



Burgettstown Area School District

100 Bavington Road

Burgettstown, PA 15021

www.burgettstown.k12.pa.us

Transportation Department

Safety is our main priority in the Transportation Department of the Burgettstown Area School District. We also strive to provide a transportation schedule that is both efficient and convenient. Answers for many of your questions regarding the operation of our school buses and transportation policies can be found here. Additional concerns and questions can be addressed to the administrative contact listed at the end of this document.

Burgettstown Area School District owns and operates its own fleet of school buses. We transport students to special, parochial and private schools within a ten (10) mile radius of the district's borders on our own buses, along with contracting to a private carrier when necessary.

Bus schedules are/have been carefully prepared to accommodate the transportation needs of the District. The times are approximate and subject to revision.

Bus Drivers

All school bus drivers in Pennsylvania must be certified and hold a current Commercial Driver's License (CDL). To become certified as a school bus driver, an individual must be at least eighteen (18) years of age, possess a valid commercial driver's license, pass a physical examination, attend at least fourteen (14) hours of classroom instruction, receive a minimum of six (6) hours of behind-the-wheel training, and pass a series of school bus driver's tests administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

To maintain certification a bus driver must pass an annual physical examination and every four (4) years, must attend seven (7) hours of classroom instructions, receive three (3) hours of behind-the-wheel refresher training and retake a school bus driver's test. Bus drivers are also subject to all background checks that are required for school staff, plus a background check on their driving record. Copies of yearly records of renewal of their School Bus endorsement, physical card and CDL License for each driver are kept on file in the administration and transportation offices.

All Burgettstown Area School District bus drivers wear District provided name badges.

School Buses

Today's school bus is designed according to strict federal and state regulations in order to provide the safest form of transportation in the United States. Every year, each school bus used in transporting students is subject to two (2) official PA State Inspections. In addition, the Pennsylvania State Police conduct one scheduled inspection of all buses each year, and periodically perform spot checks throughout the year. Also, each driver is required to visually inspect his/her bus and to complete a safety check prior to the start of each trip.

Bus Rules

Every parent and student is asked to know the following Bus Rules for riding a Burgettstown Area School District school bus.

1. Students are to get on and off the bus in an orderly manner.
2. Students should remain seated while the bus is in operation.
3. Conversation levels should be kept low. Profanity or obscene gestures will not be tolerated.
4. Windows of the bus should only be operated with the permission of the driver. Nothing is to be passed through the windows.
5. Students should respect each other and the bus driver. Students should keep their hands, feet, bookbags or any other objects to themselves. Safe behavior is expected.
6. No fighting on the bus.
7. Animals are not permitted on the bus.
8. Eating food, chewing gum, or possessing tobacco or nicotine products is not permitted on the bus.
9. No defacing or destroying school property; including but not limited to: seats, lighting and windows.
10. The bus driver and/or school administrator has the authority to assign or reassign student seating assignments.
11. Students are not permitted to leave the bus except at their designated stop and are not permitted to ride another bus without permission from a school administrator or the Director of Transportation.

Bus Passes

The District is not responsible for the transportation of students to locations other than the student's home residence. Students are to ride the bus to which they are assigned. Only in an emergency situation will students be permitted to ride another bus. Permission to ride a different bus must be obtained from the school. The student must first bring a note from home or an e-mail must be sent to the school. Upon approval, the school will issue a note to the transportation department, which the bus driver will accept and allow the student to ride their bus. Bus drivers will not accept verbal confirmation from the parent, and there must be space available on the bus to accommodate the request.

State law requires a daily roster of every student on each bus and specifies the number of students allowed on each bus. To be in compliance with the law, we must keep a paper trail in the form of a bus pass for every change made to each bus daily. Therefore, our district will follow the guidelines noted below for the issuance of bus passes:

1. For the purpose of accommodating child care arrangements, each student is eligible to be rostered on one (1) alternate bus. This request must be submitted prior to the start of the school year. After initial routes and runs have been established for the new school year, adequate seating space must be available to accommodate requests.
 - a. Parents must follow procedure by submitting an alternate bus request.
 - b. Exceptions will be made for custodial parents.
2. Bus passes will not be accepted by phone. Exceptions will be made in cases of extreme emergency conditions and must be approved by the building principal or Director of Transportation.
3. No elementary student shall ride the high school bus in the morning unless it is for a school-related activity such as student council, band, tutoring, etc. A one day notice is required. High school students will not be permitted to ride the elementary bus to school in the morning.
4. Bus passes cannot be approved for reasons such as going to a friend's house, boy/girl scout meetings, birthday parties, etc. The same applies on early dismissal days.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent temporary emergency changes in critical conditions at the discretion of the Director of Transportation.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- Q. Are school districts required to transport students?**
- A. With the exception of charter school students, Pennsylvania law does not require a school district to provide transportation to its students.

