

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MANUAL FOR PARENTS



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PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

TRANSPORTATION

MANUAL FOR PARENTS

The safety and welfare of student passengers will be the first consideration in all matters pertaining to transportation. Drivers, aides, students and district employees will observe all New Jersey Statutory provisions, Paterson Public School District Policies, and New Jersey State Transportation regulations pertaining to the use of school buses. Our mission and goal is to work collectively with the cooperation of the bus companies, school administrators and parents to provide safe and efficient transportation for all transported students.

Students are to follow the bus rules that have been developed by the Department of Transportation, School Personnel, and the respective bus company. Parents are asked to work with the District by making sure that their child complies with all bus safety rules. Students must be at their bus stop at their appointed time. Parents of very young children are encouraged to accompany them to the bus stop and to be at the bus stop when their children are returned from school. Teachers and other staff members will provide proper supervision to the students while entering and exiting the bus.

STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR TRANSPORTATION

In accordance with New Jersey statutory provisions, State Board of Education regulations and New Jersey Transportation regulations, the Paterson Board of Education will provide free public transportation to all children who attend public schools whose residence lies beyond the minimum distance to the property line of the assigned school. To qualify for bus transportation, elementary school grade students must reside over 2.0 miles away from their assigned school. High school grade students must reside 2.5 miles away from their assigned school.

Children with special needs will be provided transportation to and from home, as designated in their IEP. This will also apply to students with a 504 and temporarily displaced students who require transportation.

DISCIPLINE POLICY FOR SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Students who are being transported to and from school are expected to follow the bus safety and conduct rules according to our bus conduct policy. The bus rules and disciplinary process for violation of the rules are found below:

BUS CONDUCT RULES

1. Students may ride only the bus to which they have been assigned.
2. Students must remain seated once they have boarded the bus; no changing of seats is permitted.
3. Nothing is to be hung or thrown out of the bus windows or doors.
4. There is to be no shouting or yelling out of the bus.
5. There is to be no eating or drinking on the bus.

6. The driver is in charge of the students on the bus; please respect her/him.
7. Students may be assigned seats by the driver or school administrator.
8. No temporary switching of buses or bus stops will be allowed (only to and from the registered address, not to friends/grandparents/aunts, etc. address).
9. Feet, legs, arms, books, etc., must not stick out into the aisle. All belongings must be placed under the seat or on lap.
10. Emergency equipment and exits must not be touched or tampered with unless they are needed.
11. Do not bring any type of dangerous article which may cause harm aboard a bus.
12. No lighting matches and or smoking on bus.
13. No spitting or littering.
14. No rude or discourteous behavior.
15. No possession and/or use of controlled substance.
16. There is to be no inappropriate behavior which may affect the safety, well-being and respect of others. Any student who is reported by the bus driver as misbehaving or violating bus conduct rules may be excluded from the bus and/or school.
17. No fighting/pushing/tripping.
18. No destruction of property.
19. No improper boarding/departing procedures.
20. No harassing, bullying, or intimidating.

If a student chooses to ignore a rule, the principal upon receipt of a written School Bus Incident Report, signed by the driver/aide, will take the following disciplinary action(s).

NOTE: The specific disciplinary action will depend largely upon the seriousness of the infraction. Parents should refer to the student code of conduct. The driver/principal must follow each step below to maintain order on the bus as well as protect the student's rights.

1. Verbal Warnings - A warning to a student with a possible phone call to the parent/guardian. Parents will be expected to follow through and affirm that students follow and adhere to bus conduct rules.
2. Second Offense - Parents will be notified by the principal.
3. Third Offense - A meeting will take place with principal, CST member and/or appropriate staff member, transportation department, parent and child. May result in possible suspension from the bus.
4. Fourth Offense - May result in suspension or expulsion from bus. Parent will be responsible for transporting the student to and from school.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:
Section 18A:25-2 of New Jersey Statutes is amended to read as follows:

18A:25-2. A teacher or other person in authority over such pupil shall hold every pupil accountable for disorderly conduct in school and during recess and on the playgrounds of the school and on the way to school.

