



# Policy 810 – Transportation Administrative Guidelines

The purposes of the Transportation Policy and these Guidelines are to provide for the safe transportation of District students to and from school, to provide for the safe operation of all vehicles that transport District students to and from school and provide for the consistent application of the Transportation Policy and the Guidelines to all District students.

## **I. Transportation Service**

1. Except for kindergarten students, bus service will be provided for students to school from home and from school to home attending approved schools and/or programs that reside within the school district and are not residing in designated walking zones by the District Administration. (See **Appendix A**, which identifies the designated walking zones for each District school).
2. Hazardous walking conditions shall be determined by the transportation safety committee with input from the bus contractor(s). Where a disagreement exists as to the hazardous nature of the road or walking route, PennDOT will be requested to perform a study that will be considered in the District's final decision.
3. Bus routes will be established to function in a manner to provide for the child's safety and well being, while attempting to maintain the fiscal responsibility of the District and the efficiency and the practicality of the route established.
4. Upon request, students attending non-public schools, who are legal residents of the District and who provide written verification thereof, are eligible for transportation provided the school attended is within District boundaries or not in excess of ten (10) miles from said boundaries. The distance shall be determined by the most direct public roads and shall not include driveways or private roads.
5. Students who are residents of the District and who are required to attend special needs classes shall be eligible for transportation.
6. All students riding buses to and from school are expected to comply with the School Bus Rules and Regulations attached hereto as **Appendix B**, as well as comply with the District's Discipline Policies and the Student Code of Discipline. Policing of bus stops and supervision of students between their residence and the bus stops will be the responsibility of the parents and guardians.
7. Buses contracted in the District are equipped with video monitoring boxes. Video cameras, without audio, may be used periodically to monitor actions on the bus. Video utilization on buses will be governed by Policy 809: Transportation Video Monitoring.

## **II. Riding Time**

1. For students riding buses to and from District buildings in a defined attendance area, every effort will be made not to exceed sixty (60) minutes of actual riding time per route on normal condition days. Weather events and/or traffic congestion may also affect the routes on any given day.
2. For students riding buses to and from private, charter and special needs schools every effort will be made not to exceed sixty (60) minutes of actual riding time per route on normal condition days; however, actual riding time may exceed this limit depending on the location of the school in proximity to the child's residence and those requiring transportation services. Weather events and/or traffic congestion may also affect the routes on any given day.
3. Students are expected to be at their assigned bus stops five (5) minutes prior to the estimated time for the bus arrival.

## **III. Routes and Bus Stops**

1. The District will establish bus stops along the bus routes where it is most practical, safe and efficient.

2. Additional bus stops may be considered when the number of students at any one stop exceeds 15 students or the number creates a safety concern for the location of the bus stop.
3. No bus stops will be created for students to be dropped off at work locations after school.
4. Eligible morning session kindergarten students will be bused from home to school only. Eligible afternoon session kindergarten students will be bused from school to home only.
5. A student may be transported to and from a daycare provider, rather than his/her own home, but the student's daycare provider must reside within the same school attendance area in which the child is enrolled. The daycare provider must live on existing bus routes, because no stops will be established outside the attendance area or outside the District boundaries. Arrangements for stops at a daycare provider location shall be the same Monday through Friday. The District may assign children to different buses for the morning pick-up and the afternoon return trip, but will not assign more than one bus for each trip.
6. Buses generally will not enter unpaved streets, cul-de-sacs, private lanes or non-dedicated streets. The criteria upon which buses will enter unpaved streets, cul-de-sacs, private lanes or non-dedicated streets include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Hazardous conditions prevail at the entrance.
  - b. The number of students congregating, loading or unloading that could create a safety hazard.
  - c. The loading or unloading on a public road that would seriously disrupt traffic flow.
  - d. The ability of the school bus to safely enter, traverse and exit the development without having to back-up.
  - e. The unpaved streets, cul-de-sacs, private lanes or non-dedicated streets provides a better route for the bus to travel.
  - f. Unpaved streets, cul-de-sacs, private lanes or non-dedicated streets routing would benefit legitimate district needs or concerns.
  - g. Any other safety, operational or relevant consideration as determined by the District's Transportation Department (i.e. ongoing construction, narrow-width roads).

## **IV. Riding Buses, or Alternative Transportation, Other than as Assigned**

1. Changing of buses will be permitted only for reasons of urgency such as medical and family emergencies. Requests for such change must be directed to the building principal and approved. This provision is not for student non-emergency situations.
2. Students attending Private or Charter Schools may not have students from other school districts ride to school or home on buses provided by Downingtown Area School District.
3. Students may be assigned to a different bus and afternoon bus to accommodate custody/childcare arrangements, if recommended by the building principal.
  - a. Building principals will require a written request including a copy of the Custody Agreement for divorced parents and contact information for all who are legally responsible.
  - b. One alternate schedule/month; Bus schedule assignments will not be changed during the month except for provisions IV-1; and changes are limited to available seats.
  - c. Existing bus stops will be used whenever possible; the decision will be the sole discretion of the Supervisor of Transportation and building principal.

