

Northview Public Schools Transportation Department System Rules - Guidelines - Procedures



Updated August 2020

I. INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

The Northview Public School District is committed to providing safe and efficient school bus transportation to its students and other users. We have a long tradition of safety and efficiently providing this service to all students that are eligible under applicable statutes, rules and regulations of the State of Michigan, or its agencies. It is our intention to adhere to these policies. Our intent is to service the needs of all eligible students and other users; however, transportation is a privilege, not a right. Parents, guardians, students and other users are encouraged to carefully read these policies and procedures and respect the privilege of access to and use of the Northview transportation system. As a District, we encourage recommendations for improvement and all suggestions will be carefully considered.

The primary purpose of the transportation system is to provide safe, timely, efficient and enjoyable transportation for all eligible students from the vicinity of their homes to the school they attend. Use of transportation equipment for field trips, co-curricular activities and other authorized educational, cultural and recreational activities is permitted when it does not conflict with the primary purpose of transportation. Alternative community requests for use of the Northview transportation system will be considered by the Transportation Director. Careful consideration will be given to efficiency and economy of operation.

No charge will be made for transportation of resident students on the school buses of the district, with the possible exception of use for transportation to non-mandatory, non-credit events. Such charges will be determined as permitted by state regulations according to procedures recommended by the superintendent and approved by the Board of Education.

II. STANDARD TRANSPORTATION

Students will be entitled to transportation services according to the following conditions:

1. The responsibility for safety and supervision of students going to and from school is a shared responsibility of the students, parents, transportation department and school staff.
2. Riding a school bus will be considered a privilege available only to students who demonstrate responsible behavior and follow established District and busing rules and regulations.
3. Students who exhibit disruptive behavior during the school day often continue the behavior on the bus. This creates an unsafe environment for the driver and other passengers. Therefore, students who display behavior problems during the school day may be prohibited from riding the bus home. The school will notify the parent/guardian of the situation and their responsibility for alternate transportation.

4. In order to provide an efficient transportation system that keeps all children safe and accounted for, the Transportation Department implements the following guidelines:

A. Providing a lawful bus stop may be made, the transportation department will strive to establish bus stop locations that are located no more than 1000 feet from the student's home.

B. A three day notice must be must be given for a requested bus stop change (child care provider, change of address, etc)

C. If a student is to go home with another student other than on a permanent basis, the parent/guardian MUST contact the transportation department and submit the request by 10:00 a.m. on the day of transport. The transportation department will determine if space exists on the requested bus.

D. Transportation outside the attendance area will only be provided upon prior approval of the Transportation Director. Approval will be contingent upon: ability to transport on established bus runs; busing population; and other factors deemed appropriate by the Superintendent.

E. In district students shall be the first to receive bus assignments. Providing space is available, out of district students will be eligible for bus service. The bus assignments for out of district students will occur within the first few weeks of the school year.

III. TEMPORARY HANDICAP

The Transportation Director may declare a student to be temporarily handicapped and in need of special transportation service. The determination of temporary disability will be made based upon a written request from the school, and/or a physician statement. These requests and statements will include an estimate of a length of time such service will be required. Should a parent or school appeal a decision of the Transportation Director, the superintendent will make the final administrative decision.

IV. CONTRACTED TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation Director may contract with parents, private contractors, or public transit authorities to provide transportation services in accordance with transportation policy and rules.

V. ESTABLISHING AND CHANGING ROUTES AND STOPS

Bus Routes

The Transportation Director will establish bus routes which provide for safe transportation and reasonable riding times and distances. Routes will be designed to keep riding times to a minimum. Our goal is to keep the maximum riding time for a student traveling to or from school to one (1) hour or less.

Bus Stops

1. Whenever practical bus stops will be located so that students do not have to cross the road on which the bus is stopped. In the event that this is not practical, the bus driver will use flashing red lights to control traffic, in accordance with current State Law (PA 187, section 55), to allow students to cross the road.
2. All bus routes and stops are tentative and will be established by the Transportation Director no later than October 1st of each year.
3. There will be no turn around unless approved by the Transportation Director.
4. School buses are not permitted to travel on roads which are designated as “closed to through traffic” by the Kent County Road Commission or MI. Department of Transportation.

VI. APPEAL PROCESS FOR CHANGING BUS ROUTES

It is recognized that busing or walking conditions can change temporarily or permanently from year to year, giving rise to a need to review conditions for adjustment. It is the responsibility of the Transportation Director to review routes annually and to respond to specific inquiries and requests. The requesting party may wish to have a route decision reviewed. The steps for this are as follows:

1. An appeal for review of a requested bus route change will be submitted in writing to the Transportation Director, clearly identifying the condition for the request so that proper evaluation can be made.
2. The Transportation Director will thoroughly investigate the request, giving appropriate consideration of applicable laws. The Transportation Director will respond to the requesting party within ten (10) working days of receiving the written request.
3. Any further appeal will be submitted to the School Superintendent. A written response to the appeal will be provided to the requesting party and to the Transportation Director within ten (10) working days of its receipt. The decision of the Superintendent shall be final.

