

**NORTHERN YORK COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

2019-2020
TRANSPORTATION
STUDENT HANDBOOK

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School Bus Safety

One of our most important goals as a school district is to transport our students to and from school safely. We are fortunate to have school bus drivers who take safety seriously. We need your help, however, to ensure that we have a successful school year with no accidents or close calls. Please share with your child the following safety tips:

While waiting for the bus:

- Stand in a safe place at least 10 feet from the road. Show your child the distance of 10 feet.
- NEVER stand on the road.
- Behave in a quiet and orderly manner. Playing (or roughhousing) around the bus stop could cause someone to be hurt.
- Please stay off private property. Do not damage or litter on private property.

While boarding the bus:

- Get on the bus in single file.
- Be polite to others.
- NEVER, NEVER cross behind the bus; this is a danger zone.
- Don't push or shove.
- Use the handrails.

While riding the bus:

- Obey your bus driver and bus rules. Rules are there to keep you safe.
- Sit quietly in your seat. Do not turn around or lay down in your seat.
- Speak quietly to others near you so you don't distract the driver.

Getting off the bus:

- Get off the bus in single file.
- Use the handrails.
- Look to the rear of the bus before you step off the bottom step as more and more motorists are passing stopped school buses on the right shoulder, where the door is.
- Don't push or shove.
- Take 10 giant steps away from the bus.
- Stay away from the bus as you head home.
- NEVER stop to pick up items that went under the bus; notify the driver. Never bend down near or under the bus.

If you have to cross the road:

- Make sure you can see the driver and the driver can see you.
- Look both ways before crossing to make sure all traffic has stopped.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR IS A CRITICAL FACTOR IN BUS SAFETY. Bus drivers must constantly be involved with their bus, road conditions, traffic, and students entering and exiting the bus. When a bus driver's attention is called from the road, even for a split second, the chance of an accident increases. The importance of proper conduct while waiting for, boarding, riding or disembarking from a bus cannot be over-emphasized. ANY BEHAVIOR THAT DISTRACTS THE BUS DRIVER INSTANTLY ENDANGERS ALL. In the interest of safety, parents are urged to make sure their students understand the necessity for strict compliance with all bus rules.

NORTHERN YORK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

TRANSPORTATION

BUS ASSIGNMENT

Students are assigned a bus to equalize the loading and to account for the pupils. Bus stops, and or pick-up/drop-off times, are subject to change, as needed.

Arrangements previously in effect for the preceding school year will be continued for your child the next school year, unless Transportation is notified in writing.

Student transportation arrangements must remain the same for each day of the week (Monday thru Friday). Students are permitted to be assigned one bus/stop for the morning pickup and a different bus/stop for the afternoon drop off, if needed. The bus assignment must be for the full week and can not be for individual days of the week, unless the parent/adult transports the off days.

If your student moves or changes daycare/sitter, please send new information using the required **Change of Information Form** you may obtain from District website, or at any school building office, so the busing information can be changed, bus driver notified and a bus pass issued. Please allow up to 5 days for the change to take place. If you move, please supply the building secretary with two proofs of residency. Once received, your child will receive a pass, and may start riding the new bus.

Students who miss the bus at their assigned stop may not be taken to another stop along the route that would require the student to walk from behind the bus, as the driver may not see the student, and the student could be struck by the bus wheels. If student misses the bus please take them to school.

In the interest of student safety, written permission from parent/guardian, and a bus pass from the building office, is necessary to temporarily change buses or to board or depart from the bus anywhere other than the student's assigned stop. Bus passes will be given for daycare changes, student moving, and emergency situations only.

Due to limited seating on some buses, students are not permitted to ride home with friends for the purpose of play, sleep over, sporting events, outside activities, school projects, etc. In those instances it is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation.

Parents/guardians are not permitted to use school buses as a means for their personal transport.

TIME SCHEDULE

Students are to be visible at the bus stop at least five (5) minutes before scheduled bus arrival. Students are not to wait inside the house or on their porch for the bus. This delays the bus from running on schedule for the other students.

Bus drivers are not required to stop if the student is not out. The bus driver will not stop if the student is not visible. **Students are to be at their assigned stop, ready to board, and visible to the bus driver.**

Bus stop times are approximate and may vary slightly due to traffic congestion, accidents, mechanical breakdown, weather or road conditions. Bus times are subject to change.

In the event that a bus should have a breakdown, we will still run the route no matter how late. This could be a delay in the run as much as a half hour or more, but we will do our best to stay on schedule.

STUDENT LOADING AND UNLOADING

Students who have their bus pass their stop twice, shall board or depart the bus door side for added protection.