The driver shall be in full charge of the school bus at all times and shall be responsible for order; he/she shall never exclude a pupil from the bus, if unable to manage any pupil, shall report the unmanageable pupil to the principal of the school which he attends.

A pupil may be excluded from the bus for disciplinary reasons by the principal, and his/her parents shall provide for his transportation to and from school during the period of such exclusions.

DEPARTMENT STAFF AND HOURS

The Transportation Department office hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's transportation program please contact the office at the following telephone numbers.

Main Number 973-321-0830

Lisa Vainieri-Marshall, Director of Student Assignment Services - 973-321-0795

Teresa Afonso, Transportation Supervisor - 973-321-0833

Stephanie Cruz, Transportation Coordinator - 973-321-0835

Michele Moya-Flores, Transportation Coordinator - 973-321-2414

Zenaida Diaz, Transportation Liaison - 973-321-0834

Idamis Urena, Transportation Liaison - 973-321-2460

Na'Imah Bogert, Administrative Liaison - 973-321-0832

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR STUDENT INFORMATION

All address changes for transported pupils must be made at the school level. Parents must contact the school with all permanent and temporary changes. The Department of Transportation will not accept changes over the telephone.

In a case, where a student attends an out of district school, the parent or legal guardian will be required to go to the Department of Special Services at 90 Delaware Avenue, Paterson, NJ, to generate the change. The Department of Special Services will then forward the required paperwork to this office.

CHANGE OF PICK-UP/DROP-OFF ADDRESS

There may be times when your child may need to be picked up and/or dropped off at a different address within Paterson. This is granted only when there is an emergent situation. Please contact the Child Study Team or transportation department as soon as possible in order to transport the pupil to the requested location.

If approved, the district will contact the bus company. Do not contact the bus company to make these changes as they will not accept any changes unless they come from the Transportation Department.

COMMUNICATION WITH BUS DRIVERS/AIDES

The Paterson Public School District requires either the bus driver and /or the bus aide to speak the English language fluently. It is important that directions given by the bus driver or bus aide are to be clearly understood by the students. Do not discuss problems with the driver or the aide. Please call the Transportation Department if there are any problems or concerns.

Parents, guardians and/or the general public are prohibited from going on the bus without the permission of the bus company and the Paterson Public School District.

PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ENTER THE BUS.

PICKUP/DROP OFF STUDENT

You can expect delays during the first week of school as the drivers and students become familiar with their routines. Buses follow a pre-determined route and schedule and after the first week or so they will fall into a consistent routine. After that, if the buses do run late, it is most likely due to unforeseen circumstances such as traffic, weather conditions or when there is a substitute driver. Your patience and understanding during these adjustment times is greatly appreciated.

The initial time your child is given as a pick-up time is an approximate time. You will know after the first week of school a more accurate time to expect the bus. Please plan to be ready at least 10 minutes prior to that. Minor modifications to the actual pick-up time may vary during the school year due to changes in a route such as additional students, fluctuations in traffic patterns, student absences, etc.

All students are to be picked up and dropped off by the bus driver on the side of the street which they reside. No student should have to cross the street to get to his or her house. If the bus driver does not follow this rule, please contact the Transportation Department immediately.

Please have your child ready and waiting for the bus. The bus driver cannot blow the horn. **Bus drivers have been instructed to wait no more than three (3) minutes for your child.** If your child does not show up, the bus will leave and you will be responsible to get your child to school.

DROP OFF

A parent/guardian or responsible adult must be at home to receive all children, unless student is authorized by the parent to be a latch key holder. This will allow the student to enter their home alone. This arrangement must be done through the transportation Department. Parent must notify the office in writing by completing the *RELEASE FOR UNSUPERVISED DROP-OFF Form*, which is included in this manual. Please return the form to the Transportation Department at 90 Delaware Avenue.