VII. RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS, PARENTS/GUARDIANS and STAFF

Northview Public Schools recognize that the responsibility for safety and supervision of students going to and from school is a shared responsibility of the students, parents/guardians, transportation department, and school staff.

Meeting the Bus

1. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide for the child's safety to and from the bus stop and to ensure that the child arrives at the bus stop on time. Students must show respect for citizens and for private property while waiting at a bus stop. In the event that a child misses a bus, the parent/guardian is responsible for providing alternative transportation. In the event that bus service is delayed, parents/guardians should be prepared to assume the responsibility for the child's welfare until the bus arrives.

2. It is the responsibility of every student who rides a school bus to be ready at the assigned stop five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time. If a student is not ready at the stop on time, the driver will continue the route. The driver will not return for a student who is not ready on time.

3. Kindergarten and Developmental Kindergarten students require an adult or older responsible student to walk with them to and from their bus stop. Such person shall be at the stop at the scheduled drop-off time to receive them. If the responsible person is not there to receive the student, the student will remain on the bus while the driver initiates the following procedure:
 - A. The driver radios the transportation department and the dispatcher phones the parent/guardian, reminding the person of their responsibility to meet the bus.

 - B. If there is no answer, or no drop-off contact information, the dispatcher will phone the school of attendance. The school will verify the contact information and emergency information as needed.

 - C. The student is taken back to the transportation department office when the driver can fit it into the schedule.

 - D. The transportation department will contact the parent/guardian for a conference after the second instance of there being no one to receive the student. Failure to meet the bus may result in a loss of transportation services.

Guidelines for Passenger Boarding and Departure

1. Students waiting to board the bus must be at the bus stop, standing in full view of the driver.
2. Whenever possible, students are to be 10 steps back from the roadway while waiting for the bus.
3. Should a stop require students to cross the road, the bus driver will use flashing red lights to control traffic. The bus will be stopped directly in the lane of travel, and all surrounding traffic must come to a complete stop, prior to students being allowed to cross the road.
4. Should the stop not require students to cross the road, a yellow hazard light stop may be made. In such an instance, the bus will be pulled off to the right as far as possible. Since no students will be crossing the roadway, traffic is allowed to proceed.
5. As appropriate and lawful, the driver will conduct a yellow hazard light stop or a flashing red light stop for passenger boarding and departure.

A. If a ***passenger boarding*** stop involves students crossing the road, a flashing red light stop shall be made. All surrounding traffic must come to a complete stop. Students must watch the driver until a uniform hand signal is made, directing the students to cross the road. Students are to look in both directions, and when safe proceed across the road (10) steps away from and in ***front*** of the front bumper of the bus.

B. Walk along the side of the road toward the bus.

C. Board the bus.

D. If a ***passenger departure*** stop involves students crossing the road, a flashing red light stop shall be made. All surrounding traffic must come to a complete stop. Students will leave the bus and walk along the right side of the road until they are ten (10) steps away from and in ***front*** of the front bumper of the bus. Students must watch the driver until a uniform hand signal is made directing the students to cross the road. Students will proceed until even with the traffic side of the bus. They will stop - look left - look right. Proceed when clear.

E. Students are required to ***WALK in front of the bus when*** crossing the roadway.

Conduct on the Bus

Bus transportation is a service provided by Northview Public Schools to students who abide by the rules set forth below. Bus conduct requirements are made available to parents/guardians and students so that everyone has a clear understanding of the obligations related to the privilege of bus transportation. Families are requested to discuss these rules and regulations with their children since stressing their importance will assure safer transportation for all.

NVPS Transportation Rules and Regulations:

- School and District rules and regulations shall apply while being transported in school-owned or contracted vehicles
- Students shall ride their regularly assigned bus, unless permission to do otherwise has been granted by the Transportation Department
- Students should be at their assigned bus stop five (5) minutes prior to their scheduled pickup time. The driver will not delay, nor return, for students arriving late at their stop
- Students waiting to board the bus should stand at least ten (10) feet back from the curb or roadway until the driver opens the door of the bus
- The driver is in full charge of the bus and its passengers and may assign seats. Students must obey the driver promptly and willingly
- Students are required to remain in a seat and in a sitting position when the bus is in motion
- Courteous behavior is expected. Profanity, vulgar language, excessive noise, fighting, teasing, pushing and shoving is prohibited
- No eating, drinking, or chewing gum is allowed on the bus during routine, daily trips to and from school. Eating and drinking may be allowed at the driver's discretion on **activity trips only**
- Students who must cross the road after leaving the bus shall cross at least ten (10) steps in **FRONT** of the bus and only upon a signal given by the bus driver
- Students are required to keep all body parts and items under their control inside the bus. Articles are not to be thrown on the bus or out of the bus windows
- As provided for by State of Michigan law, parents/guardians may be held financially liable for damage caused by their child's act of vandalism (MCLA 600.2913)
- Routine circumstances do not allow for the bus driver to make unscheduled bus stops
- Emergency exits are to be used only in cases of emergency. Tampering with emergency exits is prohibited
- Animals of any type are not to be brought on the bus.
- District buses are equipped with video cameras to monitor events and student actions. If a student misbehaves on a bus and his/her actions are recorded, the recording may be used as evidence of the misbehavior. Privacy laws dictate who may view, and under what circumstances, these recordings may be viewed

IX. BUS CONDUCT VIOLATION REPORT

Bus Conduct Violation Reports will be completed by the driver involved in the incident. The Transportation Department will communicate and work together with school principals to determine appropriate dispositions for individual bus conduct violations.

