

ABINGTON SCHOOL DEPARTMENT
ABINGTON, MA 02351
2019-2020 SCHOOL BUS RULES AND REGULATIONS

MANDATED TOWN-PAID TRANSPORTATION

Under Massachusetts General Laws, transportation at town expense shall be furnished to all Abington pupils grades K-6 who live two miles or more from the school they attend. Transportation at town expense is based solely on the student's home address and is only for transportation between the student's home bus stop and the school he/she attends. Additionally, transportation shall be provided at town expense for children whose Individualized Education Plan (IEP) requires such transportation or whose physical condition makes such transportation necessary as stated in an (IEP).

NON MANDATED FEE-BASED TRANSPORTATION

The Fee-Based Transportation System provides an option for arranging bus service for students Grades K-6 who live less than 2 miles from their school and for all students Grades 7-12. There is a provision for a fee waiver. The "Fee Waiver Application Form" must be completed and submitted by July 1, to the Superintendent's Office. This form is available in both the Principal's Office and the Superintendent's Office. Eligibility is subject to the income guidelines and verification. Ridership is not guaranteed, as it is dependent on sufficient funding, routing and available seating.

TWO MILE LIMIT

The two-mile measurement is the shortest vehicular route between the nearest walkway or driveway to the student's residence to the nearest walkway or gateway leading to the front door of the school. If the mileage is in dispute, a "Distance Appeal Form" must be completed and submitted by July 1, to the School Department. This form is available in both the Principal's Office and Superintendent's Office. The distance will be rechecked and a decision made. This decision shall be final. Appeals not properly submitted by July 1, will not be honored. Please note that the shortest vehicular route may change from year to year as new streets open to traffic; therefore, the shortest vehicular route will be based on streets existing as of July 1, of each year. Mileage will NOT be calculated to or from a daycare provider.

APPLICATION, FEES, & DUE DATE

- During the month of April students will receive a Transportation Packet containing rules and regulations, frequently asked questions, and all pertinent forms.
- **The fee is \$255 per student with a \$510 family cap.** (note: the transportation fee is subject to change) The fee is refundable **only** if the School Department cannot provide the service. Aside from this exception, and because buses must be contracted in advance, the fee is nonrefundable and will be not be prorated in any manner or for any reason. The seat purchased is not transferable to another route.

- **The application and payment in full must be submitted by July 1.** This payment insures that your child is included on the bus list as routes are developed during the summer. Applications and payments received after July 1, will be considered late and will be honored only if space is available and if there is an existing stop on the route.
- Subject to the availability of seats and an existing bus stop, applications for children whose parents/guardians are experiencing an emergency situation will be accepted and processed during the school year. Applications submitted under this provision must be accompanied by a written explanation of the nature of the emergency and any supportive documentation requested by the School Department. The Superintendent of Schools and/or designee will review, act on such emergency requests and, if approved, set a prorated fee.

NEW RESIDENTS

Subject to the availability of seats and an existing bus stop, applications and fees for children of new residents will be processed at the time of registration.

IDENTIFICATION

In mid August bus passes will be mailed directly to the households of all mandated and enrolled riders. The bus pass will indicate the student's name, grade, and the assigned school, bus route and bus stop. Beginning the first day of school, each bus student is required to carry the bus pass. Not doing so could result in exclusion from the bus. We suggest attaching the pass to the backpack. This will keep the pass handy and allow the student to display it without delay. Lost passes will be replaced for a \$5.00 fee.

BUS STOPS AND ROUTING

Students K-12 are not entitled to street-by-street or door-to-door pick-up and/or delivery. The School Department will establish common neighborhood bus stops. Timing and routing do not allow for additional bus stops even if the bus passes your residence. As it is unknown how many buses will be funded, the length of bus routes may be adversely affected. All efforts will be made to schedule bus routes so that no child is riding for more than one hour per trip.

SAFETY

Safety is a responsibility that is shared between the home and the school district. While the law requires the School Department to furnish a defined level of transportation, it does not relieve parents/guardians of students from the responsibility of supervision until such time as the child boards the bus in the morning. Once the child boards the bus – and only at that time – does he or she become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the regular bus stop at the close of the school day. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to escort the child to and from the bus stop where there are no sidewalks, where sidewalks are only on one side, where the bus stop is on the opposite side of the street, and where there are either traffic or commuter rail concerns.

BUS CONDUCT

In view of the fact that a bus is an extension of the classroom, the students are required to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior as stated in the student handbook. Bus drivers have the authority and the responsibility to maintain good order while operating the bus. Additionally, bus drivers are instructed to inform the building principal about any student misconduct that creates an annoyance or distraction while driving. The building principal will inform the parents/guardians of the misconduct and request their cooperation in monitoring the child's behavior. Any student who becomes a disciplinary problem on the school bus may have riding privileges suspended on a

temporary or permanent basis. In such cases, the parents/guardians of the child involved become responsible for seeing that the child gets to and from school safely. There will be no refunds resulting from disciplinary action.

SCHOOL BUS RULES AND REGULATIONS

Please refer to the student handbook. It should be noted here that the courts have held that the right of a student to transportation is a qualified right, one that is dependent upon good behavior. In a case where a student seriously or continuously breaks the rules, the parents/guardians will be notified of the misbehavior. Depending on the seriousness of the infraction(s), the student's right to school bus transportation may be suspended or terminated at any time. Any infraction of the School Bus Rules and Regulations that is reported to the school authorities will be investigated before any disciplinary action is taken, and if there is a basis for the report, the student will be given notice of the charges against him/her. If the student denies the charges, an explanation of the evidence the School Department has and an opportunity to present his/her side of the story will be afforded the student in accordance with the due process procedures stated in the student handbook.