Stops that are deemed dangerous for the student or bus load of students will be moved to a safer location. Parents will be responsible to get the student to the safer location.

Students are to wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the red flashing lights activated. Students that have to cross the road are to look, and listen, in both directions making certain all traffic has stopped before starting to cross.

Students should prepare to disembark the bus by having their belongings together before the bus reaches their stop. This helps keep the bus on schedule for the other students.

Students are not permitted to get off the bus any place other than their assigned stop, the only exception is when the student has a bus pass from the school office.

Once a student boards the bus in the afternoon, they may not depart the bus without authorization from the school office or administration office. Parents who are picking up their student for i.e. doctors appointment, please remind your student not to board the bus that afternoon. If your student forgets and boards the bus, you will need to go into the office and authorize the student to depart from the bus.

Parents are responsible for their student while waiting for the bus and after they depart the bus in the afternoon. With this in mind, parents are urged to be at their child's bus stop whenever possible, particularly when an elementary student must cross the road. Kindergarten students are not permitted to cross a road without adult supervision.

ASSIGNED SEATING

The driver or administrator will assign pupils a seat on the bus so students may enter and leave the bus with a minimum of disturbance to others.

Assigned seating is a requirement of the District Transportation Department. Assigned seats are helpful in controlling student behavior and are most helpful with loading and unloading students.

ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE BOUNDARIES

Students must attend the elementary school located within the boundaries of their residence. Transportation will be provided for students located within their residence attendance area.

If you wish to use babysitting/daycare outside of your boundaries, you may do so but you/daycare will be responsible for your child's transportation to their assigned school.

NON-RESIDENT STUDENTS

Only students who are residents of the Northern School District may ride the school bus.

KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE STUDENTS

Kindergarten students must have an adult with them at their bus stop for pick up and drop off.

Kindergarten students who must cross a roadway are to be accompanied by an adult to and from the bus door to help insure their safety, as these youngsters are easily distracted.

If an adult is not visible at the stop, the kindergarten student will be taken back to their school building where an adult will be notified to pick up the student.

First grade students...it is strongly suggested an adult be with a first grade student at the bus stop. If you do not wish to have an adult present with your child, please give a note to the bus driver stating your first grade student has permission to board/exit the bus without an adult present.

TOBACCO, E CIGARETTES, DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Tobacco, Electronic Cigarettes, drugs, and or alcohol on the school bus are strictly forbidden. Possession could result in immediate suspension, and where necessary, prosecution.

VIDEO/AUDIO CAMERAS

NYCSD Board Policy #810 provides authorization of the use of cameras on school buses, **including those that capture video and audio recordings**. These cameras monitor the behavior on the bus to ensure that the established bus safety and conduct rules are being followed. Video/Audio cameras will be randomly rotated among all regularly scheduled buses based upon the number of incidents of misconduct.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones are to be on **SILENT/VIBRATE** so not to disturb the bus driver and other students.

Students are responsible for their cell phone, including the content.

AUDIO EQUIPMENT AND HAND HELD DEVICES

iPod type music players with headsets are permitted to be used by the students as long as the volume is low, for the health of the student, and to avoid annoyance to others. Students who abuse this privilege will have the player taken and given to the principal.

Hand held gaming devices must be played on silent mode or headset so the noise cannot be heard.

Students assume the responsibility of the games, devices being lost, stolen or damaged.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

NORTHERN SCHOOL DISTRICT IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST OR STOLEN PROPERTY BROUGHT ON THE SCHOOL BUS.

STUDENTS WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Parents are to notify their student's building nurse of any medical condition that may require medication or special awareness of the teacher, office staff or bus driver. Example would be diabetics, seizure disorder, hemophilia, allergies, for example.

It is always helpful if the parent speaks directly with the bus driver of unusual medical conditions.

ATHLETIC/SPORTING EQUIPMENT

For the safety of all students, students are permitted to bring approved sporting equipment on the bus provided they can control the equipment on their lap or the space in front of them.

Students may not place sporting equipment under the seat or take up additional seat space.

Sporting equipment must be placed in a bag when transporting on the bus.

The following equipment is **NOT** permitted on the school bus; it is parent responsibility to transport:

Large Midfield Lacrosse Stick (the smaller Lacrosse stick is permitted but must be in the bag)

Goalie Equipment

Catcher Equipment

BAND AND ORCHESTRA INSTRUMENTS AND SCHOOL PROJECTS

For the safety of all, students may not bring large band instruments or school projects on the bus. Only instruments, and projects, that can be controlled by the student are permitted on the bus. The student must be able to contain the item on their lap or in front of them.

Students may not take up another seat for the instrument or project.