- d. Both parents residence and/or daycare provider must be in the same school attendance area.
- 4. The Safety and security of all district students is extremely important; Parents are required to communicate in writing specific alternate requests for student transportation on a month-by-month basis if changes are necessary in order to guarantee safe transport to and from school. Any change to the transportation plans communicated in writing to the principal will not be honored without the authorization of the building principal or his/her designee.
- 5. The Alternate Bus Assignment form (Appendix C) must be completed for all alternate bus service due to childcare arrangements.
- 6. Elementary students are not permitted to alter their assigned transportation unless written parent permission is presented specifying the date and method of the alternative transportation.
- 7. Secondary School students and their parents are encouraged to use their best discretion when determining whether to avail themselves of the transportation services provided by the District from school.

- 5. Follow all directions and guidance as instructed by the bus driver.

#### **X. Large and Dangerous Objects and/or Musical Instruments**

- 1. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation mandates in Title 67, Chapter 171, that the interior of a school bus must be free of objects, which could cause injury. Objects must be secured and the aisles and emergency exits cannot be blocked.
- 2. The following rules must be adhered to at all times:
  - a. No Items can be placed in the driver's compartment, doorway or aisle. These areas must be kept clear to exit in case of emergencies. Nor may items be placed under seats, as they can become projectiles upon impact.
  - b. Animals are not permitted on the bus, the exception being an assigned guide dog (not a guide dog in training).
  - c. Any types of plants or balloons.
  - d. Large musical instruments, school projects or sports equipment are not permitted on the bus unless they can be held on the student's lap.
- 3. Objects that endanger other students are strictly prohibited. Such objects include, but are not limited to, knives, cutting instruments, cutting tools, nunchakus, firearms, shotguns, rifles, any look-alike knives, matches, ice skates, glass objects, or material capable of inflicting serious bodily injury. Violation of this rule will result in immediate suspension of bus privileges and may result in other discipline as well.

#### **V. Transfers**

- 1. In general a student's transportation is via a single bus run; however exceptions do occur particularly with non-public, charter routes that may require a transfer.
- 2. Bus drivers or other District personnel will be assigned to supervise students at all bus transfer locations.

#### **VI. Principal's Responsibilities**

- 1. Ensure that staff members are assigned and on duty when buses are loading or unloading.
- 2. Keep accurate lists of student bus assignments.
- 3. Show support for the bus drivers and routinely check with them to see if problems exist.
- 4. Enforce and administer fair and consistent discipline for students reported for bus misconduct.
  - a. Disciplinary action, if required, should be implemented as soon as possible after the incident is reported.
  - b. If suspension of bus privileges is warranted, notify the Supervisor of Transportation as soon as possible.
- 5. In the event of problems, the Principal should deal directly with the Transportation Supervisor rather than the contractor.
- 6. During severe weather conditions, at the direction of the central office, principals are to remain in the building until all busses have reported that students from their buildings have been returned home safely. The contractor will be required to notify the Transportation Supervisor when all buses from each individual building have dropped off all of their student passengers. The Transportation Supervisor will then notify the principal of each building that they are free to leave the building

#### **XI. Request for Transportation Change**

- 1. A change to transportation related decisions will be processed through the following procedures:
  - a. All requests must be initiated in writing through the filing of a Parental Request For Change form to the Supervisor of Transportation (**Appendix E**).
  - b. All appeals must provide a description of the desired transportation change, reasons for the proposed change and requested timeline for the change (estimated normal timeline is two (2) weeks or more depending on the time of the year.)
  - c. Responses to all requests will be provided in writing.

#### **XII. Transportation Change Appeals**

- 1. It is recognized that from time to time some individuals will not agree with the outcome of a change request. Therefore, the appeals process will be as follows:
  - a. Within one (1) week of receiving a rejection notice related to a transportation change request, an individual may submit a written Appeal Request for review through the Supervisor of Transportation contesting the transportation decision. (**Appendix F**)
  - b. A transportation review panel consisting of a Board Member, the Supervisor of Transportation, the Chief Financial Officer, along with the appropriate contractor will review the appeal. Additional input, if necessary, maybe sought to render a final decision.
  - c. A final panel opinion will be mailed by regular U.S. Mail to the individual making the request no later than thirty days from the date the receipt was received.
- 2. Within one (1) week of receiving a rejection notice from the transportation review panel, an individual may submit a written request (**Appendix G**) for review by the Superintendent of schools / or his/her designee.
  - a. The Superintendent / or designee will review the findings of the review panel and render a final decision within two (2) weeks from date of receipt of the request.
  - b. Notice of the decision will be sent in writing by U.S. Mail to the appealing party within one (1) week of the decision.
  - c. The decision of the Superintendent / or designee shall be final.

#### **VII. Driver's Responsibility**

- 1. The bus is an extension of the classroom and the same rules apply.
- 2. The driver will report any discipline or safety problem to the building principal as soon as possible using the discipline report form.
- 3. Show respect for students.
- 4. Avoid shouting matches with students.
- 5. Assign students to seats when behavior warrants.

#### **VIII. Parent's Responsibility**

- 1. Make sure their child is at the assigned bus stop five (5) minutes before scheduled pickup times.
- 2. Assume responsibility for their child's conduct at the bus stop in the A.M. and P.M.
- 3. Parent concerns should be directed to the building principal, not the bus driver, or district personnel.

#### **VIX. Student's Responsibility**

- 1. Arrive at the bus stop five (5) minutes before the scheduled pickup time.
- 2. Exhibit orderly and appropriate behavior while at the bus stop and on the bus.
- 3. Respect the property adjacent to the bus stop.
- 4. Respect the safety and property of other students