

8600 PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

The Hopewell Valley Regional Board of Education, while cognizant of the fact that bus transportation of pupils is necessary when safety and/or distance preclude them from walking to school, also expresses its belief that walking is desirable and healthy and pupils should be encouraged to walk to school whenever possible.

Eligibility for Transportation

The school district shall provide transportation in accordance with law for:

1. Pupils who live remote from the schoolhouse as defined by New Jersey law;
2. Educationally handicapped pupils in accordance with their IEP;
3. Eligible nonpublic school pupils and eligible pupils attending charter schools;
4. Pupils whose route to the school is deemed hazardous by the Board;
5. Pupils participating in Board-approved extracurricular activities or field trips; and
6. Other pupils as permitted by law.

The transportation provided pursuant to 4., 5., and 6. above are discretionary, and when provided, are subject to the availability of funds for this purpose.

Remote from the Schoolhouse: Defined in New Jersey Administrative Code 6A: 27 1.2 defines "remote from school" as elementary (preschool through grade eight) pupils who live more than two miles from their school and secondary pupils (grades nine-twelve) who live more than two and one-half miles from their school. Measurements shall be made along public roads or public walkways from the entrance of the pupil's residence nearest the entrance to the school.

Non-mandated, Hazardous Routes: The Board of Education will publish on the district website a list of streets or parts of streets that are deemed to be hazardous based upon consideration of the following factors:

1. Population density;
2. Traffic volume;

3. Vehicle velocity;
4. Absence of adequate shoulder and/or off-road walking space;
5. Roads and highways that are winding or have blind curves;
6. Topographical conditions of drop off sites;
7. Bridges or overpasses that must be crossed to reach the school;
8. Train tracks or trestles that must be crossed to reach the school; and
9. Busy roads or highways that must be crossed to reach the school.

The hazardous route factors for a particular route will be evaluated independently by the Director of Transportation and the School Business Administrator with the assistance of representatives from the local police departments as needed.

Pupil Pedestrian Safety

The safety of pupils on the streets of our community is the responsibility of the local governing bodies, including during those times that pupils are on their way to and from regular bus stops and at times during which school transportation is not provided. The school district will work cooperatively with each local governing body in seeking a safe and efficient solution to safety related demands for non mandatory transportation.

Parental Responsibility

Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are responsible for providing transportation to and from classes and events conducted at the schools for which transportation is not furnished by the school district. Each Building Principal shall advise the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of enrolled pupils who do not receive school district transportation of building regulations relating to dropping off and picking up pupils for regular classes.

The school district may elect to provide courtesy busing for a fee for pupils who live within statutory limits or in other discretionary situations. The charge shall include, but not be limited to the cost of fuel, driver salaries and insurance. The school district may choose to subsidize the cost of non-mandated, hazardous busing based upon availability of funds.

Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are responsible for the safety of their child/children walking to and from the assigned bus stop and while waiting at the bus stop.

Development of Bus Routes

The Superintendent shall oversee the development of bus routes to provide safe, economical, and reasonably expeditious transportation. The criteria to be used in designing routes and assigning pupils to them shall include:

1. The distance to be traveled to and from school;
2. The age and state of health of the children to be transported;
3. The requirements of the instructional program;
4. The hazards involved on the route to be traveled.
5. State requirements and guidelines.
6. In the case of discretionary routes, the number of pupils served, the impact of providing transportation on the educational program, and the availability of resources.

In the interest of pupil safety, the Board of Education as a rule will not establish bus routes that require school vehicles to make "U" or "K" turns or enter cul-de-sacs except in circumstances where logistics require. The Superintendent may by regulation establish more detailed criteria by which bus stops are located and/or moved, and by which parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may request changes in such locations.

Non-conforming Pupil Transportation Arrangements

Circumstances and conditions under which the district will permit a transported pupil to be released at a location other than the normal residential stop, shall conform to the following:

1. A pupil may be permitted to travel with a friend on another bus on an occasional basis, but only if such privilege is requested in writing by a parent(s) or legal guardian(s) at least twenty-four hours in advance, granted by the Building Principal, in consultation with the Director of Transportation, and subject to the availability of seating.
2. A pupil may be picked up or released at a licensed day care center, but only if such daycare center is located within the attendance zone within which the pupil resides, is safely accessible to the school bus, and funds are available for such purposes. The school district shall not provide transportation to/from daycare centers outside the pupil's residential attendance zone.

3. A pupil may be picked up and/or dropped off from an established bus stop other than the pupil's normal bus stop, but only if such change is for a minimum period of five school days and is subject to the availability of seating. This privilege must be requested in writing by a parent(s) or legal guardian(s) at least twenty four hours in advance and approved by the Building Principal in consultation with the Director of Transportation.

Student Conduct

All pupils riding on district buses shall be required to observe the district's bus conduct policy and administrative regulations or risk loss of the privilege of such transportation.

Bus Safety

Buses, whether contracted or district-owned, shall be kept in optimum condition and shall conform to all State safety regulations. Bids for all contracted routes shall conform to State prescribed specifications and shall assure appropriate qualitative control over contracted drivers and equipment.

Bus routes must be acted upon by the Board and submitted to the county office.

N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1 et seq.

N.J.S.A. 27:15-16

N.J.S.A. 39:3B-1 et seq.

N.J.A.C. 6A:27-1.1 et seq.; 6A:27-2.1 et seq.; 6A:27-3.1