Parents are responsible to transport large items.

The following is a list of band instruments that ARE allowed to be carried on the school bus as long as the **student is capable of controlling the item on their lap or in front of them on the floor and no additional seat space is taken:**

Alto Saxophone

Clarinet

Viola

Flute

Oboe

Violin (1/2 size, 3/4 size and full size)

Trombone

Trumpet

Small Bell Kit (no drum)

Due to the size, the following is a list of band instruments **NOT** allowed on the bus under any circumstance, it is parent responsibility to transport:

Baritone

Guitar

Bell Kit with drum

Percussion Kit

Cello

Tenor Saxophone

Drum Kit

Tuba

French Horn

STUDENT DISCIPLINE ON SCHOOL BUSES

School laws of Pennsylvania provide for the transportation of children to and from school. Safety requires the school district to enforce the rules for proper school bus conduct. The school bus driver is authorized to enforce the rules of conduct that must be adhered to within the policies set forth by the district.

Misconduct will be reported immediately in writing to the school principal who will discuss the incident with the student and take appropriate action. Students could lose riding privileges.

If it is proven that your student vandalized any part of a school bus, charges for repair of the damage to the school bus will be submitted to parent for payment.

SCHOOL BUS RULES AND GUIDELINES

Good student behavior is a critical. When a driver's attention is called from the road, the chance of an accident increases. Maintaining good order on school buses requires the cooperation of everyone.

1. Prior to loading:

- a. Students should wait for the bus at a safe place, on the side of the street on which they live. Cross the street to enter the bus only when the bus is stopped and the red flashing signals are activated.
- c. Students must be at the bus stop at least 5 minutes prior to the time designated, and be ready to board with the least possible delay. The bus will not wait for students to return home for forgotten items.
- d. Respect the property rights of people who reside at or near the bus stop.
- e. Do not get into private vehicles with strangers.
- f. Students may board only assigned buses, and may board only at the bus stop they are assigned. **Boarding another bus requires a bus pass.**
- g. Act 65 prohibits anyone from boarding a school bus without proper authorization.
- h. Only students who are residents of Northern York School District may ride the bus.
- i. Students who miss the bus may not be taken to another stop along the route that would require the student to walk from behind the bus, as the driver may not see the student.

2. While on the bus: (THESE RULES ALSO APPLY TO FIELD TRIPS AND ATHLETIC TRIPS)

- a. Observe classroom conduct, and follow the bus driver's instructions. The bus driver has the same authority on the bus as a teacher has in the classroom. *Disrespect of the bus driver will be considered a severe violation.
- b. Do not distract the bus driver, they must concentrate on driving.
- c. Students may not block the aisle or emergency door with musical instruments, athletic equipment, lunch boxes, books or other possessions.
- d. Students are to be assigned a seat and stay in their assigned seat.
- e. For the safety of the student, students must remain seated while the bus is in motion or if the bus is delayed on the road.
- f. For safety, students must not extend arms, head or other items out of the bus windows.
- g. *Students must not damage or tamper with any parts of the bus or use the emergency door except in the case of an emergency.
- h. *Roughhousing, fighting, vulgarity, profanity, throwing items in the bus or other improper conduct is not permitted.
- i. *Students may not smoke or use tobacco products or E cigarettes while on the bus.
- j. To prevent choking, students may not eat, drink or chew gum while on the bus.
- k. For sanitary reasons, students may not spit inside the bus or out of the bus windows.
- l. Nothing is to be thrown on the inside or outside of the bus.
- m. **The following items are not permitted in any school vehicle:** weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, e cigarette, flammable liquids, matches/lighter, fireworks, firecrackers, smoke bombs, water pistols, spray bottles, pea shooters, sling shots, marbles, balloons, glass containers, skateboards, any objects considered harmful to others.
- n. **Pets or creatures may not ride on the school bus. The only exception is a "Service" dog.**
- o. Musical instruments, large duffle bags, class projects or other uncontrollable items may not be brought on the bus unless small enough for the student to control on their lap. Students may not take up additional space with their belongings.
- p. Students bringing small toys to school must keep them in their bookbag while on the bus. Balls, yo-yos, etc. could roll under driver's feet and/or pedals.

- q. Anything that has a strong odor is not to be opened/sprayed on the bus, as there may be students/bus driver who are strongly sensitive/allergic to these smells.
 - r. *Any conduct that endangers the safety of the other students, or driver, will be considered severe and could result in immediate loss of bus riding privileges.
 - s. Students may depart the bus only at their assigned stop, unless a bus pass is given.
- (*) Designates a severe violation

3. After Leaving the Bus:

- a. If you must cross the road, cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus, but only after looking to be sure no traffic is approaching from either direction. Always make sure approaching cars stop before crossing. **NEVER cross behind the bus.**
- b. Help look after the safety and comfort of younger children.
- c. Go directly to your school building in the morning and directly home in the afternoon.

