

EASTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

Parent Handbook and Bus Rules



Parents and Guardians:

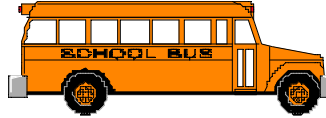
Please discuss these bus passenger rules and procedures with your child. Your child should appreciate the important part he/she plays in accomplishing SAFE and EFFICIENT district transportation.

Your child should understand that riding a school bus is a privilege conditioned on appropriate, safe, respectful behavior. Unruly conduct on the bus is a very real risk to the safe operation of a school bus.

Your cooperation in communicating this very important message would be most appreciated.

Thomas H. Evans, Superintendent of Schools

Richard Seigfried, School Board President



Bus Service Eligibility:

Bus service is required for elementary age students (grades K-4) and for Middle school students (grades 5-6) residing one and one-half miles or more from school. Service is required for Secondary Middle school students (grades 7-8) and for High school students (grades 9-12) residing up to two miles or more from the school.

The required walking distance to a school bus stop is not to exceed one and one-half miles for all grade levels.

Exceptions are made only when hazardous walking conditions exist as defined by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania pupil transportation codes.

In order to change their normal bus and/or stop on a day-to-day basis, students must present written permission by their parent/guardian to the principal's office and obtain a pass from the school office to present to the bus driver.



Enroute to Bus Stop:

Parents/guardians are encouraged to review their child's walking route to the bus stop, advising about safety concerns.



Be Prompt:

Arrive at the assigned bus stop approximately five (5) minutes prior to the bus scheduled arrival time. For safety, once bus doors are closed, drivers will not stop for late arriving students.



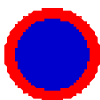
At the Bus Stop:

While waiting at the bus stop, students are expected to stand a safe distance from the street and avoid activities that could injure themselves or others. Students are expected to respect the property of others. When the bus approaches, students must observe the instructions of the driver. This is particularly important in the winter months when slick road conditions exist.



Boarding/Departing Bus:

Students must wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before approaching. It may be necessary to cross the road to board/depart the bus. Students are expected to observe the driver's instruction and always cross in front of the bus with the aid of the flashing stop sign lights and crossing arm.



Items Not Allowed on the Bus:

For reasons of safety and health and in order to comply with state law and district policies, the following items are **not** allowed on a school bus:

1. Glass objects; bottles, jars, etc.
2. Open containers of food, drink, gum.
3. Inflated balloons.
4. Live animals, bugs, and worms.
5. Plants, dirt, or other growing projects.
6. Oversized objects and instruments; those items that cannot fit safely in the seat with the student.
7. Weapons; guns, knives, razor blades, etc. (real or toy).
8. Sports equipment which could endanger others; like javelins, pole vaults or shot puts.
9. Skate boards and baseball bats.
10. Any item which cannot be transported easily or which creates a safety concern.
11. Distractive electronic devices or trading cards.

Please arrange for your own transportation if any of the above needs to go to or from school.

Driver Authority:

The driver has full authority over the passengers on the bus. Seating assignments may be necessary to assure passenger safety. If a student demonstrates inappropriate behavior, the parent will be contacted to assist the student to modify the behavior of concern.

Student Conduct:

Being transported on an Easton Area School District vehicle is a *privilege, not a right*. The District must assure that proper conduct is maintained in all vehicles for the health, safety, and welfare of the students. The responsibility for the proper conduct on the bus rests with the parents and students. Responsibility for the administration of the procedures listed below rests with the building principal to which the students are assigned. The driver is in complete charge of the bus. Students who risk the safety of others by their misbehavior may lose the privilege of riding the bus. Safe, respectful conduct is expected of all passengers to insure safety. Students being transported are expected to adhere to the following:

Code of Conduct and Safety:

Students will -

- Arrive at the assigned bus stop approximately five (5) minutes prior to pick-up.
- Wait to board when the bus has come to a complete stop.
- Board and depart the bus in an orderly and safe manner --- single file.
- Ride only on the assigned bus --- boarding and departing at the designated stop.
- Maintain safe conditions within the bus at all time.
- Not extend hands, arms, etc. or objects out of the windows or door *or* throw objects from the bus.
- Use of obscene language is not permitted.
- Radios and other audio-visual equipment are not permitted on the bus.
- Musical instruments are not permitted on the bus unless they are carried in a case and can be held on the lap of the student.
- Eating or drinking is not permitted on the bus.
- Obey the school bus driver at all times. In case of emergency, remain seated in the bus unless directed to do otherwise by the driver or individual in authority.
- If a student damages seats or other parts of the bus, the student will be required to pay for its replacement.
- Students are to remain in their seats upon entering the bus until they are designated to depart by the bus driver.
- The District reserves the right to establish any other rules and regulations that protect the health, safety, and welfare of the students.

If a student violates any of the above rules/regulations and loses the bus privilege, the student or his/her parents/guardians will be responsible for transportation to and from school. Even though bus privileges are lost, the law still requires attendance at school per student attendance policy.

