

TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

1. Bus Route Schedules

Student Transportation of America (STA) is responsible for establishing all school bus routes and stops, subject to approval by the District. The following guidelines are used to determine bus routes:

- Safety for all students
- Nature of roads to be traveled
- Impact on established school attendance areas
- Use of turn-around areas to change the direction of vehicles which service bus routes
- Cost to the school district
- Conditions to be met when buses enter and/or leave roads to be served
- Time students board buses at designated stops
- Length of time students ride buses to and from school
- Maximum utilization concerning the transportation of district students
- State Regulations concerning the transportation of district students

2. Bus Safety Rules and Regulations

General Rules:

- Always follow driver's instructions.
- Always be courteous to fellow students.

Bus Stop

- Be at the stop 10 minutes early. Sitting in a car is not considered being at the stop.
- Be considerate of private property (no ball or game playing).
- Wait until bus comes to a complete stop. Never cross the street to a bus stop until the bus has put its red lights on and the crossing arm is extended.
- If you are late, never run after a moving bus (be 10 minutes early).
- Never chase after a bus to another bus stop in the car. You are not authorized to board the bus anywhere except at your assigned stop.
- Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children to and from the bus stop and while waiting at the bus stop.

Riding the Bus

- Keep your hands and head inside the bus at all times.
- Stay seated. Do not get up and move around.
- Do not throw anything out the windows.
- Share your seat.
- No smoking permitted.
- No eating or drinking is allowed as some students may have allergies and become ill.
- No shouting, yelling or loud music, as it is distracting to the driver and your safety.

Exiting the Bus

- Stay seated. until bus comes to a complete stop.
- Students may exit the bus only at their assigned bus stop.
- Stand a safe distance away from the bus after exiting.

- If crossing the street, always do so in front of the bus, beyond the crossing arm where the driver can see you at all times.

3. Bus Stop Assignments

East Penn School District transports over 9,500 students each day on approximately 129 buses to over 40 different district, non-public and charter schools. The district's transportation provider routes school buses in the most efficient manner consistent with State Law and School Board Policies and Guidelines regarding the establishment of safe school bus stops. Some of the factors in determining a bus stop are:

- Potential safety issues at waiting/loading locations
- Age of the students
- Student access to the bus stop
- Maintaining State mandated distances for activation of the school bus 8-way warning lights
- Visibility at the stop location for approaching motorists
- Because of the inherent danger in school buses backing up, routes and stop locations are established where possible to preclude the necessity of buses backing up
- Routes are designed to avoid buses traveling into areas terminating at cul-de-sacs or dead-end streets
- Buses will not be routed into developments where other vehicles or objects may block or create unsafe travel through the development
- The road is designated as "hazardous" by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
- On high speed and congested roadways, school bus stops create hazards for both students and the motoring public, so the transportation provider tries to keep the number of stops to a minimum

Definitions and Clarifications:

- **House Stops:** House Stops are not permitted except for students whose IEP's require one, validated medical reasons, or where Penn Dot has certified the road to be hazardous to walk or cross.
- **Hazardous Routes:** Only the PA Department of Transportation can certify a road as hazardous. Even if designated a hazardous road, the law permits students to walk up to 500 feet to reach a bus stop.
- **Distances from Bus Stop:** According to State law, and regardless of age, students can walk up to 1.5 miles to a bus stop.
- **Distances from School:** According to State law, secondary students can walk up to 2 miles to school and elementary students can walk up to 1.5 miles to school.
- **Length of Ride (Time on Bus):** There are no time limits set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education on the length of a bus ride. The district makes every effort to adhere to a limit of 60 minutes to transport within district boundaries. Any additional time spent on the bus due to transporting a student outside of district boundaries is considered allowable and may exceed 60 minutes..
- **Stop Locations:** Attempts are made to centrally locate all stops for the students assigned. Elementary stops may be within the neighborhoods. Middle school students are expected to walk farther, and high school stops are almost never in the neighborhoods, but out at main roads.
- **Mirror Stops:** When possible, all stops for private, public, parochial and charter school students should be at the same location.

Changes and Alternatives to Bus Stops

- All requests for changes to bus stops must be submitted in writing to the transportation provider for review and approval/denial by the transportation supervisor. School bus drivers are not permitted to change stop locations without written approval from the transportation supervisor.
- Students are permitted to have only one (1) AM bus stop and one (1) PM bus stop assignment subject to the exceptions discussed below which can be requested through the district's Director of Student Services on a case-by-case basis.
- EPSD recognizes families in the district are faced with work, childcare and custody constraints, and will consider written requests for an individual stop alternative for these reasons. Requests will only be granted under the exceptions discussed above and will be subject to the following limitations:
 - › No more than one alternative stop will be allowed.
 - › The schedule must be the same set schedule every week (no variations from week to week).
 - › Custody arrangements must be supported by a written custody agreement (copy provided to the school the child attends).
 - › There must be available capacity on the bus that the alternate request is being made.
 - › The alternate stop must be on an existing route. We will not alter the existing bus route to accommodate the request.