RIDING THE SCHOOL BUS IS A PRIVILEGE....NOT A RIGHT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Why do I need to be at the bus stop early?

Bus drivers attempt to maintain a schedule; however, various conditions (weather, traffic, road repairs, equipment breakdown, etc.) may prevent a bus arriving at the exact minute. At times the driver may even run early due to other students not riding the bus that day. Students being ready to board the bus will help to maintain the schedule. Accidents could occur at school bus stops, as a result of children running to catch the bus. This practice can be very dangerous, as the bus driver may not see you running for the bus. Students, who miss the bus, may NOT be taken to another bus stop along the route that would require the student to walk behind the bus.

2. Why can't I wait inside my house or on my porch for the bus?

Students are to be at their assigned bus stop when waiting for the bus to help keep the bus on schedule. Taking the extra time to come out of your home and walk to the bus stop isn't fair to the students on the bus who do follow the rules, and wait for the bus at the bus stop. If everyone on the bus waited inside their home for the bus, the average bus would have to start a minimum of 30 minutes earlier everyday, just to arrive at school on time.

3. Why must I cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus and NEVER behind the bus?

Crossing the road too close to the bus puts the student in a blind spot for the driver. If you can't see the driver's face, the driver can't see you. Crossing behind the bus is very dangerous, and could result in the student slipping and falling under the bus wheels; the driver not being able to see them and the student being seriously injured or killed. If you miss the bus, students may not go to another bus stop that would require them to walk behind the bus. Never walk behind the bus, this is a danger zone.

4. Why do I have to look for traffic when crossing the road? Aren't cars to stop when the red lights on the bus flash?

It is law that all vehicles stop when they meet a school bus with flashing red lights. Not everyone obeys this law putting the student in jeopardy. It is urgent that any student who has to cross a road wait until the red flashing lights come on, and then look both ways to make sure all traffic has come to a complete stop.

5. Why can't I ride other buses?

To avoid overcrowding and to account for all students, you can only ride your assigned bus. Riding another bus (for emergency situations) requires a bus pass. This pass can be obtained from the school office with a parental note. You may not ride another bus for sleep over, play day, sporting events, etc.

6. Why can't I get off at a stop other than the one I'm assigned, it's the same bus?

Students may not get off the bus any place other than their assigned stop. This avoids problems for parents not knowing the whereabouts of their child. The only exception to this is when the student has a bus pass for the bus driver.

7. Why do I have to have an assigned seat?

The District Transportation Department requires that all students have an assigned seat. In case of an emergency, students can be accounted for faster. Having an assigned seat also speeds up loading, and unloading as students do not have to search for a seat.

8. Why do I have to leave my toys in my bookbag, why can't I play with them on the bus?

Toys, marbles, balls, etc. could roll to the front and under the gas or brake pedal causing an accident.

9. *Why can't I put my bookbag or other items in the aisle of the bus?*

The aisle of the bus must be clear at all times so the driver can see out the back lower window and students entering or exiting the bus do not trip over items. Blocking the aisle in the event of an emergency could delay a bus evacuation.

10. *Why can't I turn around in my seat on the bus? Why do I have to sit facing forward?*

The seats are designed to protect you in case of a sudden stop or bus accident. If you turn around or lay down on the seat, you could be hurt if the bus driver had to apply the brakes suddenly. Always sit 'back to back' and 'bottom to bottom'; take off your backpack and place in your lap.

11. *Why can't I walk around on the bus when it is moving?*

Students walking around could be thrown forward if the driver has to suddenly apply the brakes, causing the student injury. A student walking around in the bus and changing seats is not only dangerous for the student but is also a distraction to the driver.

12. *Why can't I put my head or hands outside of the bus window?*

School buses are taller and wider than a car, and at times may come close to trees, poles and signs. A student with a body part or object sticking out the window could be seriously injured.

13. *Why can't I be noisy and loud on the bus?*

Student behavior is a critical factor in bus safety. When a driver's attention is diverted from the road, even for a split second, the chance of an accident increases. Loud outbursts are very distracting to the bus driver. Students should use indoor voices. The school bus is not an extension of the playground.

14. *Why can't I have the volume on my music turned up really loud? I have on a headset.*

Even with a headset, others can hear music with the volume turned up to the maximum. This is not only a health hazard to the student wearing the headset, but is an annoyance to others. Students near you may talk louder trying to be heard over your music, increasing the noise level of the bus. This behavior is a distraction to the bus driver.

