

Hillsdale Community Schools Pupil Transportation Handbook



Information for a Safe and Orderly Transportation System

Welcome

Pupil transportation is an essential support service for Hillsdale Community Schools. While schools are operated primarily for student instruction, transportation ensures students who live at a distance can access these educational opportunities. It is not intended as a door-to-door convenience but as a cost-effective method of providing access to education.

Hillsdale Community Schools operates a fleet of buses, transporting students from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade to and from school daily. Additionally, we provide transportation for field trips and athletic events. Our fleet is maintained by a full-time Master Mechanic, ensuring safety and reliability. Each bus undergoes an annual inspection by the Michigan State Police, and our drivers conduct pre-trip inspections before each run.

School Bus Driver qualifications include:

- Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Type B with P and S endorsements
- Certification by the Michigan Department of Education with bi-annual continuing education
- DOT physical exams
- Random drug and alcohol testing, plus a background check

At Hillsdale Community Schools, we are committed to providing safe, efficient transportation.

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Transportation Eligibility Requirements

Routing

Bus routes prioritize safety and efficiency, following state and federal regulations. Bus stops are consolidated to reduce ride times.

Inclement Weather

Inclement weather can create many problems for the transportation department and our riders. Poor driving conditions often cause our buses to run late on the routes. During these times it is especially important that students be waiting for the bus when it arrives at the stop. We urge parents to dress their children appropriately for the conditions.

School Closing Information

Closures and delays are communicated via the Hillsdale Schools Messenger System and local media. Your child's school must have current phone numbers in their system in order for you to receive the Messenger Alert. Please avoid calling the transportation office for updates.

If the weather is believed to improve quickly, school may only be delayed for 2 hours. Add two hours to your child's normal pick up time. School personnel make every effort to avoid sending students home early, however a heavier than predicted snowfall, severe storm or facility related issue may result in an early dismissal from school.

Family Emergency Plan

Parents should establish an emergency plan with their children in case of early dismissal. Does your child have a house key or know where to find one? Does your child have a neighbor to go to or a phone number to call if no one is home? Have you quizzed your child on the various scenarios to be sure he/she will take the proper steps? Check with your child periodically to make sure they remember the steps. Keep the procedure updated as situations change.

Lost and Found

Items left on buses are kept for one week before being placed in the lost and found. Please label all items with your child's name. Please have your child ask the driver about lost items. Unclaimed items are donated after one month.

Student Responsibilities

Students must:

- Observe appropriate classroom behavior. Major infractions will be referred to buildings for discipline.
 - Be courteous to others. Demonstrate responsible citizenship through positive social interactions while on the bus.
 - Use no profane or verbally abusive language, including racial slurs.
 - Remember that eating, chewing gum, drinking, smoking, vaping, possessing illegal substances, weapons or obscene materials are not allowed on the bus.
 - Cooperate with the driver and follow the driver's instructions the first time they are given.
 - Remain seated while the bus is in motion. Students should sit erect, facing forward and remain inside the seating compartment.
 - Toys should not be brought onto the school bus.
 - Not bring anything on the bus that is too large to be safely held while in the students lap.
 - Extend nothing, including head, hands, and feet out of the bus window.
 - Be responsible for intentional damage to the interior or exterior of the bus and will be charged for such damages.
 - Arrive at their designated bus stop at least 5 minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time. Buses cannot wait for tardy students.
 - Cross in front of the bus at all times when bus stops are across the road.
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Parent Responsibilities

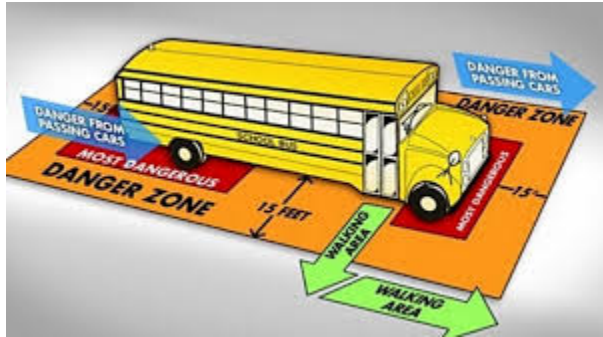
Parents must:

- Have your child ready and waiting at the bus stop at least 5 minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time. If they are waiting in your car make sure they are out before the bus arrives.
 - If your child misses the bus, DO NOT chase the bus or flash your automobile headlights at the bus. Bus drivers are not authorized to stop. Take your child to school or call the transportation department to arrange a pick up at another stop. You must call before this can happen.
 - Accept joint responsibility for proper conduct of your children on the bus or at the bus stop.
 - Inform the transportation office if your child will not be riding for an extended period of time.
 - Parents will provide transportation for their students if oversized objects or animals must be transported to school, or when students' riding privileges have been suspended.
 - Ensure that payment is made for damages resulting from vandalism to the bus.
 - Have a family emergency plan if the student arrives home early or if parents/guardians are not present at the time of their arrival.
 - Ensure Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students have an adult in view when they are delivered home without an older sibling.
 - Become familiar with district policies, regulations, and principals of school bus safety.
 - Make sure elementary students have supervision when they arrive at their stop.
 - Parents must be prepared to show a picture I.D. when picking up students at locations other than the normal schedule.
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Bus Driver Responsibilities