Q. How long may a child be required to ride the bus?

A. There are no time limits set by law or regulations.

Q. How far may a child be asked to walk to a school bus stop?

A. The law allows a school district to ask a child, regardless of age, to walk up to a mile and a half to a bus stop. The mile and a half is measured by public roads and does not include any private lane or walkway of the child's residence.

Q. The bus goes right down my street. Why can't the bus stop at my house?

A. Bus stops are centrally located for all students. In most cases, we try to use intersections which are easy to locate and where motorists may be more alert to pedestrians and stopped vehicles. The District attempts to keep the number of stops minimized thus keeping the buses moving and reducing ride times. Stopping at every driveway inconveniences the motoring public causing them to become impatient trying to get around the bus, compromising safety and adding a considerable amount of time to the bus run.

Q. I can't see the stop from my house. Can't the stop be closer?

A. Unfortunately not everyone will be able to see the stop from their house. It is not feasible to put all stops in sight range. Parents must use good judgment by either going to the stop with the child or working with other families in the area to support safety.

Q. Why is my child assigned to a contracted carrier rather than a BASD bus?

A. The majority of our special needs schools and some of our private schools are serviced by contracted vehicles. With an ever changing enrollment and special arrangements, contractors are in most cases better suited to handle these routes.

The granting of special transportation services is based on the disability or physical handicap of the child transported as required by the Pennsylvania Regulations at 22 Pa. Code 15.6 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Q. Who is responsible for student behavior at bus stops?

A. The District is responsible to determine safe stop locations. Parents are responsible for their child's behavior at the stop. If inappropriate behavior is reported to the bus driver, they will turn this information over to the school for investigation.

Q. Who handles discipline on the bus?

A. Buses carrying students are considered an extension of the school setting. A high standard of student behavior is expected and required. The driver is the authority figure responsible for enforcing the transportation rules. The driver can handle minor discipline problems speaking to students or reassigning seats. More serious issues are addressed at the school by the building principal(s). Misconduct forms may be submitted to the school by drivers. Violations may result in a warning, reprimand, and/or suspension of riding privileges.

Any student whose conduct on a school vehicle is found improper will be subject to disciplinary procedures as per appropriate grade and building level discipline codes. Smoking, throwing objects from the bus or windows, rowdiness, standing while the bus is in motion, deliberate delays in boarding, unauthorized transferring to another bus, opening of emergency doors without the driver's permission (except in bona fide emergencies), distracting the attention of the driver, failure to cooperate with the driver, or any conduct detrimental to safe bus operation will result in a review of the offending student's opportunity to continue to ride the bus, and may cause permanent loss of this privilege or suspension from school. Damage to the vehicle will be charged to the student responsible.

All buses serving Burgettstown Area School District transportation needs are subject to being both video and audio recorded to assist in ensuring that the students are transported in a manner that protects them as well as the vehicle operator from physical injury, verbal abuse, or threats. Such recordings, both audio and video, may be utilized in all disciplinary investigations of students and employees of Burgettstown Area School District and its contracted service providers.

Q. May a district suspend busing services for a child?

A. Yes. Transportation is a privilege, not a right. School Administrators do have the right to suspend a child from the use of the school bus for inappropriate behavior.

Q. When does a school district have to provide transportation to a nonpublic school?

A. When a school district provides transportation for its public pupils, it must provide transportation services to nonpublic pupils of the same grade level that it provides for its own pupils. The nonpublic school must be nonprofit and located within ten miles of the district's boundary, measured by the nearest public highway. If the school building in which the pupil is enrolled is not located within the ten-mile distance, the nonpublic pupil is not eligible for transportation by Burgettstown Area School District, nor is his/her parent(s) eligible for payment towards transportation costs.

Q. May a school district ask a child going to a nonpublic elementary school to ride on a vehicle with public high school students?

A. Yes.

Q. When I register my child with the school, do I need to contact the transportation office to set up busing?

A. No, the school will forward the required information to the transportation department.

No student will be assigned transportation until the proper documentation has been submitted to the school. Once registered, the information is sent to the transportation office for a bus assignment. Please allow at least 3-5 business days for this process as some buses may have to be rerouted to accommodate a new stop. Please note that District policy requires that parents provide three (3) items as proof of residency upon registration or change of address.

Q. What should I do if I move during the school year?

A. Notify the school of your change of address and let our Department know 7-10 days ahead of your move so that we may get your child assigned to a bus stop. If you move outside the school's attendance area, notify the guidance office where your child is enrolled.

