

STUDENT TRANSPORTATIONGeneral Operating Policy

Transportation shall be provided for all school children who live beyond such reasonable distances from their schools as the School Committee may determine. In addition, transportation shall be provided for special education students as needed, students attending the area vocational center, and others that may be prescribed by law or deemed advisable by the School Committee. Bus routes will be evaluated annually each summer to ensure maximum capacity per bus in order to minimize transportation costs.

The bus contractor, in consultation with the Superintendent and subject to review by the School Committee, shall establish bus routes. Bus routes will be developed annually and approved by the School Committee. Bus routes will be posted on the bus contractor's website and school websites, as well as advertised in The York Weekly at least two weeks before school begins each year.

The following guidelines are established:

Walking:

Parental Responsibility - It is the parent's role to ensure the safety of the student while in route to or from the school. If this expectation cannot be met due to work schedules or other circumstances, accommodations may have to be made by the parent to handle these situations.

1. Grade K-4 students may be asked to walk up to one-half mile to the elementary school(s).
2. Grade 5-8 students may be asked to walk up to three-quarters of a mile to the Middle School.
3. Grade 9-12 students may be asked to walk up to one mile to the High School.

Distances are measured from the nearest school ground entrance along a reasonable route to home.

These guidelines will remain in effect regardless of inclement weather and/or seasons. Exceptions to the above distance shall be made for hazardous walking conditions. Hazardous walking conditions shall be defined as those which would pose unacceptable risks to a child's safety. Walking surface, traffic volume, lines of sight and age of the child will all be considered. The Superintendent will decide when transportation will be provided under the hazardous walking conditions provision.

Riding:

A bus stop will be designated as authorized when approved by the School Committee. Drivers may not load or unload pupils at unauthorized bus stops. Students will not be allowed to ride the bus to any other location, even with a note from a parent. In emergency situations only, the parent shall contact the school about a change in busing for their child.

1. Bus Stops

- Bus stops, particularly in established neighborhoods, will be subject to consolidation where feasible, practical, and deemed safe for purposes of creating efficient and timely bus routes. The intent is to reduce the amount of student time spent in transit with any such consolidation to be approved in advance by the School Committee.
- Parent Responsibility - It is the parent's role to ensure the safety of the student while in route to or from the bus stop and waiting at the bus stop. The school department does not accept responsibility for the student until the student boards the bus. If this expectation cannot be met due to work schedule or other circumstances, accommodations may have to be made by the parent to handle these situations. It is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to have the student at the bus stop (not in the house) five minutes prior to the scheduled arrival of the bus.
- In the consolidation of bus stops, no students in grades K-12 will generally be required to walk in excess of one-half mile on a public road to or from the nearest designated school bus pick up/drop off point. The guidelines will remain in effect regardless of inclement weather and/or seasons.

School buses will not travel down non-town approved roads.

Bus stops will be chosen with concern for numbers and safety of the children involved. Legal bus capacities shall not be exceeded.

Bus drivers shall pick up only at existing designated bus stops; and only those students assigned to their particular bus.

2. Students are to ride the same bus every day unless permission has been granted to temporarily ride another bus. Parents must request, in writing, permission for their child to ride a different bus or to get off at a different existing designated bus stop. The written requests are given to the classroom teachers who will issue bus passes to those students. Students need to give bus passes to the driver upon entering the bus. Inquiries regarding special activities or larger groups must be made to the bus contractor in advance of notes provided through the schools.

3. The expected riding time to school will be 1 hour or less; and from school, 1 hour or less. These estimated times do not include waiting time for the bus. Exceptions to this standard may be made by the school administration when the safety of students is in jeopardy due to road conditions, or if insufficient buses are available for use.

Pick-up

1. K-4 students riding home from school shall be picked up at their assigned bus stop by a parent/guardian, or previously authorized person. Authorization procedures for adults other than a parent or guardian will be described in each school's Student Handbook.

2. If no parent/guardian, or authorized individual is present to meet a child, bus drivers will require the child(ren) to remain on the bus until the route is completed and then be driven back to the sending school. Drivers will radio ahead to alert school staff of the need to contact the parents/guardians informing them that they will be expected to pick up their child(ren) themselves.

3. In the event that a parent/guardian, or authorized individual misses three or more pick-ups, their child may lose bus privileges. Parents may also be expected to compensate the district for added driving time or staff time needed to supervise the child(ren) until pick up. This determination shall be made by the Superintendent after consultation with Principals and/or the bus contractor.

Behavior

1. The right of pupils to ride on the school bus is contingent on their behavior and observance of rules pertaining to proper conduct. Bus drivers are authorized to enforce these rules.
2. Student behavior when riding a bus shall be the same as described by each school's code of conduct, as contained in the Student Handbook. Repeated violations may result in the loss of bus privileges, as determined by the school Principal or designee.
3. Parental request for any information regarding student conduct on the bus will be addressed to and by school building administration. At no time will a parent board a bus or attempt to ascertain information regarding a student breach of conduct at pick up or drop off locations.
4. Students with repeated infractions of the code of conduct are subject to disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension of riding privileges.

Resolution of Conflicts

Parents or guardians who wish to request a change or exemption from any part of this policy shall direct that request to the bus contractor. If the parent is not satisfied by the bus contractor's ruling, they may appeal within five (5) days to the Administrative Transportation Committee by contacting the Superintendent. This committee will hear the request and its decision is final. Any recommended bus route change is subject to final approval by the York School Committee.

Source: National Transportation Safety Board, School Bus Safety
<https://www.nts.gov/safety/Pages/schoolbuses.aspx>

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