

# 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 school bus safety drills (NJAC 6:21-11.4) during the months of October and April. New students will be shown bus safety evacuation procedures.
3. New Jersey State Law states that all new buses shall be equipped with seatbelts (NJAC 6:21-6B.30). 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.
4. All school vehicles must be serviced according to a maintenance schedule and inspected bi-annually by the New Jersey Division of Motor Vehicle Department. This shall be implemented by the Transportation Supervisor.
5. Due to severe restrictions to visibility for the school bus driver and inherent safety concerns, **the school buses do not back up, pick up in driveways, dead-end streets, or cul-de-sacs.** (Unless it is absolutely necessary to do so).
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 and/or large musical instruments should be transported by parents/guardians. In the case of an emergency evacuation, large objects could hamper the safety of students evacuating the school bus.

## **BUS ROUTES/BUS STOPS**

### **1. General Information:**

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

Any driver-initiated route deviation shall be reported immediately to the Transportation Supervisor.

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 a student ride home with a friend on another bus will be honored for**

**EMERGENCY PURPOSES only. A note must be sent from both the sending and receiving parent on the given day.**

Resident-side bus stops are assigned to certain roads due to traffic or road conditions.

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

**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 by mail by the end of August. Parents/guardians need to submit bus changes, including childcare within the district, to the school office no later than the end of the third week of August. If approved by this date, the change shall be implemented for the start of school. If changes are received after the immediate start up of school, 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 per week for the length of the school year. Parents/guardians of students in grades pre-K – 8, including those who would normally walk to school, 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 sending district of 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.

If a parent/guardian needs to change his/her student's bus stop during the school year due to childcare address change or other permanent change, contact the school for a change form. If approved, the school shall direct the request to the Transportation Supervisor for review. 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. Special Needs Students:**

Parents/guardians shall have students with special needs ready ten minutes prior to the estimated pick-up time. If a student is not ready, the driver will wait two minutes and continue to school. Parents/guardians shall meet the vehicle at drop-off time. The driver shall wait 2 minutes for parents/guardians at the bus stop before returning the student to school. Arrangements must be made for the student to be picked up at the school. No student will be released without an adult present at the bus stop.

In the AM, the parent/guardian will be responsible to bring student on the vehicle and secure the student in his/her seat belt and/or specialized equipment. In the PM, parent/guardian will be

responsible to unfasten student and escort the student from the vehicle. **All bus stops will be curbside. School vehicles do not enter driveways.** The parent/guardian is to provide the student's school with current home phone number and emergency contact information.

### **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.
2. All bus drivers are required to complete in-service training each school year. Such training includes addressing requirements for special needs students and other safety and regulatory instructions as determined by state and district regulations.

### **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 resident 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 a signal before crossing the street when approaching or leaving the bus.
7. Walk to the stopped bus in an orderly fashion to board.
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) Look to the bus driver for a signal to proceed before crossing.
  - c) 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.
  - d) Look left, right and left again, and look to the driver for his/her direction before continuing to cross the road.
  - e) Walk briskly across the road.

#### **On The Bus**

1. The bus driver shall assign seats. Students **must** take their assigned seats and remain seated until the bus arrives at its destination.
2. Seatbelts must be fastened.
3. No food or drinks of any kind may be consumed on the bus.

4. Students are expected to keep their entire body inside the bus at all times.
5. Students are expected to refrain from loud talking and other behavior which may distract the driver.
6. Students shall not deface the bus in any way and should report any damage to the bus promptly to the driver.
7. Students are expected to keep the bus clean.
8. 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.
9. No smoking, no profanity, no violence, no lasers.
10. Students are expected to be courteous to the bus driver and their fellow passengers.

### **DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

1. Satisfactory behavior is expected of students who ride 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 Supervisor, 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 parent/guardian shall provide for his 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. Drivers shall submit a written referral to the Transportation Supervisor, who will review and forward to the school principal/disciplinarian. Depending on the severity of the behavior, the Building Principal shall take the necessary measures.

### **BUS ACCIDENTS**

In the event a school bus is involved in an accident:

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 students 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 school 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/guardian's personal auto insurance carrier. Coverage is provided under the "Extended Medical Expenses Benefit" provision with a usual limit of \$10,000. The bills are not subject to a deductible. 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 out to the scene to examine the students as well as the school Principal.
5. Parents of students onboard the bus at the time of the accident will be notified by the school and transportation offices and advised as to next steps. Parents should not proceed to the scene of the 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 recognizes 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 RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

1. Help the driver maintain the schedule by making sure your child is at the bus stop ten minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time.
2. Refrain from asking the driver to stop at places other than approved regular stops.
3. Cooperate with the district in its attempt 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. Accompany young children to the bus stop each morning and meet the bus each afternoon.
6. Keep in mind that the school cannot assume responsibility for your child until he/she boards the bus. Parents/guardians are responsible for their child's safety and behavior at the bus stop.
7. If the student walks to school, parents/guardians are responsible for their child until he/she enters school property.
8. Insist on correct behavior from your child while waiting for and riding on the bus.
9. Support the school's safety program by cooperating with school officials when issuing disciplinary measures.

### **CUSTODIAL ISSUES**

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 for a majority of the school year, and where there is no court order 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 resided on the last school day prior to October 16 preceding the date of the application."

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