Frequently Asked Questions for Hempfield Students

1. **How can I know my student's bus schedule?**
    a. There are two ways you can stay up to date on your student's bus schedule.
        i. Your student's schedule appears in the PowerSchool Parent Portal from either a desktop or laptop. It is not available currently through the PowerSchool app. The information in PowerSchool is always a day behind as it only updates once a day overnight. You can access the PowerSchool parent portal at the following address: https://powerschool.hempfieldsd.org/public/.
        ii. The best way to get transportation information is through the Stopfinder App.
            1. Once we set up your student to receive transportation, the Primary Contact will receive an email invitation for the Stopfinder App.
            2. Once the Primary Contact (PC) has activated their account and downloaded the app, the PC can share access to the app with other parents, grandparents, caretakers, or the student.
            3. Be sure to set up a GeoAlert for each of your student's trips so you can see the bus's GPS.
            4. You will always be able to see your student's current bus schedule in the app.
            5. You can message Transportation through the app.
            6. Notifications for late buses are done through the app.
            7. Information with Stopfinder always shows the most current schedule for your student.
            8. If you need another invitation sent to you, please email transportation@hempfieldsd.org.
2. **If a bus is running late, when and how am I notified?**
    a. We make notifications if a bus is more than 15 minutes late.
    b. When a bus is more than 15 minutes late, we send a Stopfinder Alert and a robocall to the student's Primary Contact in PowerSchool.
    c. You can always see the bus's GPS in the Stopfinder app during your student's trip times.
3. **My child left an item (e.g., coat) on the bus. How do I get it back?**
    a. Please call Student Transportation of America (STA) directly to make arrangements to get the item back at 717-459-3803.
4. **Are there School Bus Safety rules that I should make sure my students know before they ride the bus?**
    a. Yes, please review the Hempfield Bus Safety Rules on our website; https://www.hempfieldsd.org/transportation.
5. **I have moved, how do I get the bus stop location changed for my students?**
    a. Please contact Student Services at 717-459-9009 and complete the Change of Address process. The forms can be found at https://www.hempfieldsd.org/studentservices.
    b. Once Student Services has updated your address in PowerSchool, we import that new information daily. When we import the change, we will email you the new plan and its start date.
6. **Is it permissible for my child to wait inside the house until the bus arrives?**

a. No. Please be sure your child is waiting at the curb 5 minutes before the scheduled time. Students should not wait inside their front door until the bus arrives. Buses will not return to your stop if your child is not outside.

7. **I think my child's bus is overcrowded, what do I do?**
    a. You can contact the Transportation office at transportation@hempfieldsd.org.
    b. We will investigate the vehicle capacity, the number of students assigned, the driver's monthly reported student totals, and bus video confirmation, and make any necessary adjustments.
    c. We do plan for Elementary students to sit three to a seat.
    d. We do plan that some Middle School students can still sit three to a seat.
    e. We do plan for High School students to only be two per seat.
8. **How far can a student walk to school or the bus stop?**
    a. An elementary student can be asked to walk one and a half miles to the bus stop or school. A secondary student can be asked to walk two miles to the bus stop or school. This distance does not include the distance walked on private driveways or private roads. (PA School Code of 1949 24 PS 13-1362)
9. **Are sidewalks required for a student's walking path to a bus stop to be safe?**
    a. No (PA Code Title 67 Chapter 447)
10. **Are streetlights required for a student's walking path to a bus stop to be safe?**
    a. No (PA Code Title 67 Chapter 447)
11. **What makes a walking path to a bus stop legally hazardous?**
    a. The following study must demonstrate the path is hazardous according to the PA Code Title 67 Chapter 447 criteria and receive the local PennDOT Engineering Group approval; https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Forms/TE-111.pdf
12. **Can students be asked to cross the street to get on the bus?**
    a. Yes, in the morning, students should wait on their side of the street until the bus stops, activates its lights, and traffic stops. Then cross 10 feet in front of the bus to board. In the afternoon, the driver should let the students off the bus only after traffic has stopped. Upon exiting the bus, the student should immediately cross the street 10 feet in front of the bus. https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/penndot/documents/public/dvspubsforms/bdl/bdl-school-bus-protected/pub117.pdf
13. **Can a student be asked to walk to a bus stop on a roadway that has been deemed hazardous by the local PennDOT Engineering Group?**
    a. Yes, a student can be asked to walk up to 500' to a bus stop on a walking path that has been deemed hazardous. (PA Code Title 67 Chapter 447:3)
14. **If a bus is stopped and has its red lights activated, should I stop my vehicle?**
    a. The only case where someone does not have to stop for a bus's red lights is in the case of a barrier-divided highway. In our area, examples would be routes 30 and 283. (Pa Title 75 Section 3345.0 & 3345.1) We do not have bus stops on our local highways.
    b. In summary, if you see a school bus stopped with its red lights activated, please STOP!
    c. If convicted, a motorist receives a 60-day driver's license suspension, 5 points on their driving record, and a $250 fine for violating a school bus's reds.
    d. The district does actively share videos and information with the police to follow up on red-light violators.

