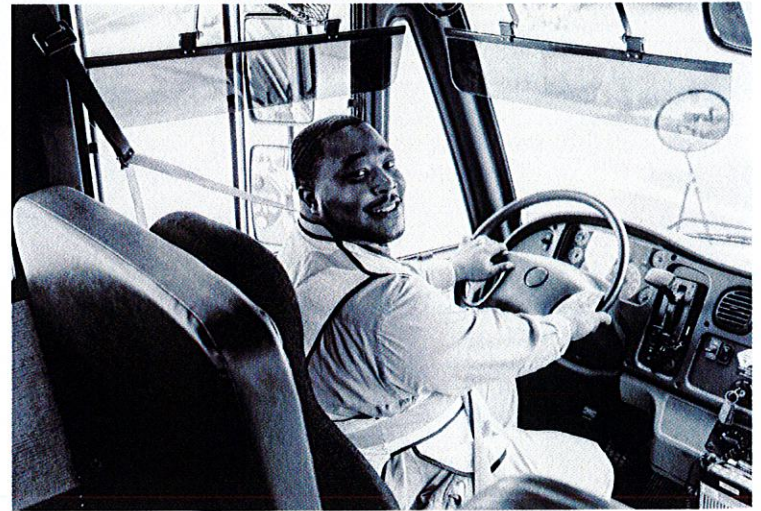
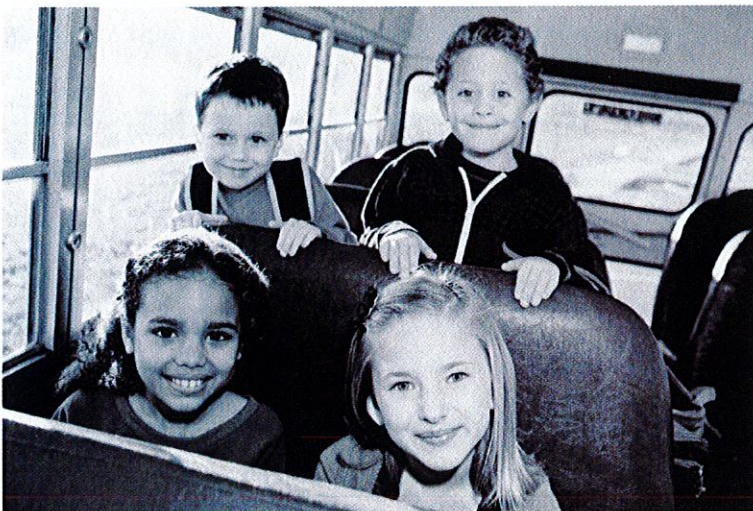
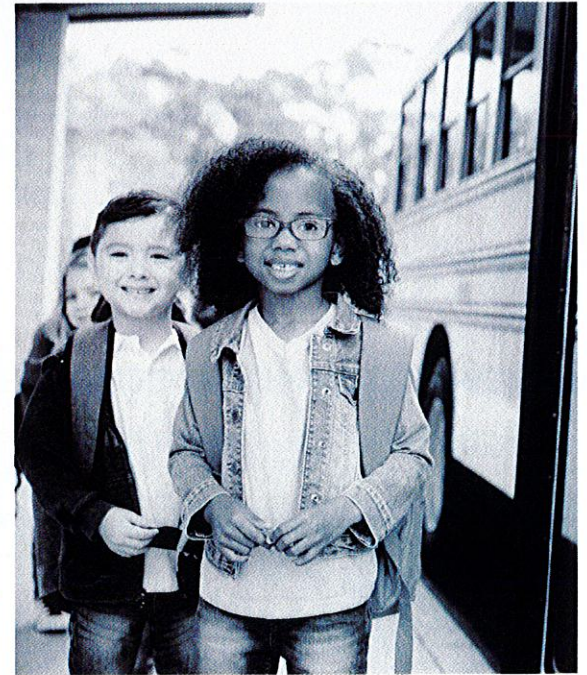
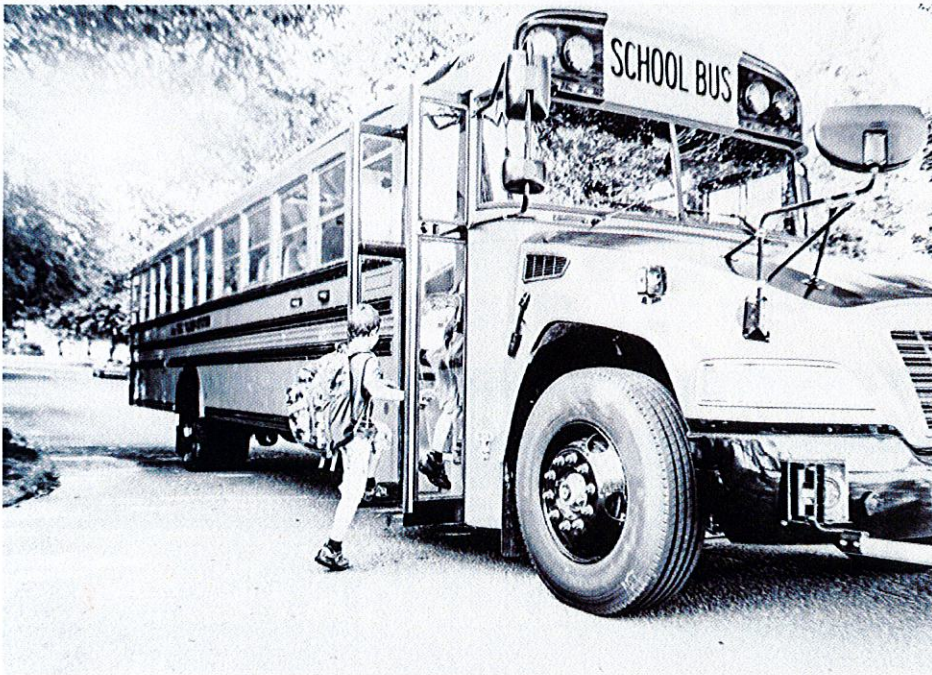




