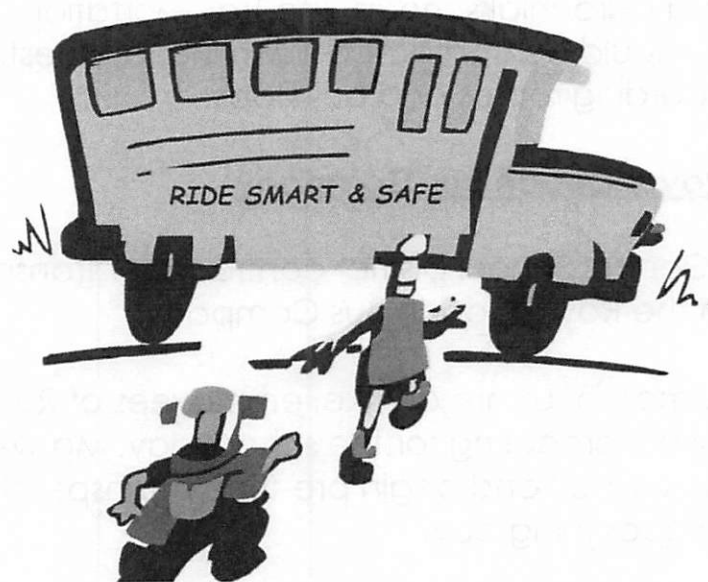


AN INFORMATIONAL GUIDE  
ABOUTTHE  
SOMERS CENTRAL SCHOOLDISTRICT  
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM



# **Pupil Transportation Guide**

This Pupil Transportation Guide has been developed to inform our community of policies, procedures and general information relating to our transportation system.

## **About the Somers Central School District's Transportation Department**

The Somers Transportation Department consists of **Assistant Transportation Supervisor, Mr. Gerard Esposito** ([Gesposito@somersschools.org](mailto:Gesposito@somersschools.org)) and an **Office Assistant Ms. Joanne Colon**, ([Jcolon@somersschools.org](mailto:Jcolon@somersschools.org)). This office is in the Somers Intermediate School, on Route 202 in Somers. Their telephone number is 277-3180 or 277-2410. The Transportation staff works closely with the Royal Coach Bus Company and has overall responsibility for setting up the bus routes and for coordinating requests for bus transportation to private and parochial schools. The Transportation Department should be contacted in writing for questions or concerns regarding routes and bus stops.

## **About the Royal Coach Bus Company**

The Somers Central School District contracts transportation services with the Royal Coach Bus Company.

Long before most of us are awake, employees of Royal Coach are hard at work preparing for the school day. Many drivers arrive at work by 6:30 and begin pre-tripping/inspecting their buses for the upcoming day.

The Royal Coach Bus Company has 70 drivers including substitute drivers and four mechanics on the Somers site. The on-site staff is composed of a site supervisor, an assistant site supervisor, a safety officer, an NYS Approved 19A examiner and a dispatcher all of whom work together to coordinate the daily operation of buses.

Royal Coach' s on-site office is located behind Somers High School. Their phone numbers are **243-3032 and 243-3052.** Royal Coach should be contacted if you need to get a message to your child's bus driver, to report that your child has missed the bus, or to check on lost items.

### **About School Bus Drivers**

As school bus drivers transport the most precious cargo in the world, candidates for bus driving positions undergo intensive scrutiny and training. After an initial interview with a potential driver is held, the driving history from the Department of Motor Vehicles is reviewed and previous employment and personal references are checked. Then, a second interview is conducted. If the applicant is to be hired, a pre-employment drug test is administered, and fingerprints are taken for a criminal background check.

Upon completion of this process, new bus drivers will begin a 30-hour training program which includes such topics as NYS Education and Department of Motor Vehicle laws, rules and regulations, Royal Coach Bus Company's policies and procedures, student management, emergency and safety planning and procedures, and driving in inclement weather.

Every year, all school bus drivers attend two mandatory 2-hour refresher courses as well as 2 annual Safety Meetings to review safety concerns, new laws or regulations as well as other pertinent information. Each driver has an annual physical. Every other year, drivers take a written test, a behind-the-wheel road test and must complete a physical performance test.