15. **How far from the bus should a vehicle stop when approaching a school bus that has its red lights activated?**
    a. 10 feet - https://www.penndot.pa.gov/TravelInPA/Safety/TrafficSafetyAndDriverTopics/Documents/PUB-741_6-13_1Up_schoolbus.pdf
16. **Can my student bring their musical instrument or sports equipment on the bus?**
    a. "Keep the aisle clear at all times. Books, lunch boxes, instruments, and book bags must be placed under the seat or held on the student's lap. DO NOT BLOCK THE AISLE!" (PA School Bus Manual page B-5; https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/dvspubsforms/BDL/BDL%20School%20Bus%20protected/SB%20Manual/SB%20Manual/English/PUB%20117.pdf)
17. **Can my student get a bus pass to use a friend's bus stop?**
    a. No, we only issue bus passes on an Emergency Exception basis. The form for an Emergency Exception can be found on our website; https://www.hempfieldsd.org/transportation.
    b. If there is a severe bus accident where EMS is involved, we want to ensure your student is accounted for and safe.
    c. We want to be able to ensure there is room for your student since most buses are near capacity.
18. **The bus passes my house, can the bus just stop at my house since it passes it anyway? The bus stops at the stop sign anyway, can my student just get on at the stop sign closest to my house?**
    a. A student can be asked to walk one and a half miles to a bus stop. This distance does not include the distance walked on private driveways or private roads. (PA School Code of 1949 24 PS 13-1362)
    b. We cannot stop at every student's house the bus passes or cannot have a designated bus stop at every stop sign. For Elementary students, we do make stops closer to student homes. For Middle School and High School students, bus stop locations are farther from the home and likely only one stop per neighborhood. Older students can safely walk farther to bus stops. The more bus stops are made per bus, the longer students must be on the bus. We want every student to have the safest and shortest ride on a bus possible.
19. **I need my student to be bused to and/or from a caretaker, how do I set this up?**
    a. We only bus to Alternate Care locations within your student's attendance area.
    b. Please fill out and turn in the Alternate Care Form on our website; https://www.hempfieldsd.org/transportation.
20. **I am divorced and need bussing from/to both parents, how do I set this up?**
    a. Both parents must live within the district.
    b. There must be a Custody Agreement or a Custody Affidavit on file for each of your students with Student Services. If you do not have a legal Custody Agreement, then please complete a Custody Affidavit; https://www.hempfieldsd.org/studentservices.
    c. Please fill out and turn in the Dual Custody Form on our website; https://www.hempfieldsd.org/transportation.
21. **How do you become a School Bus Driver?**
    a. The district uses Student Transportation of America (STA) as our bus contractor.
    b. Please call STA directly for the hiring process to become a School Bus Driver – 717-459-3803.
22. **What are the clearances, credentials, and licensing requirements for a school bus driver?**
    a. You must be at least 18 years of age or older.

b. You must obtain a School Bus Driver's Physical Examination Form (DL-704) from your prospective employer.
c. Upon passing the physical examination, you will need to submit Form DL-704, Form DL-31CD (PDF), "Application for Commercial Learner's Permit" and the appropriate fee to PennDOT.
d. You will be required to pass a vision screening and Knowledge Test, including (but not limited to) the Commercial General Knowledge Test, Passenger Endorsement, School Bus Endorsement, and Air Brakes, if applicable.
e. You will be required to complete a minimum of 20 hours of school bus-specific instruction, which includes at least 14 hours of classroom training and at least 6 hours of in-bus training.
f. You will be required to pass a Road Test consisting of a pre-trip inspection, performance of basic maneuvers, and an on-road driving test. You will also be required to execute a simulated student discharge and a simulated or actual railroad crossing.
g. To maintain a school bus endorsement, every four years, a school bus driver must:
    i. Complete a minimum of 10 hours of refresher training, which includes at least 7 hours of classroom training and at least 3 hours of in-bus training.
    ii. Pass the School Bus Knowledge Test.
    iii. Pass a Road Test on a school bus.
h. These rules can be found at https://www.dmv.pa.gov/Driver-Services/School-Bus-Drivers/Pages/How-to-become-a-school-bus-driver-in-pa.aspx#:~:text=You%20will%20be%20required%20to,and%20Air%20Brakes%2C%20if%20applicable.
i. Before becoming a school bus driver, you must also pass and be trained in the below Pennsylvania Acts.
    i. ACT 34 PA State Police Criminal Record Check
    ii. ACT 151 Child Abuse History Clearance
    iii. ACT 114 FBI Fingerprint Report
    iv. ACT 24 PDE Form 6004, Arrest/Conviction Report & Certification Form
    v. ACT 126 Mandatory Training for Child Abuse Recognition & Reporting
    vi. ACT 71 Section 1526 & 1527, Suicide Awareness and Child Exploitation
    vii. ACT 168 Sexual Misconduct/Abuse Disclosure Release

23. Are school districts required to transport students?

a. All students? No
b. The district is required to transport Special Education students, charter students, foster students, and McKinney Vento students.
c. If the district does choose to provide transportation for its students, it then is required to transport Non-Public students to any school within 10 miles of the district's borders.