NEWTON MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Parent - Student Transportation Handbook



Dr. Glenda Nickson, NMSD Superintendent
Charlie Vickers, Director of Operations

2024 - 2025

Table of Contents

IMPORTANT CONTACTS.....	3
INTRODUCTION	4
BUS ROUTES AND BUS STOPS.....	5
TRANSPORTATION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.....	6
SPECIAL HEALTH ISSUES	6
PROCEDURES FOR CHANGING TRANSPORTATION.....	7
SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES.....	8
PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES.....	9
STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES	10
BUS DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES	11
KINDERGARTEN AND SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS.....	12
STUDENT CROSSING PROCEDURES	14
INCLEMENT WEATHER.....	15
BUS CONDUCT REPORTING PROCESS.....	15
RECEIPT OF HANDBOOK & BUS RIDER INFORMATION	17

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Newton Transportation Office.....601-683-2451
Newton Web Site.....www.nmsd.us

Newton District Office

205 School Street
Newton, MS 39345
Phone: 601-683-2451

Elementary School

Serving students from Pre-K through 5th grade.
301 W Tatum Street
Newton, MS 39345
Phone: 601-683-3979

NH Pilate Middle School

Serving students from 6th through 8th grades.
531 E Church Street
Newton, MS 39345
Phone: 601-683-3926

Newton High School

Serving students from 9th through 12th grades.
201 W First Street
Newton, MS 39345
Phone: 601-683-2232

Newton Career and Technical Center

Serving students from 9th through 12th grades
203 W First Street
Newton, MS 39345
Phone: 601-683-6338

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide students and parents/guardians with general information about Newton Municipal School District pupil transportation system. At Newton Municipal Schools, we strive for safe and reliable Transportation services for you, our customers.

Transportation of regular education students to and from school is not required by law. Please take time to read the following pages and review them with your children in order to protect your transportation privileges.

