

## SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION

### Organization

The responsibility for the transportation program is assigned to the Director of Support Services through the Superintendent.

### Eligibility

SC 1361 Transportation will be provided to and from school for elementary pupils residing one and one-half (1 ½) miles or more and secondary pupils residing two (2) or more miles by the nearest public highway from the school in which the pupils are lawfully enrolled, and to which transportation is lawfully authorized or road or traffic conditions constitute a hazard to the safety of the child when so certified by the Bureau of Traffic Safety, or when the health of a student mandates that transportation should be provided. Kindergarten pupils and exceptional children as defined by special education laws will be provided transportation based upon special needs of individual children. Bus transportation is a privilege not a right.

### Maximum Time On Bus

With the exception of field trips, extracurricular activity runs and runs to the Lehigh Career and Technical Institute, the following presents the district's goal with respect to the maximum time students should be required to be on a bus:

1. Elementary Runs – Fifty-five (55) minutes\*
2. Secondary Runs – Fifty (50) minutes\*

\*It should be understood that this goal may or may not be met due to circumstances beyond our control such as construction and/or emergency situations.

### Non-Assigned Bus Riders

Students who are not assigned to a particular bus shall not be permitted to ride on school buses. Adults, other than authorized administrators, teachers, teachers' aides, or approved school volunteers shall not be permitted to ride on school buses on regular routes.

Criteria For Establishment Of Bus Stops

For the safety of students already on the bus, as well as that of the traveling public, bus stops should be consolidated in order to reduce the hazards caused by frequent stops along a road or highway. In determining stops, consideration will be given to the effort of the stop on a safe, reasonable, and efficient route for the bus. Other agencies, particularly municipal governments, have a responsibility for requiring the installation of sidewalks, traffic lights, police and crossing guards as well as the maintenance of safe roadway conditions.

Concentrations of students and suitability of waiting and loading and unloading areas will be considered in determining stops.

1. Kindergarten Return – Bus Stops –

Kindergarten students will not be permitted to exit the bus at their stop unless a parent or other authorized individual is present to meet the child. For their safety, kindergarten students will be returned to the school and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted to pick up their child.

2. Hazardous Conditions –

The district may establish a stop at any location which in its judgment best ensures the health, safety, and welfare of those affected. Should a stop be located within the mileage limits established above, the district shall apply to the Bureau of Traffic Safety in the Department of Transportation for a hazardous route investigation.

The district may, at its discretion, deny a request for a hazardous area stop. Should any part differ with the district's decision, it may request the district to appeal to the Bureau of Traffic Safety for a route investigation. The request shall be in writing to the Director of Support Services. The bus stop(s) as originally established shall be continued until the hazardous route investigation is completed. Students in grades 7 through 12 are considered sufficiently mature so that regulations regarding hazardous routes generally will not apply to them.

3. Exception To Policy – Student Health –

Upon written request, the district may, at its discretion, establish a stop for a student whose health mandates that such a stop be provided. A physician's statement clearly indicating reason the child cannot walk to school or to bus stop shall accompany each request. These statements will be reviewed by the school physician.

4. Unimproved Or Private Roads –

Buses will not be required to traverse unimproved or private roads. Unimproved roads shall include all dirt roads.

### School Bus Schedule

The school bus schedule shall be prepared each year by the Director of Support Services or his/her designated representative and approved by the School Board.

Bus schedules which detail the bus stops, times, and a list of pupils being transported shall be located in each bus, the principal's office, the transportation office, and the district Administrative Office at all times.

There shall be strict adherence to the bus schedule on the part of drivers, parents/guardians, children and school authorities.

### Bus Assignments And Change Requests

Pupils eligible for bus transportation are given bus assignments by the Director of Support Services or his/her designated representative. Once assignments of busing are made, it is a violation for a pupil to ride a bus other than the one s/he has been assigned to.

Any request initiated by the parent or guardian for permanent changes and/or temporary changes in student transportation to and from a location such as home, childcare facilities and baby sitters must be made to the transportation office by letter of request, allowing for a three (3) day notice. All transportation arrangements in place at the end of the current school year will be carried over into the new school year unless the transportation office is notified with the exception of Y-care students.

The Board recognizes the constraints placed on working families, and to that end will consider written requests for a singular day care stop alternative where that stop is along an existing route within a building attendance area, and when that stop is established on a consistent basis from week to week throughout the school year. The parent/guardian must provide the transportation office with a schedule that does not vary from week to week.

#### 1. Permanent Changes –

The Director of Support Services or his/her designated representative shall have the authority to add or transfer a student to an existing stop/run, and to add/delete a stop/run. The communication for this authorization will be made to the following individuals before the change is initiated:

- a. Parent(s) or Legal Guardian(s) of the student(s) involved.
- b. Dispatcher/Bus Driver(s).
- c. Respective building principal.

2. Temporary Changes –

Emergency situations will be handled on a day-to-day basis. The Director of Support Services and the building principal are the only individuals authorized to make any bus changes. Therefore NO NOTES are to be given to the bus driver at any time as a way of communicating this emergency information to the school.

3. Activity Bus –

An activity bus shall leave the Middle School for students from both the High School and Middle School Monday through Friday on or about 3:00 p.m. when requested by the principal. This is the only bus available for transportation following an after-school activity. Students must get an Activity Bus Pass from the teacher who sponsored the activity/detention or from the administration. Students will not be allowed on the activity bus without this pass. **REGULAR BUS STUDENTS ONLY MAY RIDE THE ACTIVITY BUS.**

Separate activity buses will be scheduled for Slatington and Peters Elementary Schools as needed.