Parents/Guardians will be notified of bus conduct violations via email and/or telephone.

Students may be asked to report their name to the driver during any suspected conduct problem. Any student failing to report the correct identifying information will be subject to more severe consequences. Reporting this information allows the bus to continue its schedule and the incident to be processed after the run is complete.

Routine Discipline Progression

1st Offense: (warning): The driver will address the problem with the student. The driver will complete the report and deliver it to the Transportation Director or designee. The report will be distributed as described above. The Principal or designee will review the report with the student. The Transportation Director or designee will discuss the issue with the parent/guardian.

2nd Offense: (assigned seat): The driver will complete the report and deliver it to the Transportation Director or designee. The report will be distributed as described above. The Principal or designee will review the report with the student. The Transportation Director or designee will discuss the issue with the parent/guardian and advise that future violations may result in a suspension of bus privileges. The duration of assigned seat status will be determined by the driver.

3rd Offense: (two to five day bus suspension): The driver will complete the report and deliver it to the Transportation Director or designee. The report will be distributed as described as above. The Principal or designee will review the report with the student. The Transportation Director or designee will discuss the issue with the parent/guardian and advise that future violations may result in suspension of bus privileges for up to the remainder of the school year.

4th Offense: (suspension for up to the remainder of the school year): The driver will complete the report and deliver it to the Transportation Director or designee. The report will be distributed as described above. The Principal or designee will review the report with the student. The Transportation Director or designee will discuss the issue with the parent/guardian and advise of length of suspension.

Major Offense:

- A major offense may include, but is not limited to: criminal offenses (illegal drugs, weapons offenses, vandalism) fighting, assaults, insubordination, and safety violations.
- A major offense shall be penalized at no less than the 3rd Offense level of the discipline progression. The Principal or designee and Transportation Director or designee shall work in concert to determine the discipline level imposed for a major offense.

Appeals:

- Final administrative appeal of decisions for 1st and 2nd offenses are to be made to the Transportation Director, who will confer with the school principal.
- Final administrative appeals of 3rd, 4th, or major offenses are to be made to the Transportation Director, who will confer with the Superintendent's office.

X. VIDEO CAMERA POLICY

1. Northview Public Schools Transportation Services will routinely use video recording equipment on the District's buses for the purpose of monitoring student behavior and enhancing bus safety. Video review will be utilized to assist in the investigation of bus discipline issues and other events.
2. Bus video recordings will be viewed only by the Transportation Director (and/or designee) building principals (and/or designee), bus drivers, and school police liaison officer or other appropriate law enforcement official. Recording revealing unlawful actions may be brought to the attention of law enforcement agencies.
3. Appropriate review of video recordings shall occur whenever a parent or guardian disputes or challenges a bus disciplinary action. Privacy laws dictate who may view, and under what circumstances, these recordings may be viewed. Upon written request, the school district will provide a written summary of the recorded incident(s) to a student, or the parent or guardian of a student who has been the subject of disciplinary action.
4. Northview Public Schools will be responsible for the security of the video equipment and the handling of video recordings. Storage components of the video systems have space limitations. Video recordings will routinely be kept for no less than seven (7) days. Certain circumstances, such as pending disciplinary actions, requests from law enforcement agencies, and/or other District needs, may result in a longer period of retention of specific recordings.

XI. SEVERE WEATHER

If a Tornado Watch is in effect, the driver will proceed on the route. A tornado watch means that the weather conditions are such that a tornado could develop. The Transportation Department will inform drivers of this condition.

If a Tornado Warning is in effect, school buses should not run. Students should remain in the building. The Transportation Department will inform drivers of this condition. The tornado warning means that a confirmed funnel cloud has been sighted within the county.

If a watch becomes a warning while buses are on the road and a tornado is sighted near our schools, the Transportation Department will notify all drivers. This means drivers are to seek shelter immediately.

To inform drivers when the danger has passed, the Transportation Department will issue an "all clear." This means that all of the above weather conditions have passed and drivers should return to normal operations.

XII. CONTACTING TRANSPORTATION OFFICE

Parents/guardians are to notify the Transportation Office (361-3480) of the following:

- If there is a change in the student's home address. Parents/guardians should allow 1-3 days for the changes in bus service and are responsible for providing transportation for the student during the delay.
- Call the school and/or the Transportation Office if there is a concerning incident involving students at the bus stop. The school and Transportation Office will work together to respond to the problems.
- Call the Transportation Office if there is a question about the time of pick-up or drop-off on a regular route.
- Call the Transportation Office if there is a concern about the safety or location of a bus stop.

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