all pupils in grades K-6** who live two miles or more from the school they attend. If pay-to-ride buses are running on their route, those who participate in the free and reduced lunch program are eligible to ride free. Additionally, transportation shall be provided at town expense via Special Education vans for children whose Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) requires such transportation or whose physical condition makes such transportation necessary as stated in an (IEP).

No additional buses and no new stops will be added for students paying late. New residents will be allowed to purchase a seat on the bus if there is room. If a family moves out of town prior to the start of the school year, a refund of the fees paid will be allowed.

If a student is participating in pay-to-ride program and loses his/her transportation privileges, the fee shall not be refunded.

The two-mile measurement shall be made from the sidewalk or public way in front of or nearest to the pupil's home to the public way in front of the school the pupil is attending. The measurement shall be made using the shortest (walking) route.

Transportation at parent's expense shall be available to all pupils who live less than two miles from the school they attend. The School Committee will determine the cost of this transportation.

Parents with special circumstances may appeal fees to the Superintendent to establish a payment plan.

All students being transported, either at town or parent expense, shall be issued a bus tag on the first day of school and may be required to display them in order to be eligible to board the bus.

Scheduling and Routing

Common bus stops shall be established for purposes of economy and efficiency. Stops may be changed as conditions warrant. Each student on the bus must have a seat. Standing is not allowed, except in case of emergency as designated by the Superintendent of Schools.

Parents of pupils eligible for transportation, either at parental or town expense, may designate a regular bus stop other than the one closest to their residence if (1) the stop is on a route scheduled for their child's school and (2) space is available on the bus. Only **one** stop other than a student's home may be requested.

All efforts will be made to schedule bus routes so that no child is riding for more than one hour.

Bus Conduct

While the law requires the School District to furnish transportation, it does not relieve parents of students from the responsibility of supervision until such time as the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child leaves the bus at the end of the school day.

Once a child boards the bus and only at that time - does he or she become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the regular bus stop at the close of the school day.

In view of the fact that a bus is an extension of the classroom, the School Committee shall require children to conduct themselves in the bus in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior. The authority for enforcing School Committee requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the Principal.

In cases when a child does not conduct him/herself properly on a bus, the bus driver or the supervisor of transportation shall bring such instances to the attention of the building Principal. The building Principal shall inform the parents immediately of the misconduct and request their cooperation in monitoring the child's behavior.

To ensure the safety of all students who ride in buses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents of children whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges in accordance with regulations approved by the School Committee. In such cases, the parents of the children involved become responsible for seeing that their children get to and from school safely.

School Bus Rules and Regulations

Introductory Statement

The courts have held that the right of a student to transportation is a qualified right, one that is dependent upon good behavior. In cases where students seriously or continuously break the rules, parents will be notified in writing that a recurrence of the misbehavior will result in the suspension of the student's privilege of provided bus transportation. Any infraction of the School Bus Rules and Regulations that is reported to the school authorities will be investigated before any disciplinary action is taken, and if there is a basis for the report, the student will be given notice of the charges against him or her. If he or she denies the charges, an explanation of the evidence the School Department has and an opportunity to present his or her side of the story will be afforded the student.

Rules of Behavior (Students)

Loading and Unloading at Bus Stop:

1. Riders must be on time. Bus drivers will not stop or wait for students. Students should arrive 5 minutes before scheduled pick up time.
2. Riders will enter or leave at regular stops only.
3. Orderly behavior and respect for personal property will be required.
4. The riders when entering or leaving the bus must follow instructions and directions of the driver. If a student must cross the road after getting off the bus, he/she must walk along the side of the road to the right front side of the bus until he/she can see the bus driver, stop and wait for the bus driver to signal to cross the road, and walk and look for traffic both ways. If he/she sees a vehicle that has not stopped, he/she should go back to the bus immediately. If all vehicles have stopped, he/she should cross the road quickly.
5. Pupils may not stand in any roadway while waiting for a bus. Students may not push or shove while awaiting the bus nor while on a bus. Approach the school bus only when it has come to a complete stop. Do not cross the road to board the bus until the driver signals to do so.
6. While walking to and from the bus loading area, students, where practicable, must walk on the left side facing traffic.

Rules of Behavior (Students)

While riding on the bus:

1. Students are to sit in their seats and remain in them until time of discharge.
2. Students are not to climb over seats.
3. Students are not to open or close windows.
4. Students are to keep their entire bodies including arms, legs and heads inside of the school bus.
5. Students are not to throw anything in the school bus or out of the windows.
6. Students are not to push, shove, strike nor verbally abuse other students.
7. Students are to keep the interior of the school bus neat and clean. Books and personal belongings must be kept out of aisles.
8. Students are to report on time and in good order to their assigned bus-loading stop.
9. Verbal disrespect or any other form of abuse, directed at the school bus driver will not be tolerated.
10. Students should not have conversations with the driver, shout, whistle or make any loud noises
11. There will be no use of tobacco products and e-cigarettes, no use of drugs, no drinking of alcoholic beverages, no use of profanity, and no possession of weapons or ammunition of any kind on the school bus.
12. Students are to use emergency exits only in cases of emergency or when directed to do so by the school bus driver.
13. No pets or animals other than a muzzled seeing-eye dog may be transported on a school bus.
14. Students will be permitted to ride on other than their regularly assigned bus. Permission can only be granted if seating is available. Starting the first week in October and ending the last Thursday in May, students will be permitted to ride on other than their regularly assigned bus, a maximum of three (3) times per month.

Permission to ride will only be granted from Monday through Thursday, after written parental request 24 hour in advance, and with approval of the Principal. Bus changes are not allowed on early release days or when buses are filled to capacity.