School Bus Discipline

1. Bus transportation to and from school is a privilege established by the taxpaying citizens of the Northern Lehigh School District for every student. Students may avail themselves of the opportunity to the transportation. However, it must be understood by both the students and their parents/guardians the responsibilities which this privilege carries.
2. Maintaining discipline on school buses is a community affair and needs the cooperation of all involved. Misconduct on school buses is dangerous and foolhardy as well as selfish and lacking self-discipline. The Northern Lehigh School District has set down regulations, and students who violate them may be denied bus service. The rules have one aim: safe transportation between school and home.
3. Students will conduct themselves while on the bus in a manner that will not distract the driver. A bus driver has many responsibilities, and all are important for the safety of the students.
4. The driver is in complete charge of the bus and the students. The driver has the authority when notified by the principal to refuse transportation to a student who has violated the rules, until the case is reviewed and acted upon by the administration of the school district. Any incident must be reported by the bus driver to the school administration within twenty-four (24) hours of the occurrence.

5. Bus Rules –

- a. All riders must board and leave their assigned bus at the designated stop. Questions concerning transportation should be directed to the principal or assistant principal. Any changes must be approved by the school administration. A signed note from a parent/guardian and approved by the principal's office must be presented to the driver to get off at another stop. This practice is limited to emergencies only.
- b. The bus driver has the authority to assign seats at his/her discretion.
- c. Students must remain seated, behave in an orderly manner, and respect the rights and property of fellow passengers.
- d. Littering, eating, drinking, smoking, fighting, and loud or profane language are prohibited on all bus runs.
- e. Students shall not block the aisle or emergency door with musical instruments, books, lunch boxes, gym bags, or other possessions.
- f. Students shall not extend arms or heads out of the windows or throw objects out of the bus.
- g. Radios, tape recorders, CD players, or other forms of distraction are prohibited.
- h. Students will be held responsible for damage to school property, including buses, and will be held liable for payment and/or further prosecution for any such action.
- i. A driver will not proceed until all students are seated or until students have reached safety after leaving the bus.

6. Bus Violations, Secondary/Elementary Students –

Refer to current Parent/Student handbooks.

Parental Requests For Transportation Changes

Any requests initiated by a parent or guardian for permanent changes and/or temporary changes in student transportation to and from locations such as home or child care facilities, must be made in writing and mailed or hand carried to:

Northern Lehigh School District  
Transportation Office  
1201 Shadow Oaks Lane  
Slatington, PA 18080

These requests should be submitted prior to the beginning of the new school year allowing for the required three (3) days notice. All transportation arrangements in place at the end of the prior year will be carried into the new school year unless the Transportation Office is notified.

All written requests that are submitted to the Transportation Office will receive a follow-up phone call to verify the request prior to the effective date(s).

Student transportation pick-up arrangements must remain the same for each day of the week (Monday through Friday). Parents/Guardians will have the option of having the school bus return their child to a different location from where s/he was picked up; however, this location must also remain consistent for each day of the week (Monday through Friday). Parents/Guardians will have the option of changing their son's/daughter's pick-up or return location a maximum of one (1) time per month. Any additional requests will be handled on an individual basis.

Emergency situations will be handled on a day-to-day basis. The Transportation Office or the building principal are the only individuals that are authorized to make any bus changes. Therefore, NO notes are to be given to bus drivers at any time as a way of communicating this emergency information to the school.

Baby sitting/child care facilities must be located within the attendance boundaries of the Northern Lehigh School District and must be located on an established route.

#### School Closing

The decision to cancel or delay school will be made by the Superintendent, or his/her designee, in consultation with members of the "Cancellation Team," which consists of the Director of Support Services and the bus contractor.

#### Student Safety

All vehicles used in the transportation of students shall meet or exceed the minimum requirements established by the state and federal government.

Subsection 1517(d) of the Public School Code of 1949 states that "All schools using or contracting for school buses for the transportation of school children shall conduct on school grounds two (2) emergency evacuation drills on buses during each school year, the first to be conducted during the first month of the new school term and the second during the month of March, and at such other times as the chief school administrator may require. Each such drill shall include the practice and instruction concerning the location, use and operation of emergency exit doors and fire extinguishers and the proper evacuation of buses in the event of fire or accidents."

Bus operators shall be provided with proper training and instructions to enable them to carry out the provisions of this subsection and may be required to attend classes and drills in connection therewith.

The administration shall develop a plan that is automatically implemented in case of an accident, especially one in which one or more students are injured seriously enough to require medical attention. The plan shall include procedures for alerting hospital emergency rooms, securing ambulances as quickly as possible, informing emergency squads, and police, and getting in touch with parents/guardians of the children involved. Emergency numbers are to be posted in buses.

Emergency Procedures For Student Trips

1. Person in Charge –
  - a. The faculty member present shall be the responsible person. Administrators are to designate the teacher in charge if more than one accompanies a trip.
  - b. Where no teacher is present, the bus driver shall be the responsible person unless another adult is designated by an appropriate administrator.
2. Notification –
  - a. If the emergency involves a vehicular breakdown, the Director of Support Services is to be contacted.
  - b. If the person above is not available contact:
    1. The Athletic director if the trip is for athletic purposes.
    2. The appropriate administrator for non-athletic trip.
3. Bus Load Limits –
  - a. It is illegal to either allow anyone to stand on a moving school bus or exceed the designated seating capacity. The seating capacity can be found on the Pennsylvania Police Inspection Sticker, on the right side of the windshield.
  - b. Arrangements should be made for substitute vehicles rather than exceed load limits.
4. Emergency Not Involving Vehicular Breakdown –
  - a. Student health and safety is top priority under any circumstances.
  - b. Contact the athletic director for athletic trips; and the appropriate administrator for all other trips.
  - c. Barring specific instructions from either of the above or if it is impossible to reach any of the contact persons, the person in charge is to use his/her best judgment keeping in mind the number one priority is student health and safety.