15. *Why can't I play with my hand held device with the volume?*

The audio on some of these hand held games/devices are quit annoying to others. Some students have learning disabilities that heighten the annoyance level when listening to some of those high pitched sounds, as well as a distraction to the bus driver. They must be on silent mode.

16. *Why can't I eat, drink or chew gum on the bus?*

We know students are hungry after school, and some students try to save time in the morning by eating breakfast on the bus. You could choke, and with the high seats, activity and noise level on the bus, the driver or other students may not even know the student is choking.

17. *Why can't I bring my pet or other creatures on the bus?*

Some students are highly allergic to animals. The animal could become frightened, scratch, bite, or get loose and run under the bus driver's feet and cause an accident.

18. *Why can't I bring my large musical instrument or school project on the bus?*

If the instrument or project is small enough that you can control it without bumping other students, and not take up additional space (student must hold on their lap) you may transport it on the bus; please see approved list. If the item is large you will have to have your parent take it to school for you. The large item would slow down evacuation and could become a projectile as the bus comes to a sudden stop.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILL

To comply with State regulations, students must participate in emergency school bus evacuation drills at least two (2) times per school year. The first drill will be conducted in September and the second the month of March.

Students will be instructed to exit via the rear emergency door or the drill may have half the bus exit via the rear door and half exit out the front door. Students are to sit on their bottom, and push off the back exit.

Drivers will assign bus helpers to assist with the evacuation drill.

Selected students may be trained to use the bus radio in case of an emergency.

ACTUAL SCHOOL BUS EMERGENCY EVACUATION INSTRUCTIONS

Evacuate ONLY if there is:

- a. Smoke.
- b. Fire or danger of fire.
- c. Danger of drowning.
- d. Danger of collision with other traffic.

Remain calm and quiet.

Wait for directions from the driver. If the driver is unable to talk, move, or is unconscious, follow instructions of the trained students.

Pull on the parking brake (trained helper).

Turn off bus ignition key (trained helper).

Trained student radios Northern Base for help. If the radio is not available/working, one student with cell phone should call 911 for help, and another their building principal.

- a. Student is to identify bus number.
- b. Student is to identify bus location.

Flags or flares are to be placed outside of bus (trained helper).

Students are to leave personal items on the bus.

Help each other for a safe, quick and orderly evacuation.

Go out the safest and quickest exit. Use push-out windows if other exits are blocked.

Move to a safe place away from the bus (100 feet or more) and wait for help.

**WHEN ACCIDENTS HAPPEN, THERE IS OFTEN CONFUSION...
STAY CALM, THINK SAFETY, HELP OTHERS, CALL FOR HELP**

SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENT INSURANCE PROVISIONS

The purpose of this notice is to inform you of insurance regulations and procedures in the event that your child is involved in a school bus accident. In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania insurance regulations are established under the No-Fault provisions. Therefore, in the event of a school bus accident you will be required to contact your individual automobile insurance agent or carrier to submit a claim. This will include accidents in which the school bus and another vehicle are involved, or just the school bus. There are no options to permit filing of a claim directly with the Northern York County School District. Your insurance agent or carrier is required to file against the correct individuals on the basis of the claim, which you submit.

If you have any questions concerning the No-Fault provisions of the law as it pertains to school bus accidents, please contact your automobile insurance agent or carrier.

GUIDELINE PROHIBITING EATING AND DRINKING ON SCHOOL BUSES

A nationwide review of policies involving drinking, and eating on school buses have resulted in concern over the potential for choking. The increase in traffic volume, and the problems related to deteriorated road construction, is generating additional cases where food or drink items have been associated with students choking while traveling on school buses.

The Northern York County School District continues to enforce “No Drinking, Eating or Chewing Gum” rules on the school bus.

This rule is meant to reduce the potential for student injury.

UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY ONTO SCHOOL BUS

Statutes 18 PA C.S. 5571, unauthorized school bus entry, prohibits unauthorized entry onto a school bus. 1998 amends the crime codes to classify as a misdemeanor the entrance onto a school bus without proper authorization, and with the intent to commit a crime, disrupt or interfere with the driver, or refusal to disembark from the school bus after being ordered to do so by the driver.

- a. Unauthorized persons may not board the school bus to speak with their student or any student on the school bus.
- b. If the parent /adult needs to give their student or another student something, they may not board the bus to accomplish this task. The driver may call the parent’s child to the front of the bus to retrieve the item or the parent may take the item to the school secretary.
- c. Even people with good intentions may not board the school bus, the only exception would be any one who is authorized to chaperone a band, athletic or field trip.