Q. Can my child ride home on another bus?

A. We ask parents for their understanding and to please note that bus stop assignments cannot be customized to meet every individual need and still be part of an efficient and economical transportation system. Therefore, we discourage this from happening. Requests, if absolutely necessary, should be for childcare needs only. Students changing buses cause disturbances in seat assignments and can cause over-crowding issues.

The District cannot consider factors that are associated with individual family or parental situations. Such concerns are expected to be resolved by the family, parent, or guardian, not the School District.

If your child must ride another bus, please contact your child's school directly. If the request is approved, they will issue a pass to your child notifying the bus driver. Please note that no more than two students may ride with another student on any given day, and with limited open seats on most buses, some requests may not be approved.

A roster and seating chart is maintained on all buses at all times.

Q. Is it possible to transport my child to or from a daycare rather than my home?

A. This is possible; however, it is governed by several rules. The daycare must be within the attendance area of the school and must reside on an existing route. The Department will not travel outside the attendance border for childcare purposes. The daycare you are using should provide a list of students to our department. Arrangements for stops at a daycare provider location should be the same Monday through Friday to avoid confusion at the school or for the child. If you need to make different arrangements, only two (2) schedules will be accepted by the school and transportation. Additionally, it is important that your child know where they are going each day if it is a part-time service. Drivers cannot be responsible for knowing your child's schedule.

Q. My child is the only student at the stop. Should I call when he/she is not riding?

A. This is helpful and appreciated. Your call to our Transportation Department saves mileage and time so that the bus route may run more efficiently.

Q. I do not plan to regularly use transportation but want my child kept on the list. Is there a procedure I should follow?

A. If your child is the only one at the stop and will be riding rarely, we ask that you notify our department to have your child listed as "will ride when calling". The bus will only come to

your stop if you need service. Please call the day before to allow ample time for us to schedule the pickup.

Q. There is split custody for my child. Can I get him/her assigned to two different buses?

A. Yes, but we can only list one primary stop. Contact our department and we will determine a secondary stop and notify the driver. Both homes must be in the same school attendance area for transportation.

Q. When the bus is running late, why don't you call to inform parents?

A. In most cases, there simply is not enough time. When all other buses are running on time, it can be difficult to call the numerous families assigned to one bus. In the case of a breakdown, our focus is on getting a replacement vehicle to service the students as quickly as possible.

Q. What time should my child arrive at the bus stop?

A. Students are required to be at the bus stop at least 10 minutes prior to the designated time.

Q. If the bus does not arrive, how long should my child wait at the bus stop?

A. The District asks that you use good judgment based on weather conditions.

Q. What should I do if my child does not arrive home after school as expected?

A. We urge parents/guardians to take the following steps:

- Call your child's school if within ½ hour of student dismissal.
- Contact the transportation department at 724-947-8148.

We understand that this situation can cause undue stress and worry, but we encourage parents/guardians to proceed calmly and rationally. Many times, we find that children are located at a friend's home or are taking part in an after school activity.

Q. I have a complaint about a bus driver, to whom do I call?

A. You can contact the Director of Transportation using the information provided on the school district website or at the end of this document. Normally an issue is solved immediately and does not happen again. If this is not the case, please contact the transportation department again or the Principal of the school.

Q. I have a complaint about a bus stop, to whom do I call?

A. You can contact the Director of Transportation using the information provided on the school district website or at the end of this document. Any other concerns can be directed to the Principal of the school.

Q. How will I find out my child's busing information for the new school year?

A. Each summer, usually by the third week of August, this information is posted to the school district website: www.burgettstown.k12.pa.us.

Q. How should I find out about school closings and delays?

A. More information regarding Burgettstown Area School District closings and delays can be found on the District website: www.burgettstown.k12.pa.us.

Please remember the following law regarding stops and drivers:

School Bus Loading Zones

As required by Section 3345(h) of the Vehicle Code, Title 75 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes;

Every school district transporting school children by school bus must establish and maintain school bus loading zones at or near all schools to or from which children are transported. Each school district transporting children by school bus also must establish school bus loading zones along the highways traveled by school buses, in accordance with the Department's regulations, Title 67, Chapter 104 of the Pennsylvania Code.

Whenever school bus loading zones have been established at or near a school or along a highway, it is unlawful for a school bus driver to stop the bus to pick up or discharge school children at any location other than loading zones.

For more information regarding the transporting of students in the district please contact:

Cheryl Slay, Director of Transportation

cslay@burgettstown.k12.pa.us

724-947-8148