Students who do not have bus tags (i.e. they are not free or paid riders) may use this option to ride the bus based on space available, but must pay a per trip fee that is collected by the building office and sent to the Transportation office of the Sharon Public Schools. This privilege may be used a maximum of three (3) times per month. It should be noted though that priority will be given to students with regularly assigned seats (that is, those students with bus tickets which guarantee a seat on a specific bus).

Parents will be held responsible for any defacing or damaging of the bus.

When students do not abide by the School Bus Rules and Regulations, or take any action that diverts the school bus driver's attention from the task of operating the school bus in a safe manner, the school authorities will take the following steps:

First Offense

The building Principal or his/her designee will attempt to notify the parent by telephone and will inform the parent of the incident in writing. If the offense warrants suspension of school bus privileges as determined by the building Principal or his/her designee, the student will not be allowed to ride on the school bus for a period of time up to a maximum of five school days. The building Principal or his/her designee will determine the number of school days that the student will not be allowed to ride on the school bus.

This written notification to the parent will include a statement that a second offense will result in the student not being allowed to ride on the school bus for a period of time up to a maximum of ten school days.

Second Offense

The building Principal or his/her designee will attempt to notify the parent by telephone and will inform the parent of the incident in writing. The student will not be allowed to ride on the school bus for a period of time up to a maximum of ten school days. The building Principal or his/her designee will determine the number of school days that the student will not be allowed to ride on the school bus.

This written notification to the parent will include a statement that a third offense may result in a recommendation to the Sharon School Committee that the student not be allowed to ride on the school bus for the remainder of the school year.

Third Offense

The building Principal or his/her designee will attempt to notify the parent by telephone and will inform the parent of the incident in writing. The student will not be allowed to ride on the school bus for a period of time up to a maximum of ten school days. The building Principal or his/her designee will determine the number of school days that the student will not be allowed to ride on the school bus.

If a recommendation is to be made to the Sharon School Committee that the student not be allowed to ride on the school bus for the remainder of the school year, the building Principal or his/her designee will attempt to notify the parent by telephone and will inform the parent of the recommendation by certified mail. A timely hearing will be held by the School Committee to determine the conditions under which the offending student will be provided with the privilege of school bus transportation. The student will not be allowed to ride on the school bus until the date of the hearing with the School Committee, provided such date is within ten school days.

Fourth Offense

A recommendation will be made to the Sharon School Committee that the student not is allowed to ride on the school bus for the remainder of the school year; the building Principal or his/her designee will attempt to notify the parent by telephone and will inform the parent of the recommendation by certified mail. A timely hearing will be held by the School Committee to determine the conditions under which the offending student will be provided with the privilege of school bus transportation. The student will not be allowed to ride on the school bus until the date of the hearing with the School Committee, provided such date is within ten school days.

Additional Conditions

1. Should any infraction of the School Bus Rules and Regulations place any student in serious danger of injury, or in any way impede the school bus driver from the safe operation of the school bus, the incident will be treated in the same manner as a Fourth Offense by the building Principal or his/her designee.
2. Specific infractions of the School Bus Rules and Regulations may result also in school disciplinary action. The building Principal or his/her designee will determine if the infraction violates school rules and will result in school disciplinary action.
3. If an infraction of the School Bus Rules and Regulations results in damage to the school bus, restitution will be obtained from the parent by the school bus company.

Rules of Behavior (Bus Drivers)

1. No school bus driver shall operate a school bus at a rate of speed in excess of the posted speed limits or in violation of the statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
2. There will be no use of tobacco products and e-cigarettes, no use of drugs, no drinking of alcoholic beverages, no use of profanity, and no possession of weapons or ammunition of any kind by the school bus driver while transporting students.
3. School bus drivers will not leave a school bus unsupervised while students are on the school bus, except in an emergency.

4. Students are not allowed to leave a school bus, except at regularly designated school bus stops, without the specific written permission from the parent and approval by the building Principal or his/her designee.
5. Each school bus driver shall be responsible for the maintenance of discipline on the school bus and will report to the appropriate school authorities any incident of improper student conduct. The building Principal or his/her designee will investigate any incident that is reported and appropriate action will be taken. A school bus driver has no authority to put a student off the school bus nor deny the student transportation for disciplinary reasons. This action is reserved for the school authorities. Nothing herein shall prevent a school bus driver from reprimanding a student for behavior that might cause injury to the student or others or in any way impedes the school bus driver from the safe operation of the school bus.
6. School bus drivers are to load and discharge students only at the regularly designated school bus stops.
7. No school bus driver is to push another school bus or allow the school bus for which the school bus driver is responsible to be pushed by another school bus while students are in either vehicle.
8. School bus drivers are to communicate to the contractor's base stations via their two-way radio any school bus accident, injury to a student or significant event, which may result in the bus running late in excess of twenty minutes. The bus contractor will immediately relay the information to the appropriate school. The School Department Central Administration Office shall also be notified immediately regarding all mishaps that result in the police or other assistance being called to assist the bus, passengers on the bus, or the driver.

Procedure in Case of Weather Related Emergencies

In the event of a weather-related emergency, the Superintendent of Schools will:

1. Declare a weather-related emergency via Boston channels and the District's phone/email messaging system whenever possible.
2. Identify and publicize special common bus pick-ups and drop-offs along main thoroughfares.
3. May declare a time delay for the opening of the school day.

Walkers may be allowed to use bus transportation during a declared weather-related emergency if there is room on the bus.

Legal Refs.: M.G.L. 71:7A, Transportation of Pupils; Payment of Costs; Limitations

M.G.L. 71:68, Duties of Towns to Maintain Schools; Transportation of Children:
School Committee Building Representation
M.G.L. 71B:5, Children with Special Needs: Costs or Obligations; Payment; Budget

Cross Ref.: EEA, Student Transportation Services

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