It is the mutual responsibility of the parent/guardian and school district personnel to make a reasonable effort to understand and cooperate with each other regarding safe and orderly pupil transportation.

School bus transportation is provided only for eligible students and shall be considered a *PRIVILEGE* to be enjoyed only as long as the students accept responsibility for their own personal conduct and carefully follow all rules and regulations.

*Thank you for your support and cooperation.
Together we will have a great school year.*

BUS ROUTES AND BUS STOPS

Safety is the most important factor in transporting students. The following information is offered to help make pupil transportation safe and successful.

1. Bus stops and bus routes are established on the basis of safety, efficiency, and the age of students and in accordance with State laws and recommendations and School Board policy. Bus stop locations must avoid as much traffic as possible. Stops shall not be on a hill or before or after a curve. Buses shall be visible in all traffic directions when stopped, and stops shall be at least 200 feet apart.
2. It is each parent's responsibility to get her/his student to and from the school bus safely.
3. Bus stops will be placed at locations consistent with State laws and Board policy.
4. Students should arrive at the bus stop five minutes prior to the scheduled arrival of the bus. This will allow time to catch the bus but not enough time for problems among students to arise. Bus departure times are subject to change. PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR STUDENTS UNTIL THE BUS ARRIVES.
5. If a student is the only one assigned to a particular bus stop and if the student will be absent for ten (10) consecutive days, the bus will **not** stop again until the parent/guardian calls to resume transportation.
6. As required by state law, all students **SHALL** cross in front of the school bus. They will receive instruction on proper crossing procedures from bus drivers. PARENTS/GUARDIANS WHO MEET STUDENTS AT THE STOP SHOULD SET THE EXAMPLE AND ALSO FOLLOW THIS IMPORTANT SAFETY RULE.

Please note: Due to circumstances that may or may not be under the control of the school district:

- The district reserves the right to change stops and routes when necessary;
- Walking distances and bus routes may be adjusted temporarily if necessary by reason of unsafe or impassable roads.

TRANSPORTATION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Walk and Ride Policy

Students may find it necessary to walk some distance to their designated bus stops or to school. In compliance with state laws, the Newton Municipal School District walk/ride policy is:

- Elementary school students, grades K-5 may be expected to walk up to ¼ mile to a bus stop wherever appropriate walkways and traffic signs are available.
- Middle school and senior high school students, grades 6-12, may be expected to walk up to ½ mile to a bus stop wherever appropriate walkways and traffic signs are available.

It is not possible to provide transportation to bus stops located outside of the attendance boundaries of the school. Because routes are established based on the student's residence and/or bus stop address, changes of pick up or drop off during the year are difficult to accommodate. Requests for change must be made in writing, in advance. Please direct your requests to the principal of your child's school.

SPECIAL HEALTH ISSUES

Parents/guardians of students with unique health issues that could become safety issues on the bus are encouraged to contact the Principal and Transportation Department.

Out of consideration of those passengers and employees with medical conditions, passengers should refrain from using any aerosol spray, cologne, perfume or other items with strong odors while on the bus. Please be aware of, and respect, other people's medical issues and needs.

PROCEDURES FOR CHANGING TRANSPORTATION

At NMSD we are responsible for the safe and orderly transportation of your children. Parents/Guardians are requested to identify one (1) pick up and one (1) drop off location for the school year. Exceptions are joint custody and after school program drop offs. The bus stop may or may not be located at the students' home address. Parents are responsible to ensure the student is met at the designated stop by a responsible person if required.

Permanent changes to the scheduled transportation for a student may be made upon **written request at least 72 hours in advance** from the parent/guardian. Direct your changes to your child's school Principal.

Temporary Changes to the scheduled transportation for a student also may be made upon **written request at least 72 hours in advance** from the parent/guardian. Direct your changes to your child's school Principal. All forms are available on-line or at the school office. The Transportation request must include your student's name and destination and be signed by a parent/guardian. School personnel, upon receipt of your written request, will authorize your request and/or complete a bus pass that will be given to the driver.