The bus driver must see the parent before the child is dropped off. Students that are undeliverable may be brought back to the Paterson School District, Transportation

Department, located at 90 Delaware Avenue, Paterson. Failure to meet a child at home may result in the Paterson Public School District contacting the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency formerly known as DYFS.

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

The Department of Transportation needs the latest and most accurate phone numbers of the parents/guardians of our students. Emergencies happen and we may need to contact you. Please provide us with more than one phone number. If you change your telephone number during the school year, please notify the Transportation Department so that we can update your records.

DRUG, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO USE-PUBLIC SCHOOL POLICY

Students are prohibited from possessing, consuming or distributing drugs or alcohol in any form, while at school, in co-curriculum programs, on school grounds, attending a school-related function on or off campus, and while being transported to and from school. Students are further prohibited from smoking cigarettes or using other tobacco products in any form in school buildings or on school grounds.

If the bus driver or the transportation aide observes a student violating the policy by possessing, consuming or distributing drugs or alcohol that behavior will be reported to the school administrator immediately.

INCLEMENT WEATHER/DELAYED OPENING

In the event that schools in Paterson are closed due to inclement weather, there will be no transportation for any Paterson students in or out of district. Transportation will be cancelled for students who are attending school in Paterson and students who are attending schools in other communities.

The decision to close Paterson Schools is made for the safety of all students who live in Paterson, whether they go to school in Paterson or are transported to school outside of Paterson. School closing announcements will be made on most major television networks. Parents will receive automated phone calls to inform them of the closings. You may also log on to our website at www.paterson.k12.nj.us.

In case of a delayed opening, school will begin at 9:45am and all bus routes will pick up students 90 minutes later than their regular scheduled pick up time.

PASSENGERS; AUTHORIZED

Pursuant to New Jersey State Law, only the following people may be authorized to be on the vehicle:

- Enrolled eligible pupil
- Transportation bus aide
- School personnel

Public Safety officials
Transportation personnel

Parents, guardians, relatives, friends of pupils, and the general public are prohibited from entering the vehicle, unless authorized or invited by the school district in cooperation with the bus company.

SMOKING, EATING, DRINKING PROHIBITED

Smoking, eating, and drinking on the bus is prohibited by students, the bus driver, bus aide, or other personnel. The transported students and bus personnel must be mindful that there may be students or staff with allergies to different foods or products. In addition to allergies, eating or drinking is also prohibited on school vehicles to prevent choking possibilities.

VEHICLES

Your child will be picked up in a yellow school bus with all the proper warning lights and signs. The Paterson School District does not allow cars, station wagons, commercial vans or other non-yellow school buses to transport students.

Again, our goal is to get your child to and from school in a safe and timely fashion. We encourage parents to build a relationship with your child's bus driver. We are receptive to suggestions from all parents to help us meet our goal.

Transportation Department
90 Delaware Avenue, Paterson NJ 07503
Office: (973) 321-0830 Fax: (973) 321-0484

LIABILITY RELEASE FOR UNSUPERVISED DROP-OFF

Please complete and submit this form if you wish to permit your child to be released without supervision at his or her transportation destination. This form must be received by the Transportation department at least 24 hours in advance and will be effective for the remainder of the current school year unless revoked in writing.

I understand that Paterson Public Schools Provides transportation for students and generally require that a parent, legal guardian, or other authorized adult to whom the student may be released is present at the designated drop-off location. However, I have chosen instead to permit my child to disembark at the designated drop-off location even if no authorized adult is present.

Student's Name: _____

School: _____

Drop-off Address: _____

By signing this document, I agree to accept complete legal responsibility for my child and to release from liability Paterson Public Schools and its employees, Officers, representative, contractors, and agents.

Parent's Name: _____

Parents' Address: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____