

Readington Township Transportation

Parent Handbook



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Safety

1. The safety of our students is the primary concern of Readington Twp. B.O.E. Safety concerns are inherent in, and the reason for most of the guidelines set forth in this policy.
2. All students will participate in the school bus safety drills twice during the school year. New students will be shown bus safety evacuation procedures. (NJAC 6:21 -11.4)
3. New Jersey State Law states that all school buses shall be equipped with seatbelts. Students riding buses equipped with seatbelts shall keep their seatbelts fastened for the duration of the bus ride. Students who fail to comply shall be subject to disciplinary measures. (NJAC 6:21 -6B.30) However if charter buses are used for a class trip please see below:

a federal regulation mandated that all new motorcoaches manufactured on or after November 28, 2016, must be equipped with lap and shoulder seat belts for every seat. Buses built before this date may or may not have them.
4. All school vehicles must be serviced according to a maintenance schedule and inspected bi -annually by the NJ Division of Motor Vehicles Department School Bus unit. This shall be implemented by the Transportation Coordinator.
5. Due to severe restrictions to visibility for the school bus drivers and safety concerns, our bus driver s are instructed not to back up or pick up in driveways, dead-end streets, or cul -de-sacs, unless absolutely unavoidable.
6. Parents/Guardians whose children are participating in class trips or athletic trips should notify or remind the teacher/coach about any medical conditions that could be affected by a long bus ride.
7. Backpacks having long strings and/or multiple ornaments are discouraged. The strings and/or ornaments may get caught in seatbelts, fans and handrails creating a safety hazard for the students.
8. Oversized school projects, balloons and/or large musical instruments or oversized sports equipment should be transported by parents/guardians.
9. If you miss the bus at your stop, go to a stop towards the end of the bus route.

DO NOT LET YOUR CHILD OFF BEHIND THE BUS.

10. Students who are temporarily utilizing a wheel chair, crutches or other mobility devices must be transported by a parents/guardian. This ensures the safety of the student during loading, unloading and emergency situations, as standard bus equipment and procedures may not adequately support temporary medical accommodations. For parents who have a legitimate reason for being unable to transport a child during the temporary use of a wheel chair or crutches, the Transportation Office recommends discussing this situation with the Transportation Director and your child's building principal to explore possible options.

BUS ROUTES/BUS STOPS

1. General Information

Bus routes and designated stops to be assigned annually by the Transportation Coordinator in conjunction with school administrators. There is to be no deviation from these routes and or stops unless authorized by the Transportation Coordinator EXCEPT for the immediate safety of the students due to extreme weather conditions or road obstruction.

A district bus driver may not transport any unauthorized person in any school vehicle. A student is authorized to ride his/her assigned bus and is assigned one AM and one PM bus stop.

Requests to have students ride home on another bus will be honored for EMERGENCY PURPOSES only. A note must be sent from both the sending and receiving parent to your perspective school office and approved through the Transportation Department. Alternate transportation will not be arranged for social purposes.

Resident - side bus stops will be assigned to certain roads due to either traffic or road conditions.

Students in Grade Pre-k through Grade 3 will not be dropped off alone at a bus stop without the presence of a responsible person. If a responsible person is not present, students will then be transported to the Board of Education and arrangements will be made for the student(s) to be picked up at the Board of Education by the parent/guardian.

It is essential that a responsible adult be present at the designated bus stop at the assigned time each day. This ensures the safety and supervision of all young riders and supports timely transportation operations. In the event a child is returned to the Board of Education offices on more than three occasions due to the absence of a responsible adult at the bus stop, transportation privileges may be suspended for a designated period of time as determined by the Transportation Director in consultation with the building principal/director.

2. Start of School

Bus stops are assigned based on the student's home address on record at their school. Each student shall be notified of his/her bus number, bus stop location and estimated times of pick-up and drop-off through Genesis by the end of August. Parents/guardians need to submit bus changes, including childcare within the district, to the school office no later August 15. If approved by this date, the change shall be implemented for the start of school. If changes are received after this date, those changes would not be implemented until the third week of September.

