



NONPUBLIC SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES WHEN CONTRACTING WITH Monmouth-Ocean Educational Services Commission (MOESC)

This document provides guidance and answers to frequently asked questions for districts contracting non-public transportation through MOESC. Transportation or aid in lieu of transportation (AIL) shall be provided in accordance with New Jersey Statute (NJSA18A:39-1 et seq) and Code (NJAC 6A:27-2). The DOE Student Transportation web site is located at: <http://www.nj.gov/njded/finance/transportation/trans.htm>

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who must be transported?

In accordance with state law, *N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1*, all public elementary school students (grades K-8) who live more than **two miles** from their school and all public secondary school students (grades 9-12) who live more than **two-and-a-half miles** from their and **no more than 20 miles** from the non-public school they are attending are entitled to transportation. Whenever a school district is required to provide transportation to students attending regular public school programs, students attending nonpublic schools who meet those distance requirements may also be entitled to transportation services.

2. When must transportation be provided?

Transportation or AIL shall be provided to eligible nonpublic school students Monday through Friday between September 1 and June 30 when the nonpublic school is in session. Parents must submit an application for transportation (B6T) to the nonpublic school. Applications must be received by the local school district no later than March 15. Applications received after this are considered late and may not be submitted to MOESC for processing. However, AIL will be paid if the eligibility requirements are met.

3. Is my child GUARANTEED to get a bus to school?

NO. If your child is eligible for transportation, that does not mean that a seat on a bus is guaranteed. If a route cannot be contracted after several attempts through the bidding process to secure transportation, then you will receive AIL (\$1000) instead of actual transportation. That money may be used by parents to secure another form of transportation.

4. When will I find out if my child has a bus to school?

School districts must notify parents of the determination of their application no later than August 1. This means you will be notified if transportation could not be secured and that you will be receiving AIL. At that time, the district nor MOESC are required to continue to attempt to secure transportation. If transportation is secured after August 1, you will be notified by MOESC. Please note, AIL payments come from the district, not MOESC, please contact your district for your AIL payment. If transportation is secured for a child, parents can expect to receive the bus pass no



later than the second week in August.

5. Are there any limits on nonpublic school transportation?

Yes, there are several limits on nonpublic school transportation. They are:

- The school must be a nonprofit school;
- The school may be located **no more** than twenty miles from the student's home;
- The cost of the transportation must not exceed the annual maximum expenditure set by law each year (\$1000). This does not make non-public contracts attractive to contractors because they do not generate revenue. This limits the number of contractors willing to bid on routes and often results in a lack of transportation coverage.
- Students must reside in a district which provides transportation to and from school for remote public school students. (Exception: Nonpublic school transportation services are not required when the only transportation provided by the local board of education is for students attending special education, vocational/technical, or other specialized programs.)
- Students must be in grades kindergarten through grade 12 and must meet the entrance age requirements for students in the resident public school district.

6. What happens if the cost of transportation exceeds the annual maximum expenditure set by law?

If the cost of the transportation to be provided to the nonpublic school student will exceed the annual maximum expenditure, the school district cannot provide the transportation but instead pay the student's parent or legal guardian the maximum expenditure amount.

7. Is a nonpublic school student who is not eligible to receive transportation eligible to receive AIL?

No. When parents submit the Application for Private School Transportation (B6T Form), they are applying for transportation, not aid. The district's first obligation is to provide transportation for eligible students within the maximum expenditure. Parents receive AIL only if students are eligible for transportation and the district is unable to provide it for this amount. AIL is simply an alternate way of providing the transportation itself. Therefore, if students are not eligible for one, they are not eligible for the other.

8. I do not like my child's bus route, can I just get AIL?

No. Once transportation is secured, the parent cannot decide they want the AIL payment. If you decide not to use the transportation provided, no other aid will be provided to parents and the parents will be responsible for transportation.

9. What is the maximum length of time permitted for a student to spend on a school bus?

New Jersey Statute and Code does not establish a maximum time limit a student may



be on a bus. Nonpublic routes do tend to be longer than their regular public school counterparts because of the nature of the transportation. While public school routes usually transport a large number of students within a small geographic area, nonpublic school routes typically do the opposite. They transport a relatively small number of students over a much larger area to schools that are often outside of the district and/or to multiple destinations. Therefore, as an industry standard, an hour and a half is not uncommon for these routes. MOESC will try to do its best to keep all routes within industry standard.