Newton Municipal School District will no longer accept notes handed to the driver or phone calls from parents/guardians, only properly completed forms turned into the Transportation office in advance of the change in transportation.

Call the Transportation Department in advance to verify seating availability. Bus capacity and assignment may limit changes. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee extra groups will have adequate seating for scout meetings, birthday parties, etc. Parent cooperation is required to make sure students ride the buses to which they are assigned. This ensures that the school will know who is actually on a bus, that a student can be located in an emergency, that overcrowding is controlled, and other potential problems can be prevented. In the rare event that a bus has more students than available seating, students may temporarily be moved to an alternate bus without advance notice. Thank you in advance for your support and cooperation.

SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

The School District is responsible for:

1. Establishing the policies and procedures by which the pupil transportation program functions.
2. Establishing pupil regulations governing the behavior and safety of students while on the bus and at bus stops.
3. Instituting and administering an instructional program that teaches students proper conduct and safety procedures.
4. Conducting a training program for school bus drivers to ensure that all policies, procedures, regulations and their enforcement are understood.
5. Ensuring that parents receive written copies of transportation safety rules and regulations and clearly establishing their roles and obligations with respect to student promptness, attitude and behavior.
6. Initiating procedures to open lines of communication and cooperation between school administrators, transportation staff and state agencies.
7. Providing training in pupil management skills that extend beyond the scope of enforcing rules and regulations.
8. Ensuring that administrators provide support for discipline and stand behind bus driver's reasonable enforcement.
9. Notifying schools if the bus will be late in arriving.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/Guardians will:

1. Support safe riding practices and reasonable discipline practices.
2. Model, teach and hold their children accountable for appropriate behavior.
3. Make certain that their students arrive at the bus stop on time and be responsible for their student's behavior until the bus arrives. Parents/guardians are responsible for their students going to, from and at the bus stop.
4. Provide alternative transportation for their students if oversized objects that must be transported to or from school, or when a student's bus riding privileges are suspended for cause.
5. Ensure that payment is made for damages resulting from vandalism to the bus.
6. Work with school personnel to reinforce appropriate bus rider behavior.
7. Have a family emergency plan if the student arrives home early or if parents/guardians are not present at the time of their arrival.
8. Support emergency evacuation drills and other emergency procedures as set by the school district.
9. Respect the rights and privileges of others.
10. Become familiar with district policies, regulations, and principles of school bus safety.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students will:

1. Observe appropriate bus riding behavior in order to protect their riding privileges.
2. Be courteous to others. Demonstrate responsible citizenship through positive social interactions while on the bus. Do not use profanity or be verbally abusive. Do use inside voices on the bus.
3. Remember that smoking, vaping, possessing illegal substances, weapons or obscene materials are not allowed on the bus.
4. Cooperate with the bus driver and follow the bus driver's instructions the first time they are given.
5. Remain seated while bus is in motion.
6. Extend nothing, including head, hands and feet out of the bus windows. Open windows only with permission.
7. Be responsible for intentional damage to the interior or exterior of the bus. Be responsible for charges for such damages.
8. Display proper respect for the rights and comfort of others on the bus.
9. Be on time and respect private property while waiting at bus stops. **Buses cannot wait for tardy students.**
10. Cross in front of the bus at all times.
11. Limit objects that are brought on the bus to those items that can be safely held by the student. Do not bring or use any items on the bus that could affect the health, safety, and security of any passengers. Examples: scooters, skateboards and live animals may not be transported on the bus.
12. Realize that ANY driver distraction is potentially hazardous to the safety of all passengers.