All requests for bus stop changes are made by calling the transportation provider and will be reviewed beginning in the third full week of school.

4. Carry-On Policy

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation mandates that the interior of a school bus must be free of any objects that could cause injury. All objects must be secured and the aisles, emergency exits and driver's compartment must be free and clear of any object.

The following rules must be adhered to at all times:

- Any object, in the opinion of the bus driver, that may endanger other students or limit driver visibility may not be permitted on the bus by the driver.
- Students may not bring skateboards or any live animals (including animals for class projects) on board the buses. Guide dogs or trained companion dogs are the only exception.
- Students may not bring an inflated balloon onto the bus.
- Students may not bring any suitcase, book bag, school class project or any other object unless it can be held on their lap or placed under the seat.
- Musical instruments may be brought on board if the instrument can be held on their lap. If it does not fit on their lap, provided there is room, a student may place the instrument on the seat or on the floor between themselves and the window.

5. Daily Bus Passes

Daily Bus Passes are available to parents if there is available capacity on the bus and the request is made in writing to the principal by 9:30 AM before or on the day of the request. These passes will only be approved for existing bus stops on existing routes. Parents should consider that daily bus passes

should not be made for items such as birthday parties, friends staying over, boyfriend/girlfriend riding home, etc. Telephone calls to the principal will be accepted in emergencies and will not be accepted in non-emergency situations.

6. Day Care Transportation

East Penn School District will transport a student to or from a day care facility or day care provider under the following rules:

- Transportation will be provided five (5) days a week to or from the same address in the morning and afternoon. The morning and afternoon addresses may be different, but the same set schedule must be followed every week.
- If the student is scheduled to attend the day care less than five (5) days per week, on the days the student is not to be picked up or dropped off at the day care provider or facility, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation to or from school.

To arrange for transportation to or from a day care facility or caregiver, the day care facility directly informs STA. Requests for a change in transportation will become effective only after adequate time has been given to make the changes and properly notify all persons concerned. Telephone requests for permanent changes will not be accepted. Notes requesting changes must be signed by parents. All requests shall be made to the school principal who will issue a temporary bus pass if approved.

7. Discipline Policy

The school bus is considered district property and all School Board Policies and Administrative Regulations are in force. The bus driver is responsible for all actions on the bus and may submit a Student Disciplinary form to the principal for corrective action. Misbehavior may result in bus suspension, in which case the parents/guardians are responsible for the student's transportation.

Students are to board the bus only at their designated bus stops approved by the District. Conduct of students at the bus stop is the responsibility of parents/guardians and the student may be subject to school disciplinary action. Any unauthorized entrance or attempted entrance onto a bus by any individual will be referred to local law enforcement.

8. Distances

Transportation services to and from school are provided for students in grades K-5 who live more than 0.75 miles from their school. Students in grades 6-12 are provided transportation if they live more than 1.5 miles from their school. In addition, transportation is provided to those students who live closer than the 0.75 and 1.5 miles stipulated above if they must walk along or cross a roadway that has been designated a hazardous walk zone or roadway by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

9. Drop-Off for Students in Grades K through Grade 1

Students in grades kindergarten through first will not be left off the bus in the afternoon unless an adult/older sibling is present at the bus stop. Parents may waive this requirement and have their child dropped off without an adult/older sibling present by writing and submitting a letter to the district transportation provider. If there is no one at the stop to receive a child, the bus will continue on its route dropping off the remaining students. The bus will return to the stop and if there still is no one there, the child will be returned to the home school.

10. Lost & Found

If a student has left something on the bus, STA should be contacted at 610-421-6039.

11. Non-Public Schools (PA School Code)

The Pennsylvania School Code requires school districts to transport their resident non-public students (who live more than the 1.5 and 2.0 miles from their school) to their schools of their choice that are within 10 miles of the school district's boundary provided that the schools are accredited by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and are recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a non-profit school with a 501(c) certificate.

East Penn School District will not transport non-district residents.

East Penn School District is required by law to provide transportation in accordance with the officially adopted school calendar of all non-public and charter schools regardless whether or not East Penn School District is open or closed. The only exceptions are New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day and Christmas. In addition, each non-public and charter school is allowed to choose five (5) "local" holidays. These generally are Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving and Good Friday. Each non-public and charter school is notified by May of the dates East Penn School District will not provide transportation during the next school year.

The Pennsylvania School Code also requires school district to provide "like" services to non-public schools. Since East Penn School District currently has five (5) scheduled early dismissal days, it will honor and provide transportation to non-public schools on five (5) days. These days are chosen by the non-public or charter school prior to the start of the school year. All early dismissals on the official calendar of special education schools are required by law to be honored.

East Penn's scheduled early dismissal times are 11:00 AM for secondary schools and 1:00 PM for elementary schools.

12. Special Education Placements:

Student with Individualized Education Plans (:IE's), who are placed in schools outside of the district, are provided transportation to those schools regardless of school boundaries or distance.