3. Requesting a Bus Stop Change :

A student is assigned one AM and one PM bus stop five days a week for the length of the school year. Parents/guardians of students in grades Pre -k – 8, will be entitled to request a change of the designated address for the bus pick-up and drop-off of the students for child care needs. The designated address must be within the designated enrollment area for their assigned school. The designated pick-up address may vary from the drop-off address for childcare purposes only. Pick-up and drop-off addresses cannot vary on a day-to-day basis. Transportation is only provided for stops located within the designated school enrollment area.

If a parent/guardian needs to change his/her students' childcare address or other permanent during the school year, you may use the form available on the parent portal. The request shall be considered and the determination will be made contingent upon availability of a route, seating capacity in the school bus (exclusive of projected growth seats) and safety conditions in general. A request for a bus stop change must be submitted, in writing, at least five working days prior to the effective date. Requests for bus stops to vary on a day to day basis will not be approved.

If for any reason the day care center is closed on a day when Readington Township Schools are open, it is the responsibility of the parent to continue to meet the bus at the day care facility, both AM and PM. Transportation changes will not be made on a daily basis.

4. Kindergarten Student :

Parents/guardians shall provide adult supervision at the bus stop for students waiting for the bus pick up in the morning and drop off in the afternoon.

5. Student Pick Ups:

Parents/guardians shall have the students ready and at their stop 10 minutes prior to the estimated pick-up time. Parents/guardians shall meet the vehicle at drop-off time. The driver shall wait 1 minute for the parent/guardian at the bus stop before returning the student to the Board Office. Arrangements must be made for the student to be picked up at the Board of Education. No student will be released without an adult present at the stop.

All bus stops will be curbside. School vehicles do not enter driveways .

Driver Qualifications

1. All school bus drivers are required to possess a valid commercial driver's license and must meet all federal, state and local legal requirements, including criminal background checks and required drug and alcohol screening.
2. All bus drivers are required to complete in-service training each school year. Such training includes instruction in the administering of epi-pens, addressing requirements for special needs students and other safety and regulatory instructions as determined by state and district regulations. The Transportation Dept. also schedules regular safety and training meetings throughout the year to enhance professional standards for our district drivers.

Student Expectations

The following procedures have been designed to foster bus safety and to provide guidelines for appropriate student behavior.

At the bus stop students are expected to:

1. Be punctual (ten minutes before scheduled time) and wait quietly.
2. Avoid disturbing private property
3. Walk facing oncoming traffic or on the sidewalk, if available.
4. Wait on the residence side. Do not cross until the bus arrives.
5. Stay off the roadway while waiting for the bus.
6. Wait until the bus has come to a complete stop and the driver has given the

- signal before crossing the street when boarding or departing the bus.
7. Walk to the stopped bus in an orderly fashion board the bus.
 8. Walk away from the bus after unloading.
 9. Make a conscious effort to be seen by the bus driver as he/she approaches or leaves a designated stop.
 10. If crossing in front of the bus is necessary:
 - a) Walk away from the bus, and then take several steps forward.
 - b) Before starting to cross the road, stop in line with the left front corner of the bus to allow a clear view of traffic lanes to the rear of the bus.
 - c) Look left, right and left again and look to the driver for his/her signal.
 - d) Walk briskly across the street.

Student expectations on the bus :

- 1) The bus driver shall assign seats. Students must take their assigned seats and remain seated until the bus arrives at it's destination.
- 1) Seatbelts must be fastened.
- 2) Refrain from loud talking and other behavior which may distract the driver.
- 3) Students shall not deface the bus in any way and should report any damage to the bus promptly to the driver.
- 4) Students are expected to keep the bus clean.
- 5) Students shall ride only the bus to which they are assigned. Students shall board the bus and leave the bus only at their assigned stop.
- 6) Smoking, profanity , and violence are not permitted.
- 7) Students are expected to be courteous and show respect to the bus driver and their fellow passengers.