## **School Bus Stops and Routing**

Buses are authorized to stop only at established locations on the bus route. **Except for emergencies, the bus driver is not allowed to alter his/ her established route.**

In establishing bus stops, we consider whether the location is acceptable for picking up and discharging passengers as allowed by road conditions.

We consider the age of the child and whether crossing the road can be accomplished with reasonable safety. We do try and make every effort to pick up and drop off on the right side of the road, but this is not possible at all bus stops.

We attempt to strike a balance between a common stop and closeness to home in order to meet a reasonable schedule.

**Door-to-door service is neither required by New York State law nor recommended for reasons of both safety and efficiency.**

The District attempts to provide door-to-door service only for students with certain handicap conditions as determined by the Committee on Special Education. However, when the size of the bus, layout of the street or some other circumstance is prohibitive, a suitable alternative spot is chosen for these students as well.

We do not provide transportation services on roads that have not been dedicated and maintained by the town, county or state highway departments.

We try not to route school buses into cul-de-sacs or dead ends. Buses are not permitted to back up, therefore, adequate space must be available for buses to turn around. Vehicles which carry 20 passengers or less may be routed into cul-de-sacs only to provide service to physically challenged students.

Each year, as the distribution of students changes, we use the above criteria to establish bus routes and stops.

### **Late/Activity Buses**

Late buses are available so that high school, middle school, and intermediate school students can stay after school for extra help or for after-school clubs or activities. These buses are available Tuesday thru Thursday. There are no late buses on Mondays and Fridays. These buses bring students to their neighborhood but do not offer the same close bus stop that the regular buses do. Please follow the link to the District website for late/activity bus routes. [www.somersschools.org](http://www.somersschools.org).

### **Conduct**

Student behavior at bus stops and on the bus is extremely important. ***The responsibility for the child(ren) rests with the parent until the student actually boards the bus and after the student gets off the bus on the return trip.***

The same type of conduct expected of the student while in the classroom is expected while waiting for and riding the school bus. Behavior that creates disorder on the bus can distract the driver and threaten the safety of all passengers. Misconduct on the bus may result in a discipline report to the building's assistant principal, dean of students and to the parent. Bus transportation is a privilege, not a right. Depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, bus privileges may be suspended after a single offense. A school bus suspension is not a suspension from school attendance and does not provide a legal excuse for non-attendance. If a student is suspended from the bus, parents would be expected to arrange alternative transportation. As bus safety is a primary concern, we request parental cooperation in assuring proper behavior on the buses.

### **The Role Of Parents/Guardians**

Parents/guardians are important to ensuring a smooth operation of the district's transportation system. When safety rules are ignored, people can get hurt. You can help to

promote and maintain safety in many different ways. These are just a few:

- Familiarize your child with his/her bus stop.
- Help teach your child the importance of proper behavior aboard the bus and at the bus stop.
- Go over the rules and responsibilities of riding the bus with your child.
- Be sure your child knows the rules and understands the consequences of not following them.
- Ensure that your child is at the bus stop 10 minutes early in the morning.
- Work on reducing the number of loose items your child brings on the bus.
- Instruct your child not to get off the bus unless it is their stop. If the driver misses their stop, the child should notify the driver and they will be returned to their designated bus stop as soon as possible. This also applies if the child is on the wrong bus.

**Please be aware that parents are responsible for their child/ children's safety to and from the bus stop.**

### **Safe School Bus Riding Tips for Students**

The bus driver is in charge of the bus. Please follow the driver's instructions.

