

WEST ORANGE BOARD OF EDUCATION

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & INFORMATION GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

For forty million students nationwide, the school day begins and ends with a trip on a school bus. School bus transportation has the reputation of being the safest means of ground transportation. The Board of Education and the staff of West Orange are very aware of and fully support safe school bus transportation for our children. These rules are applied daily to and from school.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to clarify for parents and students their responsibilities and rules in contributing to the safety and efficiency of all students. Please review the following bus behavior and safety rules with your student(s). Parents play a tremendous role in preparing their child for his/her school day. This information also applies to transportation used during field and athletic trips.

If you have any further questions, please call the Transportation Department at **973-669-5357**.

BUS SAFETY REGULATIONS

The school bus is an extension of the classroom, and students should conduct themselves in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior and safety. Students must:

1. **Be at their assigned bus stop at least ten (10) minutes before the bus's scheduled arrival time.** Due to a local noise ordinance, the bus driver will **NOT** honk their horn upon arrival. During inclement weather, please allow vehicles extra time to reach pickup points.
2. **Observe property rights.** Respect citizens whose homes are in the vicinity of bus stops by not defacing, littering, or trespassing on their property.
3. **Wait safely.** Wait on the sidewalk or the edge of the lane—a safe distance from the bus—until it comes to a full stop.
4. **Never walk behind the bus.** Walk at least three giant steps from the side of the bus. If something is dropped near or under the bus, tell the bus driver immediately. Never try to pick it up yourself, as the driver may not be able to see you.
5. **Cross safely in front of the bus.** Cross the roadway in front of the stopped bus only after the driver verifies that warning lamps are operating and signals that conditions are safe to cross. Walk on the sidewalk or along the side of the road to a point at least five giant steps (10 feet) ahead of the bus before crossing. The driver must always be able to see the student, and the student must always be able to see the driver. Cross in single file.
6. **Board orderly.** When boarding, use the handrails to avoid falls. Board without pushing or crowding and be seated quickly. The driver will assign seats.
7. **Use appropriate noise levels.** Talk in conversational tones; do not become boisterous or loud.
8. **Remain seated while moving.** Keep all items—including book bags, instruments, and hands—in your assigned seat area. Students are allowed only one seat. Items too large to

be held on a lap or in a seat area are not allowed on the bus and must be transported by a parent.

9. **Wear seatbelts at all times.** State law requires seatbelts to be worn at all times. Failure to do so can result in immediate loss of bus privileges.
10. **Follow window rules.** Do not open or close windows without the permission of the bus driver. Windows are not to be opened more than halfway.
11. **Keep inside the bus.** Keep arms, hands, and other body parts inside the bus. Throwing any objects inside or out of the school bus windows is grounds for immediate suspension of bus privileges.
12. **Maintain appropriate conduct.** Inappropriate behavior—including fighting, profanity, threats, weapons, laser pointers, drugs, and smoking—will result in suspension of bus privileges.
13. **Absolutely eating or drinking.** Food, snacks, and gum are prohibited on the bus.
14. **Avoid cell phone use.** The use of cell phones is prohibited. No calls, texting, or video recording while riding the bus.
15. **Respect bus equipment.** Do not tamper with any parts of the bus or equipment. If equipment (such as seats, windows, or seatbelts) is damaged, the cost of repair will be charged to the student assigned to that seat and may result in suspension of bus privileges.
16. **Keep the bus clean.** Deposit trash and waste paper in the waste container at the front of the bus.
17. **Avoid dangling items.** Avoid large key chains or dangling objects on belongings or clothing, as these can pose a hazard when boarding and departing.
18. **Follow emergency procedures.** In the event of an emergency, remain quietly seated and await instructions from the driver. Students may be instructed to leave the bus and wait at a safe distance. Students are required to fully participate in bus evacuation drills, which occur twice a year.
19. **Cooperate with staff.** Cooperate with the driver and behave in a respectful manner at all times.
20. **Do not walk if you miss the bus.** For the safety of the students, if a student misses their bus, please do not have them walk to the Board Office, ESC, or West Orange Bus Garage. Parents must drive them to school.

VIOLATION PROCEDURES

In the event school bus rules and regulations are not observed, students will be subject to disciplinary actions.

- **Suspension of Privileges:** Students who present disciplinary problems on the school bus may have their riding privileges suspended. In such cases, parents become responsible for ensuring their children get to and from school safely.
- **School Regulations:** Individual schools may enforce additional bus regulations.
- **Vandalism:** DO NOT MARK, CUT, OR SCRATCH ANY PART OF THE BUS. Vandalism repair costs will be billed to the person responsible.
- **Personal Electronics:** Do not use cell phones, iPods, or other electronic devices. The

district is not responsible for damaged or lost equipment.

- **Video Surveillance:** Video cameras are in use on all buses. Recordings may be viewed by the Transportation Director, Principals, and Administration personnel. Videos may also be viewed by Law Enforcement Agencies and are subject to release through a court-ordered subpoena.

BUS PASSES

Bus passes can be found in the **MY RIDE K-12 APP**. Do not call the transportation office unless your pass is not available in the My Ride K-12 App.

A pass will be available to all children who qualify for transportation. Under State Statute 18A:39-1 et seq., a student must live over two (2) miles from an elementary school and over 2.5 miles from a secondary school to qualify for transportation, or reside in an area designated as hazardous by West Orange Board of Education policy. An exception applies to children who qualify for Special Education Transportation.

When a student is eligible for a bus pass, processing takes three (3) to five (5) days from the time of registration. Once processed, the pass will be available in the **MY RIDE K-12 APP**. The transportation office cannot provide busing information directly over the phone. **Processing may take longer than three to five days under certain circumstances.**

BUS STOPS

Certain streets in West Orange have been designated as hazardous for children walking to school. Because of this, some children may be picked up closer to home than others. There is no fixed distance rule for bus stop placement, provided the stop complies with State Statute 18A:39-1 et seq. mileage parameters (including courtesy late buses, if provided).

Bus stops are subject to change throughout the year as route compositions shift. Even if a student was picked up at a specific stop or in front of their home in past years, that stop is not guaranteed to remain the same year-to-year.

Students transitioning from elementary to middle school will likely be placed on a new bus with a different stop. A student who walked to elementary school may qualify for transportation in middle school, whereas a student living within walking distance of middle school may not qualify until high school.

NO SPECIAL REQUESTS

No student will be issued a pass if they do not qualify for transportation according to State Statute or West Orange Board of Education policy.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

- **Transportation Office:** 973-669-5357 | **Fax:** 973-736-5673
- **In-District Transportation (Hunterdon ESC):** 973-324-1897 | **Fax:** 973-324-1856

Out-of-District Special Education Transportation Agencies:

- **Sussex County Regional Co-op:** 973-398-3583
- **Essex Regional Educational Services Commission (ESC):** 973-405-6262
- **Union County Educational Services Commission (ESC):** 908-233-9317

Bus safety always comes first.