10. What is the maximum distance from a student's home permitted for the establishment of a school bus stop?

New Jersey Statute and Code does not establish a maximum distance from a student's home to a bus stop. However, since both (NJSA 18A: 39-1.1 and NJAC 6A: 27-1.2(a)) set a maximum distance for eligibility for transportation, the district may not establish a stop beyond those distances without the parent's consent. MOESC will try to find a bus stop that is closest to the student's residence and make every effort to ensure that the stop is not more than 2 miles from the student's residence.

11. Who is responsible for safe travel along public roadways or walkways?

It is **NOT** MOESC or the local Board of Education's responsibility to ensure safe travel along public roadways or walkways. Case law has long held that safety along public roadways and walkways is a municipal responsibility. It is for this reason that municipalities install sidewalks, traffic signals and signs, and paint crosswalks. MOESC will work with the local school district to ensure safe passage from the student's home to the bus stop. However, we cannot guarantee that every road will have a sidewalk for the entire distance between the stop and the residence. In addition, it is the responsibility of the parent to transport the student to and from the bus stop. Pursuant to section 40A:9-154.1 of New Jersey statute, school crossing guards are appointed by the municipality and are under the supervision of the chief of police or other chief law enforcement officer.

11. Is it permitted to have students arrive at the school or wait for the bus beyond the established bell times?

Yes. Provided that they are properly supervised, students may be dropped off at the school early and wait for classes to begin or wait at the school for the bus to arrive after school is dismissed. This practice is not uncommon; especially when the bus routes are tiered (i.e. the same bus is used for the completion of more than one route).

12. Is it permitted to have students transfer buses during a bus route?

Yes. Provided that they are properly supervised, students may be required to transfer buses. Typically, they will wait on the first bus, or be discharged at a school, to await the arrival of the second bus. This practice is common when students are being transported from many different points within a given area. In such a case, they are



transported to the central location and, then, board the second bus to continue to the final destination.

13. Is it permitted to have both elementary and high school students on the same bus/route?

Yes. As a matter of fact, in some municipalities if both elementary and high school students are not both on the bus/route, there may not be enough students to even contract a route. It is a common practice to have the elementary grade students sit in the front of the bus closest to the driver. The driver can be instructed to be especially vigilant and to immediately report any inappropriate conduct on the part of the older students to the principal for disciplinary action.

14. What are some practices that parents/districts/non-public schools should expect if they contract with MOESC?

- **MOESC will utilize centralized stops as much as possible.** In order to decrease the time students spend on the bus, routes must be designed with the least amount of stops. Therefore, if districts contract transportation with MOESC, they must agree to the use of centralized stops so that we can service the most amount of students in the most efficient time possible. When centralized stops cannot be found, stops will be placed along the route that have the least impact on the overall route time.
- **MOESC may design routes with multiple destinations.** When a route to a certain school passes one or more schools located along that route, the bus will be more fully utilized if children attending those other schools who live along that route can be added to the route. The bus would then stop at each of the schools along the route.
- **Standardize ride-time policies for all districts participating in consolidated services.** When districts with different ride-time policies (i.e., limits on the length of time a student may ride on a bus) attempt to use the same consolidated transportation services agency, the differences in the policies place constraints on the ability of the agency to provide transportation which meets all of the varying policies. Therefore, all districts contracting with MOESC must conform to MOESC's ride-time, which is to be within industry standards of 90 minutes or less.

15. I moved after I submitted my B6T application, what now?

MOESC cannot make changes to transportation (change of address, cancellation, change in service) unless notified by the contracting school district. Therefore, if you move, you must submit a new B6T application to your non-public school. The non-public school will submit to your local school district to ensure that you are still eligible for transportation at the new address. The application, if eligible, will be sent to MOESC along with a cancellation of the original route. This is treated like a new application and MOESC will try to place the student on an existing route if seats are available and no change to the route is required. However, there is no guarantee that because transportation was secured from your original address, that there will be transportation from your new address.