BUS DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Bus Driver will:

1. Provide safe and orderly transportation for students.
2. Establish proper rapport with students, parents/guardians and building administrators and work to ensure proper conduct and communications.
3. Establish and enforce reasonable bus rules in accordance with appropriate district policy and procedures. This includes teaching students the rules for safe bus riding and street crossing and enforcing these rules in an equitable manner.
4. Keep to the scheduled route and time each day providing conditions allow.
5. Pick up and discharge students only at their designated stops except with written permission to do otherwise. Request a photo ID of parents/guardians picking up students at other than regularly scheduled locations as necessary.
6. Assign seats as necessary.
7. Notify the office if the bus will be late in arriving.
8. Check the bus by walking from front to back to make certain it is empty after the last child exits the bus and between all runs before parking the bus.
9. Notify the Building Principal, parents/guardians, and Transportation Director of student behavior concerns.
10. Will make every effort not to leave the bus unattended with students on board.
11. Provide for school bus emergency evacuation drills on a regular basis as required. Follow appropriate procedures in dealing with dangerous situations.
12. Build positive relationships in a professional, ethical manner by honoring diversity, modeling life skills, and meeting the physical and emotional needs of all passengers

KINDERGARTEN AND SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

In addition to the above responsibilities, the following procedures have been established in order to provide for the safe and orderly transportation of students who may have a difficult time communicating information or making appropriate personal safety decisions.

Responsibilities

Parents/guardians will:

1. Have the student ready at least five minutes before the buses arrival time.
2. Escort the student to the bus and assist with boarding as required.
3. Be present, or visible, to the bus driver when the bus arrives at the students' bus stop. If not, the Driver will:
 - a. Call Dispatch/Take the student to Newton Elementary School
 - b. The parent will be called and be responsible for picking up the student.
4. Escort the student off the bus.
5. Call the Building Principal and Transportation Department if the student will be absent. If the student is absent for ten (10) consecutive days, the bus will **not** stop again until the parent/guardian calls to resume transportation.
6. Notify Transportation, Special Education and school office promptly of any address or phone number changes.
7. Participate in meetings that decide the student's unique transportation needs as required.

The Bus Driver will:

1. Maintain a passenger list of students assigned to the route.
2. Be responsible to see that the student is appropriately secured in the bus.
3. Never release the student to anyone who is not a known adult.
4. Be certain students leave the bus at the appropriate school and bus stop.
5. Call Dispatch/Take the student to Newton Elementary School if the parent is not at home.
6. Collaborate with parents/guardians and staff in developing behavioral intervention plans as necessary.
7. Report medical issues and serious behavior issues to the principal, parents/guardians and Transportation Director.

The Teachers or Paraprofessionals will:

1. Meet the bus promptly at school.
2. Escort the student to and from the bus.
3. Assist with boarding at the end of the school day.
4. Collaborate with transportation staff and parents/guardians in designing appropriate behavior.

The Special Education Department will:

1. Set up initial IEP for transportation requests.
2. Notify the Transportation Department of any changes in address, phone or pertinent medical information.
3. Notify parents/guardians of bus number and pick up and drop off information.

The Transportation Department will:

1. Notify all regular and substitute bus drivers of the correct procedures to be followed.
2. Equip buses with reasonable and appropriate safety equipment.
3. Inform school in the event that a substitute bus is being sent to pick up students.
4. Provide training so drivers can respond to emergency situations on the bus.
6. Accommodate Special Education student needs as requested in an IEP within the confines of state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.

STUDENT CROSSING PROCEDURES

Please review these important safety procedures with all of your children. Parents who escort their children to and from the bus when crossing must set the example for their children and also adhere to these important safety procedures. Everyone needs to know that not all cars stop as required by state law, even when the red lights are flashing on school buses.

When crossing the street to board the bus:

1. Students wait in a group at the designated bus stop at least 20 feet away from the edge of the roadway and look to the bus driver for the signal to cross.
2. Bus drivers will display a sign to indicate when it is safe to cross the street. If it is dark, drivers may turn on an inside light to be seen easier.
3. Students proceed directly across the road always staying well in front of the bus and board the bus.
Stay out of the "DANGER ZONE!"
4. Do not stop in the middle of the street or cross behind the bus.