- 8) Students are expected to keep their entire body inside the bus at all times
- 9) No food or drink of any kind may be consumed on the bus

Disciplinary Measures

- 1. Satisfactory behavior is expected of students who ride the buses.
- 2. "The driver shall be in full charge of the school bus at all times and shall be responsible for maintaining order. A bus driver may not exclude a pupil from the bus, but if unable to manage a pupil, shall report the unmanageable pupil to the principal of the school he/she attends." (Title 18A:25 -2)

The bus driver will submit the infraction that occurred by written referral to the Transportation Coordinator/Dispatcher, who will review and forward to the school principal/disciplinarian.

- 3. "A pupil may be excluded from the bus for disciplinary reasons by the principal and his/her parent/guardian shall provide for his/her transportation to and from school during the period of such exclusion." (Title 18A:25 -2)

- 4. Students whose repeated actions have caused safety and welfare concerns on the bus are subject to disciplinary measures. Driver shall submit a written referral to the Transportation Coordinator/Dispatcher, who will forward to the school principal/disciplinarian. Depending on the severity of the behavior, the building Principal shall follow board procedures and provide for the student's discipline.

Bus Accidents

1. All students on a bus at the time of an accident will be taken immediately to the nearest hospital, should there be any indication that students require medical attention. At the hospital, an emergency room physician will examine the student before releasing them. The school will make every attempt to contact the parents/guardians of all students who were on the bus at the time of the accident. Parents/guardians may be asked to pick up their students. In the case of a morning accident, released students will be taken to their schools if not picked up by their parents/guardians. If the accident occurs in the afternoon, students who cannot be picked up by their parents/guardians will be delivered to their home by the Transportation Department as soon as the entire busload is examined and released.
2. An administrator will be at the hospital as soon as possible after the accident occurs and will remain until the students are either picked up by a parent/guardian or placed on a bus to be taken to school or home.
3. Under New Jersey's No -Fault Insurance Law, all medical expenses associated with a bus accident are to be submitted to the parent's personal auto insurance carrier. Coverage is provided under the No - Fault Insurance Law is subject to the terms and conditions of your particular policy. In the event that parents/guardians do not have auto insurance, the parents/guardians medical insurance will be responsible for the costs, subject to any deductible and coinsurance. The district does not provide additional coverage.

4. For any accident that occurs where it is deemed that transporting the students to the hospital is not necessary, a school nurse will be sent to the scene to examine students as well as the school principal.

5. We ask that students not use their cell phones to contact their parents at the time of the accident. Parents of the students onboard the bus at the time of the accident will be notified by the school and/or the transportation office. We understand your concern as the parent. We ask that you allow the school administrators and police to proceed with ensuring the safety of your children and wait until notified by the principal or transportation office. In order to ensure the safety of all students, please do not proceed to the scene. In the event a school bus is involved in an accident:

Courtesy Busing

Courtesy busing is defined as transporting students who live within a two -mile radius of their designated school. Courtesy busing is not funded by state aid. The cost is borne entirely by the district. The board recognized the necessity of providing courtesy busing for some students due to the rural nature of the district. The Board of Education shall determine when courtesy busing is to be utilized.

Parent Responsibility

It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to review this handbook with their students.

1. Help the driver maintain the schedule by making sure your child is at the bus stop 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick -up and drop -off time.
2. The driver is NOT permitted to stop at places other than approved regular stops.
3. Cooperate with the district in its attempts to limit the number of bus stops, particularly in more densely populated areas.
4. Assume responsibility for instructing your child(ren) to cooperate with school officials.
5. Keep in mind that the school cannot assume the responsibility for your child until he/she boards the bus. Parents/guardians are responsibly for their child's safety and behavior at the bus stop.

6. If the student walks to school, parents/guardians are responsible for their child until he/she enters the school property.
7. Insist on correct behavior from your child while waiting for and riding on the bus.
8. Support the school's safety program by cooperating with school officials when issuing disciplinary measures.

Parental Custodial Information

As stated on page 3, each student will be assigned one AM/PM bus stop. "Where a student's physical custody is shared on an equal time, alternating week/month or other similar basis such that the student is not living with one parent a majority of the school year, and where there is no court or written agreement between the parents designating the school district for school, attendance , the student's domicile is the present domicile of the parent with whom the student resides on the last school day prior to October 16 preceding the date of the of the application.

(N.J.A.C. 6A:22 -3.1 (ii))