24. My student's bus ride is too long, what is the legal limit on how long a bus ride can be?

a. There is no legal limit specifying the maximum amount of time the student can be on the bus one way or in total. (https://www.education.pa.gov/Teachers%20-%20Administrators/Pupil%20Transportation/Pages/Pupil-Transportation-FAQs.aspx)

25. Can a fee be charged to pupils to ride a school vehicle?

a. No. Section 1361 of the School Code states that when a school district provides transportation to its students, it is to be free and paid for by school district funds. Additionally, Section 1365 prohibits districts from demanding, requesting, or accepting compensation for transporting students.

26. Who makes the decisions on inclement weather days?

a. The Superintendent

27. Are there assigned seats on the school bus?

a. Yes, and the Bus Driver or the Principal may change those seats at any time.

28. May a parent get on a school bus?

a. The only time a parent is permitted to get on a school bus is when they are assisting their Special Education student to attach seating or vest attachments.

b. On all other occasions Pennsylvania legislature passed a Bill in 2001 with the following provisions:

i. "Any person who shall enter a public-school bus or public-school activity bus after being forbidden to do so by the authorized school bus driver in charge thereof, or the school principal to whom the public-school bus or public-school activity bus is assigned shall be guilty of a class one misdemeanor. Any person who shall unlawfully and willfully stop, impede, delay, or detain any public-school bus or public-school activity bus being operated for public school purposes shall be guilty of a class one misdemeanor."

29. Can school buses drive on uncommitted (unfinished) roads or private roads?

a. No, servicing Special Education students would be the exception.

30. My child cannot enter or exit the bus due to an injury. What can I do?

a. Please contact the Transportation Department at transportation@hempfieldsd.org providing a doctor's note with a timeline and restrictions for alternate transportation to be arranged.

31. Can my Kindergarten student receive transportation both ways?

a. Only if your student is assigned to a full-day kindergarten class. The midday time frame is the responsibility of the parent to transport.

32. I can't see my child while walking to the bus stop. Can the bus stop be moved closer to my house?

a. Bus stops are not changed for this reason. Pennsylvania School Law permits a student walking distance of up to 1.5 miles.

33. What happens if my student misbehaves on the bus?

a. Student behavior concerns are managed by your school Principal.

b. Riding the bus is a privilege and that privilege can be suspended or revoked if one student is putting the safety of others at risk.

34. What happens if the bus driver misbehaves?

a. Please contact the Transportation Office with specific and detailed concerns at transportation@hempfieldsd.org.

b. We do have GPS and video with audio on each vehicle. Please interview your student for as many specifics as possible and report it to Transportation as soon as possible. Students often remember landmarks more easily than knowing the time. What were you passing at the time? Where were you nearby?

c. School Bus Drivers are not District employees. The investigation and follow-up with the Bus Company and the driver are confidential.

35. Will my child have the same bus driver every day?

a. Usually, the same driver will drive the morning and afternoon runs. However, there will be times when a substitute driver is on the bus and occasions when there is a different morning and afternoon driver. Also, driver trainees may ride along to learn the route.

36. My child is the only student at the stop this year, so why can't the stop be moved to my house?

a. If your student is the only student daily at the bus stop, you can feel free to reach out to Transportation at Transportation@hempfieldsd.org. We can reach out to the other families to see if their students can be removed from the roster. If we can remove them from the roster, we will gladly move the stop location.

37. My child has an appointment, can I pick them up at an early stop so I can get to the appointment on time?

a. No, your student may only get on or off at their designated stop.

38. My child's bus has broken down or has been in an accident and I can see where it is on the app, can I go and get them off the bus?

a. No, your student may only get on or off at their designated stop.

39. Why don't buses have seat belts?

a. Buses are constructed for the safe transportation of children. The seating is compartmentalized and padded to provide a seated child with a safe area in the event of an impact. The height of the vehicle places the seating above impact zones providing extra safety for the riders. School buses are 10 times more likely to catch fire than roll over thus causing a greater safety concern for all. Most routes have one adult and one seat belt cutter. Trying to remove 48 – 72 seat belts from small children in a rather short period is a situation that would not be one that any of us would like to be in.

b. Minibuses and vans do have seat belts. If the vehicles do have seat belts, the students are expected to wear them.

40. I can't find a place to park at my student's bus stop, can the bus stop be moved?

a. No, we do not move bus stop locations for this reason. Please consider alternative ways to get to and wait at the bus stop.