When crossing the street after leaving the bus:

1. Students exit the bus and take 10 giant steps in front of the bus staying on the side of the street. Stay out of the "DANGER ZONE!"
2. Students stand in a group and look to the bus driver for the signal to cross.
3. Bus drivers will display a sign to indicate when it is safe to cross the street. If it is dark, drivers may turn on an inside light to be seen easier.
4. Students proceed to a point even with the left side of the bus and STOP.
5. Students look left and right for passing cars.
6. Students look to the driver for instruction to complete the crossing.
7. Do not cross behind the bus.
8. If a paper or article goes under the school bus, always ask the bus driver for help.
9. Do not get mail from roadside mailboxes until after the bus leaves the stop.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

School Cancellation

While every effort is made to inform parents/guardians of a sudden unscheduled need to close the schools, there is no way to assure that every parent will receive information in a timely manner to respond in their students' best interest. A heavier than predicted snowfall in winter or severe rainstorm in spring or fall may result in an early dismissal from school. School personnel make every effort to avoid sending students home outside the normal schedule.

During periods of inclement weather parents/guardians and students are advised to monitor local radio and television stations for changes in school schedules. The media is contacted as soon as a decision is made to vary from the regular school schedule in order to notify parents/guardians as quickly as possible. If the weather looks threatening, parents/guardians are encouraged to stay tuned to the local news media for updates. This information will be announced on instant messenger, through district communication platforms, phone calls, and local media outlets. Information will also be available at www.nmsd.us and district and school Facebook pages.

BUS CONDUCT REPORTING PROCESS

Please help us provide safe transportation for all students by discussing appropriate bus behavior with your child and stress the importance of good conduct while on the school bus. Parents/guardians will be notified of inappropriate behavior on the school bus. To assist the bus driver, a video camera may be used to monitor student behavior while riding on Newton Municipal school buses.

All students need to attend school regularly to receive the best possible education. Riding the school bus is a privilege. Suspension of riding privileges does not mean a suspension from school. Parents/guardians are responsible for transportation to and from school.

Bus discipline is progressive and cumulative and will normally start at "Step 1" listed below. Any infraction can be processed immediately at "Step 4" when approved by an administrator. Immediate suspension will occur for any infraction involving fighting or possession of illegal drugs/alcohol/weapons/contraband. The school district reserves the right to implement alternative discipline options based on individual circumstances. Every attempt will be made to verbally notify parents/guardians prior to suspension of riding privileges. In cases involving vandalism to school buses, restitution for damages will be required prior to students regaining their bus riding privileges.

Bus Drivers Action:

Step 1 – Warning and parent notification

Step 2 – Not allowed to ride bus (Maximum of five days)

Step 3 – Not allowed to ride bus (Maximum of ten days)

Step 4 – Expulsion from the bus (Remainder of the school year)

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF
NEWTON MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

TRANSPORTING OUR MOST PRECIOUS CARGO

Newton Municipal School District Transportation Department

Receipt of Handbook and Bus Rider Information

(Pull out this page, complete requested information and return to your bus driver. Thank you.)

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are sending you this handbook in the interest of safety for your children. Riding the school bus is a privilege. Students are expected to exercise proper conduct at all times on the bus. For the safety of all passengers and the driver, misconduct will not be tolerated. Students, who misbehave or place the bus or its passengers in any jeopardy, will lose their bus privileges. Please review this important safety information with your children and sign the lower portion of this letter to indicate that you have received this important information. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support of safe pupil transportation.

Sincerely,

Newton Municipal School District Transportation Department

We have *received and reviewed* the Newton Municipal School's Pupil Transportation Handbook.

Parent and/or Guardian Name(s) Printed

Parent/Guardian signature	Date	Home Phone
---------------------------	------	------------

Home Address	Work Phone
--------------	------------

Child #1 Name	School	Grade	Bus #
---------------	--------	-------	-------

Child #2 Name	School	Grade	Bus #
---------------	--------	-------	-------

Child #3 Name	School	Grade	Bus #
---------------	--------	-------	-------