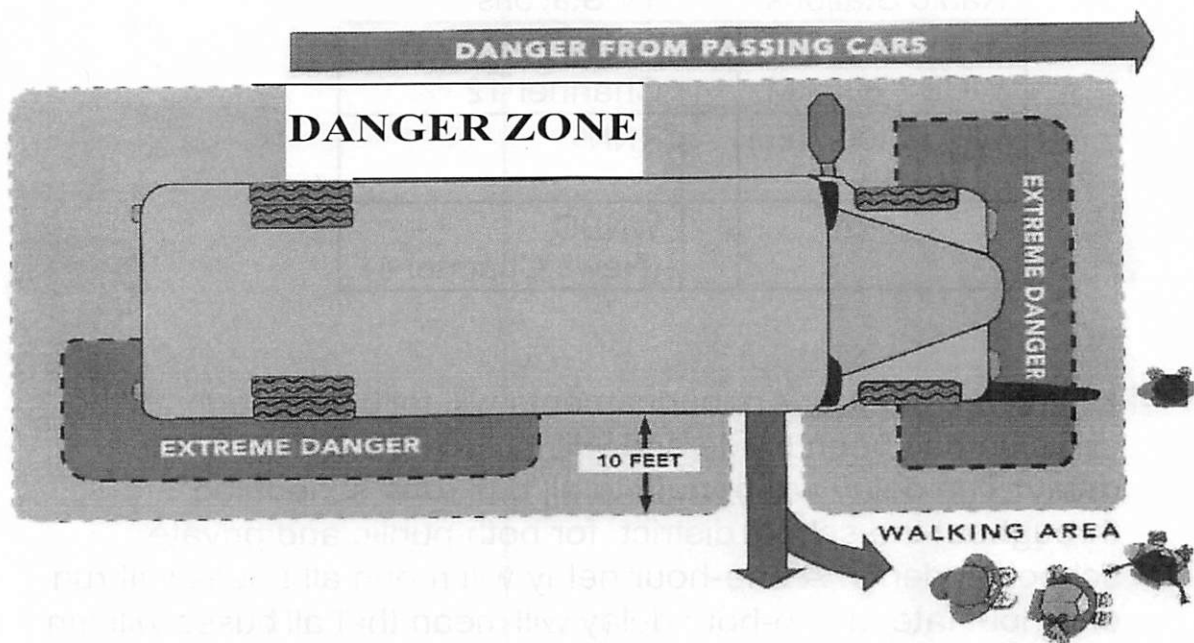
- Arrive at the bus stop 10 minutes ahead of time.
- Take your seat promptly and remain seated until the bus stops.
- Observe the same conduct as in the classroom.
- Keep arms and head inside the bus at all times.
- Keep aisles clear at all times.
- Never throw anything out of the bus windows.
- Carry only baggage that can fit comfortably in your lap. Large and/or dangerous objects will not be allowed on

the bus. This also includes instruments that cannot fit safely on your lap.

- The bus driver is authorized to assign seats.
- When leaving the bus, be alert to traffic. If you are not crossing the street, move away from the bus quickly and do not return to pick up a dropped item until the bus has pulled away.
- When crossing the street, walk forward of the bus far enough (10ft.) to see the driver's face. Wait for the bus driver's signal to cross and then cross in front of the bus.

### School Bus Danger Zones

Here is a "birds-eye" view of the bus. See the danger zone all around the bus? If you can touch the bus, you are too close!



Most injuries and deaths involving school buses occur outside the bus. Even though there are mirrors, the driver cannot see people close to the bus. Always stay out of the school bus danger zones. Students should line up when they see the bus approaching. And, stand back at least ten feet to give the bus room to pull over.

## **Additional Information**

**Private and Parochial Transportation:** Requests must be made in writing by April 1 for the following school year or within 30 days of arrival in the district. Submit your written request on the appropriate form to Somers Central School District, Transportation Department, P.O Box 620, Lindolndale, New York 10540. This form can be found on the district website ([www.somersschools.org](http://www.somersschools.org)) under the transportation link

**School Closings:** Announcements will be made on the following radio and cable TV stations as soon as possible after the decision to close, has been made. This announcement will also be posted on the District's web site.

Radio Stations		TV Stations
WCBS 880AM		Channel 12
WHUD 100.7 FM		RNN
		WNBC (News Channel 4)

**Delayed Opening:** Announcements will follow as soon as the decision has been made and will include the length of the delay. The delay will pertain to all bus runs scheduled throughout the school district, for both public and private school students. A one-hour delay will mean all buses will run one hour late, a two-hour delay will mean that all buses will run two hours late and a three-hour delay will mean all buses will run three hours late, respectively.