OTHER REQUESTS, INQUIRIES OR CONCERNS

All other requests, inquiries, or concerns must be made in writing and submitted to either the Principal's Office or to the Superintendent's Office for processing. Note: Submit all discipline issues to the Principal.

ABINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RIDE AT TOWN EXPENSE?

As mandated by state law, only Abington students grades **K-6 who live two (2) miles or more** from their assigned school, students who have a transportation component in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and students designated as homeless are eligible to ride at town expense. Transportation at town expense is based solely on the student's home address and is only for transportation between the student's home bus stop and his/her assigned school. Any alternate arrangement is subject to the waiver process and the payment of the fee.

2. WHAT IS THE FEE-BASED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM?

All students who are not eligible for town paid busing will have the option to purchase a bus pass. Passes are \$255 per student with a family cap of \$510. If a seat is not assigned, the fee will be refunded; otherwise, the fee is nonrefundable and will not be prorated in any manner or for any reason. The purchased seat is not transferable to another route.

3. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY HOME IS OVER OR UNDER TWO MILES FROM THE SCHOOL MY CHILD ATTENDS?

Street guides are posted at each elementary school and on the School Department web site, www.abingtonps.org. In conformance with state law, measurement is made via the shortest vehicular route. This may change from year to year as new streets open to traffic; therefore, distances will be calculated based on streets existing as of July 1st of each year.

4. HOW IS THE TWO MILE DETERMINATION MADE?

The distance is **only** measured by using the shortest vehicular route from the nearest walkway or driveway to the student's residence to the nearest walkway or gateway leading to the front door of the school. The shortest vehicular route may change from year to year as new streets open to traffic; therefore the shortest vehicular route will be based on streets existing on July 1, of each year. The distance from the address of a daycare provider will not be considered.

5. WHAT DO I DO IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL DEPT. MILEAGE MEASUREMENT?

You may complete a "Distance Appeal Form" and submit it to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools on or before July 1. Forms are available at the Principal's Office or Superintendent's Office. The distance will be rechecked and a decision rendered. This decision is final and not subject to further appeal. **IMPORTANT:** No appeals will be accepted after July 1.

6. WHERE WILL MY CHILD BE PICKED UP?

The bus stop will be indicated on the bus pass that is issued to your child. As students are not entitled to street-by-street or door-to-door pick-up and/or delivery, your child will have to walk to a common bus stop. The safety responsibility for escorting a child to and from the bus stop shall rest with the parents/guardians of the youngster involved. This includes escorting the child where there are no sidewalks or the sidewalks are only on one side of the street, where the bus stop is on the opposite side of the street, and where there are traffic concerns.

7. CAN I HAVE MY CHILD PICKED UP OR DROPPED OFF AT A STOP OTHER THAN HIS/HER ASSIGNED HOME BUS STOP?

Subject to the criteria below, you may apply for a bus waiver requesting another established regular bus stop other than your home bus stop. If approved, the fee must be paid.

1. The stop is on a route scheduled for your child's school.
2. The arrangement is permanent and the same for all days.
3. There is space available on the bus.
4. Only one alternate stop will be considered.
5. Students will only be transported to another address within that same assigned session subject to the above criteria. Please reference the Elementary Student Handbook regarding specific guidelines for grades K-2.

8. CAN MY CHILD, ON OCCASION, RIDE HOME WITH A FRIEND WHO TAKES ANOTHER BUS?

Except in the case of an emergency, an eligible bus student may only ride on his/her regularly assigned bus. A note from a parent/guardian must be presented to a school administrator clearly stating the emergency before any request can be honored.

9. WHAT IF I ONLY NEED THE BUS ONE WAY OR ONLY 2 OR 3 DAYS PER WEEK?

The cost for all students is the same. The amount of time you use the bus does not matter because bus costs cannot be prorated according to varied daily usage.

10. IF MY CHILD ATTENDS DAYCARE, DO I HAVE TO PAY ?

Yes, transportation at town expense is based solely on the student's home address and is only for transportation between the student's home bus stop and his/her assigned school. All daycare transportation arrangements are subject to the bus waiver process.

11. WHEN MUST I PAY THE FEE?

The completed application and full payment are due **on or before July 1**. This payment insures that your child, subject to sufficient funding and available seating, is included on the bus list as routes are developed during the summer. Submittals received after July 1, will be considered late and will be honored only if space is available and if there is an existing stop already on a route. *New stops will not be added for students paying late.*

12. IS THERE ANY PROVISION FOR A FEE WAIVER?

A Fee Waiver Application may be obtained at the Superintendent's Office (781- 982-2150). The criteria are the same as the eligibility requirements for free lunch and are subject to verification. Income guidelines are updated in June by the federal government, so a decision cannot be rendered until they are published. As is the case with all applicants, ridership cannot be guaranteed, as it is dependent on sufficient funding and available seating.

13. HOW AND WHERE SHOULD I MAKE PAYMENT?

All payments must be by check and made payable to: "Abington Public Schools – Bus Fee"
Payments and applications may either be submitted in a sealed envelope through the Principal's Office or mailed to the Superintendent's Office. **Please address all envelopes as follows:**
Abington Public Schools, Bus Transportation, 1071 Washington Street, Abington, MA 02351; *On-line bus payments and applications are also acceptable.*

Please go to www.abingtonps.org

14. IF I PAY, IS MY CHILD GUARANTEED A SEAT?

No, seating is subject to sufficient funding, routing and available space. If the School Department cannot provide the service, the fee will be refunded.

15. HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO PROCESS A REFUND?

Refunds are subject to the town warrant process and can take up to 4 weeks to complete.