Unusual and extreme misbehavior may result in the formal charges being brought against the student relating to harassment, disorderly conduct, criminal mischief, and/or criminal trespass.

Certain activities may result in immediate suspension from bus riding privileges. These include but are not limited to:

- Fighting on the bus.
- Throwing objects in or out of the bus.
- Possession of dangerous weapons or articles.
- Destroying or defacing district or private property.
- Use of sparking devices
- Smoking, or use/possession of drugs, alcohol or any form of tobacco.
- Obscene gestures or profanity directed at the bus driver or others.
- Any part of the body extended outside of the bus.
- Assault on a bus driver will result in indefinite suspension and possible criminal charges.
- Pointing a laser pointer at a bus driver will result in suspension from the bus and possible criminal charges.

Student Discipline:

The district has adopted a progressive discipline policy, which emphasizes logical consequences for inappropriate behavior. The written tool for this is the “School Bus Conduct Report”. If warranted, your child will be issued a written notice for you to review and sign.

Camera boxes are mounted in district buses. Cameras are random and/or selectively rotated through the buses. Student behavior may be monitored or observed from the video system.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school any time they have concerns. If appropriate, a conference with other parties including the student and the driver may be arranged.

The District reserves the right to suspend transportation privileges for any student who demonstrates behavior unreasonably distracting to the driver, which may contribute to an unsafe operation.

Disciplinary Procedures:

When, in the opinion of the driver, a serious rule violation occurs, or when the driver’s efforts to deal with less severe violations are unsuccessful, or a pattern seems to have developed, a school bus incident report will be initiated. The intent is to maintain good

order and a safe environment for students riding buses to and from school or school-sponsored activities, as well as to notify parents of the misconduct of their children. The following are standard actions that will generally be applied uniformly in response to documented incidents.

Grades K – 12:

- 1st Offense – Driver gave verbal warning to student.
- 2nd Offense – Driver submits misconduct report to the building principal. Building principal gives verbal warning to student **OR** a letter of warning is sent to parent(s) that suspension will occur on the next offense and that suspension will be one to three days as determined by the building principal
- 3rd Offense – Third offense is suspension for one to three days.
- 4th Offense – Is suspension for five days.
- 5th Offense – Is suspension from bus until a meeting is arranged involving a building administrator, parent, and counselor. At the meeting, conditions will be established as to changing the behavior of the student while being transported. Also at that time, conditions will be established as to what will occur if another offense develops.
- 6th Offense – Could result in permanent suspension from being transported on a District vehicle.

The administration reserves the right, depending on the seriousness of the offense, to move to any step in above process (1-6).

Note:

Serious offenses, such as fighting, flagrant displays of disrespect toward a driver, or possession of drugs or alcohol will result in immediate loss of bus privileges for a minimum of five (5) school days. Assault on a bus driver will result in indefinite suspension of bus riding privileges and possible criminal charges.

Kindergarten Students:

For your information the following instruction have been give to School Bus Drivers with regard to students transported by District School Buses.

- Drivers are instructed to discharge students **only at designated bus stops.**
- It is expected that parents/guardian will meet the students at the bus stop and escort them home.
- Drivers are instructed that no student is to be left at the bus stop unless a parent/guardian is in attendance.
- If students are on the bus and are not met by a parent/guardian, the driver is instructed to return to the school with those students. **It now becomes the parent's/guardian's responsibility to pick up the student the school.**

- Parents/guardians are not to attempt to make special arrangements with the bus driver since drivers will be prohibited from doing so.
- Parents/guardians should be aware that the District's responsibility to the students for transportation purposes ends when the students are discharged at the bus stop and the parents/guardians take charge.

Please do not put your child in this situation. Your help and cooperation are needed.

Alternate Busing Information:

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires busing to be arranged to and from the student's residence to the student's school. However, the Easton Area School District recognizes it may become necessary to change busing to another address, (ex: sitter, daycare). The guidelines for alternate busing are as follows:

- The alternate address is within the sending area of the student's current school.
- There must be an existing stop the for alternate location. No new stop will be created for alternate busing.
- **All requests must be for five (5) days per week.**

If alternating busing is necessary and the above guidelines are met, the parent/guardian must complete the ALTERNATE BUSING REQUEST form for **each student** and submit form to the student's current school. Requests for one day or several days per week will **not** be approved. If alternate busing is approved, this busing request will be in effect until the student leaves the current school or until you complete a new busing request form. Because transporting your child involves the Transportation Office Personnel, School Principal, School, Office Personnel, Bus Drivers and the student's teacher please allow five (5) days for alternate busing to take effect.



Snow Days:

Detailed emergency snow route information is distributed at the school. Local radio and TV stations will provide up-to-date information each morning when the roads are slick and snowy.

Accidents/Breakdowns:

Bus drivers are thoroughly trained in defensive driving techniques and buses are carefully maintained. Yet, given the thousands of miles traveled annually, and breakdowns can happen. All the buses have two-way radios and help can be just minutes away. One of the most

important things to a bus driver in the event of an accident or breakdown is passenger cooperation.