When inclement weather forces a change in the normal schedule, decisions concerning the operation of the schools may go through multiple stages; a one-hour delay, a two-hour delay, a three-hour delay or a closing. It is essential to listen to the radio, watch cable TV or visit the District's website for accurate information. When delays are announced, parents



should continue to listen to determine whether future adjustments are made. On a given day it may be necessary to change to an additional delay or closing.

Dismissals on days of a delayed opening will be at the regular time, unless announced otherwise.

**Early Dismissals**: Announcements of such a dismissal will be made as early as possible over the radio, cable TV and posted on the District's website ([www.somersschools.org](http://www.somersschools.org)). The early dismissal sequence is:

Somers High School	10:30
Primrose Elementary	11:00
Somers Middle School	11:30
Somers Intermediate	12:00

**Parents should make arrangements and instruct their children as to what to do in the event they are returned home early from school.**

Announcements concerning any changes in the normal starting or dismissal procedure will be made via the following:

Radio Stations		TV Stations
WCBS 880AM		Channel 12
WHUD 100.7 FM		RNN
		WNBC (News Channel 4)

**Special Situations**: If your child is not going to utilize bus transportation on a regular basis, please notify the Transportation Department at 914-277-3180.

**Questions regarding buses that have not arrived or missed pick up**: If your child does not get off the school bus at the expected time and place, please call the bus company at **243-3032 or 243-3052**.

**Missing parent:** Occasionally, the parent or usual caregiver of a Primrose student is not present at a bus stop to receive the child at dismissal time. Such children will not be released from the bus. Additionally, an SIS child fearful of getting off the bus in the absence of a parent will, likewise, be kept on the bus pending resolution of the problem. If a parent cannot be located quickly, the child will be returned to school where the building administration will assume responsibility for contacting the parent. Parents who have been unable to meet their child as usual are advised to contact the bus company or the main office of their child's school.

**Vandalism:** Any costs resulting from student vandalism to buses will be charged to the child's parents.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

Q. *My bus is late, what should I do?*

A. There are times when your school bus may arrive later than the scheduled pick-up/drop-off time. This, most assuredly, occurs at the beginning of the school year. Some reasons for inconsistent times are road detours, traffic, inclement weather, discipline problems and mechanical difficulties. If your bus does not arrive within 15 minutes of your scheduled time, contact the Royal Coach Bus Company at 243-3032 and 243-3052 and they will advise you of the status of the bus.

Q. *What should I do if my child misses the school bus in the morning?*

A. If your child misses the bus because of an error on our part, please call the Royal Coach Bus Company and explain the situation to the dispatcher. We will do everything possible to get your child to school. If your child misses the bus because he/she was not at the bus stop on time, you will be responsible for transporting your

child to school. **Please do not follow the bus and attempt to get the bus to pull over while it is on its route. This is extremely unsafe.**

Q. *Is there a different bus driver for my bus today?*

A. If your bus driver is absent, there will be a substitute driver to drive your child's bus route.

Q. *What is the transportation policy regarding children let off at the bus stop without a parent or guardian present?*

A. **Students attending the Primrose Elementary School, grades K - 2, will not be let off the bus unless a parent/guardian or designated adult is at the bus stop to meet them.** Your child will be returned to Primrose if a parent/guardian is not at the bus stop to receive them. You will be responsible for picking up your child from Primrose. Please be sure again, that an adult is at the bus stop to accept a Primrose child. Drivers are not permitted to dismiss Primrose Children from the bus unless an adult is in the immediate, safe proximity of the bus stop.

Q. *Who is allowed to ride the school bus during the bus route?*

A. For the safety of students and the bus driver, only students assigned to the bus route, those students with special permission or school personnel are allowed on the bus. **Parents/guardians are not allowed to board the bus.**

Q. *Do I have to stop for a stopped school bus with red lights flashing on school grounds?*

A. YES!! The most dangerous violation of passing a stopped school bus occurs on school grounds while parents/guardians are picking up or dropping off children. NYS Law states that you must come to a complete stop when approaching a stopped school bus with its red lights flashing. This includes when on school property.