- Provide safe and orderly transportation for students.
 - Establish proper rapport with students, parents/guardians and building administrators and work to ensure proper conduct with communications.
 - 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.
 - Maintain the scheduled route and time each day providing conditions allow.
 - 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 stops other than the normal stop as necessary.
 - Assign seats at their discretion.
 - Notify the office if the bus will be late in arriving at school.
 - Check the bus by walking from the front to the back to make certain the bus is empty at an appropriate location after the last child exits the bus and between all runs before parking the bus.
 - Make direct contact with parents/guardians and Transportation Supervisor regarding student behavior issues.
 - Make every effort not to leave the bus unattended with students on board.
 - Provide for school bus emergency evacuation drills on a regular basis as required.
 - Only allow authorized persons to enter the bus.
 - KG students arriving home without an adult visible will be brought back to the transportation department and the parent called to pick up.
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Safety Around the School Bus



Most fatalities involving school buses happen outside of the bus. Extreme caution should be used during loading and unloading. Many tragic bus accidents occur when students try to catch a missed bus. For safety's sake, when a student misses the bus, they must not chase the bus or board the bus at another location or time.

- Cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus so the driver can see you
- Never go under the bus for dropped items.
- Do not attempt to return to the bus after exiting.
- If you leave something on the bus, contact the transportation department

Many tragic bus accidents occur when students try to catch a missed bus. For safety's sake, when a student misses the bus, **they must not chase the bus** or board the bus at another location or time.

Bus Discipline

Parents/guardians will be notified of inappropriate behavior on the school bus or bus stop. Please help us provide safety for all students by discussing appropriate behavior with your child and stress the importance of good conduct while on the bus as well as at the bus stop.

To assist the bus driver, a video camera will be used to monitor student behavior while riding the bus.

Bus discipline will be progressive and cumulative depending on the severity of the offense. Most minor disciplinary issues will be handled by the bus driver. However, each incident will be evaluated and may lead to discipline at the student's school. [Link to the Behavior Rubric and Student Handbook.](#)

Severe offenses include but are not limited to the following, the driver will notify a school administrator as soon as possible for disciplinary due process:

- Profanity / Obscene or abusive language including racial slurs
- Use of vapes, tobacco, alcohol or other controlled substances
- Defiance / gross insubordination – vocal, physical
- Creating unsafe conditions
- Vandalism
- Fighting / Assault
- Spitting on another student
- Carrying a weapon on the bus
- Carrying flammable or explosive materials
- Bullying and harassment

Conduct Reporting

The district reserves the right to implement alternative discipline options based on individual circumstances. **Signed conduct reports (Pink Slip) must be returned to the driver before students can ride the bus.**

- First offense: Written warning - possible suspension depending on severity
- Second offense: 2 day bus suspension
- Third offense: 3 day bus suspension
- Fourth offense: 5 day bus suspension
- Fifth offense: 10 day bus suspension
- Sixth offense: remainder of school year
- Each incident will be evaluated by the bus driver. A driver may add additional days to each suspension depending on the severity of the incident. The bus driver will report major incidents to a student's principal for potential disciplinary action.

(Bus suspensions will be enforced for any activity involving transportation)

Suspensions beyond 10 days will be determined by consulting the Central Administration. Meetings with parents may be called to communicate problems on the bus. Parents may request meetings with drivers and the transportation supervisor to discuss issues.

Attempts will be made to call parents when students are suspended from the bus. If parents cannot be reached, a message will be left on voicemail or answering machine if available.

Teaching a child to cross in front of the bus:

During the first couple of weeks the drivers are teaching the students the proper crossing procedures. During this procedure, students must be paying attention to the driver for instructions. Students are often distracted

by parents who are waiting at the bus stop. Parents should support the driver by asking their child to pay attention to the driver.

Changes in Bussing Schedules

Routes are established based on residence and/or childcare arrangements. Changes in pick up or drop off location during the year are difficult to accommodate. Requests for permanent changes must be made in advance and in writing. Parents/Guardians are asked to identify not more than two addresses for pick up and drop off of their children.

- If children need transportation to more than one address, a parent/guardian must provide a schedule in writing to the transportation department and the child's school. Parents/guardians must sign the schedule.
- Routes will be written to reflect schedules
- Changes to a student's pick up and drop off point will need to be requested at least 24 hours in advance to the transportation office.
- If a bus arrives for 3 consecutive days to pick up a student at their residence and the student does not ride the bus, the bus will no longer stop at that residence. The parent of the student will need to contact the transportation office to resume the bus stop at the residence.

Contact Information

Hillsdale Community Schools Transportation Department

Phone: (517) 439-9506

Supervisor of Transportation: Sid Halley

Office Hours: 6:00 AM – 5:00 PM (Regular School Days)

This handbook ensures that Hillsdale Community Schools provides safe, efficient, and reliable transportation for all students.