



**JACKSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
(517) 841-2180**

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

It is recognized that excessive distances and extraordinary/excessive hazards to pedestrian safety can affect access to an equal educational opportunity. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the Jackson Public Schools Board of Education to provide safe, economical transportation to students affected by these conditions. The Board of Education retains the right to eliminate all or portions of transportation should conditions warrant such action.

The primary purpose of the transportation system is to provide safe transportation for eligible students from the vicinity of their home to the school they attend. Use of transportation equipment for field trips, co-curricular activities, and recreational activities are permitted providing it does not conflict with the primary purpose of transportation.

In organizing and operating the transportation system, all applicable statutes, rules and regulations of the State of Michigan or its agencies shall be strictly adhered to and all recommendations and suggestions shall be considered carefully.

School bus transportation is provided only for eligible students. Bus transportation shall be considered a privilege providing the student accepts responsibility for his/her own conduct. Students are expected to follow all directions and requests of the bus driver. Most school bus riders will find it necessary to walk to the designated bus stop.

Student bus riders are to arrive at their designated bus stop each morning in a timely manner. Parents are to regulate their children's arrival so that it will not result in a long wait, permitting time for mischief or unsafe behavior. The District allows for a ten-minute window for the scheduled arrival time of the bus.

Parents/guardians are expected to know bus rules and procedures, accept the need for such rules for safety and behavior and support the school in enforcement procedures. Parents/guardians must accept responsibility for their student's behavior at the bus stop prior to the arrival of the bus or after delivery. Where a large number of children congregate at a stop, parents are expected to alternately share the responsibility of supervision.

If a student has had their bus riding privileges suspended, this does not necessarily mean the student has been suspended from school. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to secure transportation for their student to and from the school providing a school suspension has not been issued.

Students who live (see below) by the nearest traveled route from the school they attend are eligible for transportation to and from school.

- Young 5's through 5th grade; one half mile or more
- Grades 6-8; 1.5 miles or more
- Grades 9-12; 2 miles or more

Special transportation as determined for a student through the (Individual Educational Planning Team) IEPT process, in accordance with R340.1702, shall be provided only through the team. Special education transportation shall be determined for the sole purpose of meeting the student's educational needs.

Persons other than eligible students shall not be provided transportation and will be prohibited from riding buses on regularly scheduled routes. This includes preschool-aged children not enrolled, school-aged children enrolled in other schools, special education students enrolled in other programs, and adults. Exceptions to this rule may be made collaboratively between the Building Principal and the Director of Transportation.

TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES

I. Transportation Service Limitations

A. Bus routes shall be planned to achieve maximum safety of operation with reasonable economy.

1. Students are considered in the walking zone as follows:

- Young 5-grade 5; one-half (1/2) mile
- Grades 6-8; one and one half (1½) miles
- Grades 9-12; 2 miles to a bus stop

2. A bus will not make more than four (4) stops in any one mile unless safety requirements make additional stops necessary.
 3. In establishing routes in new or existing residential subdivisions, buses will be scheduled to use perimeter routes and/or main thoroughfares and students will be required to walk to bus stops in accordance with items 1 and 2 above to the extent walking safety permits.
 4. In apartment complexes and mobile home parks, bus service shall be provided off the public road onto the private property only in the interest of safety. Departure from the public road in such instances will be only to the extent of a turnaround, without backing up, for a single stop, where space permits, contingent upon the property owner signing a waiver of liability for the School District.
 5. The establishment of service for Young 5/kindergarten students in going to and from school at times when other elementary students are not being transported will take into consideration their age and maturity. As pupil safety becomes a greater concern when Young 5/kindergarten students are not accompanied by older children, the Transportation Director may establish more stops and shorter walking distances for them. However, that level of service will not be continued as such youngsters move up into the grade of elementary school.
- B. Regular and Special Education routes are to be designed to keep individual riding distances and time to a practical minimum
- C. In setting up bus schedules, it shall be the objective to arrange for buses to arrive at school approximately twenty (20) minutes before the scheduled time for the beginning of classes in the morning and to leave no more than ten (10) minutes after the scheduled dismissal time.

II. Service Reduction

When economic or other conditions warrant, the Superintendent, along with the Transportation Director, shall develop a plan of priority steps to determine an orderly process for the reduction of transportation services, subject to approval by the Board of Education.

III. Student Rider Eligibility

- A. The measurement of the mileage to determine eligibility for transportation shall be the responsibility of the Director of Transportation. Such measurement shall be accepted as conclusive evidence of eligibility for transportation. Any person who feels himself/herself aggrieved by this measurement may request to accompany the Director to witness the measurement. Such a request shall be honored and scheduled at the earliest mutual convenience.
- B. Each eligible pupil will be assigned to use a specific bus and bus stop and shall not be permitted to use any other without permission of the Director of Transportation.
- C. The scheduled number of pupils assigned to ride a standard bus will not exceed 110% of its rated passenger capacity, resulting with common student absenteeism, in the assignment of no more than three pupils per seat. Upon the opening of school, should unforeseen circumstances result in overload, adjustments in routes and stops will be made within 15 school days, whenever possible, with attention being given to the most seriously overloaded route.
- D. The Director of Transportation may grant permission for a pupil to ride a different bus or use a different scheduled stop. Such permission may be granted upon receipt of a written request of a parent or guardian or upon authorization of the Building Principal for a specified period of time, subject to the following conditions and limitations.
 1. The request change may not result in the overcrowding of any bus, alteration of any regular bus route, bus stop or time schedule, the providing of service in an area not normally serviced or in any other way interfere with the regular operation of the transportation system.
 2. The purpose of such special permission requested shall be:
 - a. To participate in a regularly organized group activity for children of school age which is basically educational in nature;

- b. To relieve a temporary situation which would otherwise work a severe hardship on a pupil in getting to and from school; and
 - c. For such other emergency or unusual reason as shall be approved by the Director of Transportation.
3. Drivers are to transport only their regularly assigned passengers unless other authorization is received from the Director of Transportation.
 4. In an emergency, a written request may be waived. Such emergency requests should be made to the child's principal, who will be responsible to coordinate necessary actions with the Director of Transportation.
- E. The safety of walking conditions for students ineligible for bus transportation will be reviewed continually by the Director of Transportation or his/her designee. Actions to alleviate unsafe walking conditions may include coordinated actions with local government, provision of student safety patrol services, provision of bus service or other alternatives. The Director of Transportation will make recommendation to the Assistant Superintendent in each specific problem situation.

IV. Student Bus Riders

- A. Previous to loading (on the road and at school):
1. Be on time at your assigned bus stop. The State allows a ten (10) minute window both ways of the scheduled arrival time of the school bus. The driver is responsible for keeping their bus on schedule and cannot wait.
 2. Stay off the road or out of the street at all times while waiting for the bus to arrive. Bus riders are to conduct themselves in a safe manner while waiting.
 3. Wait until your bus comes to a complete stop before you attempt to board it.
 4. Bus riders are to be on their best behavior in making their way safely to and from their assigned bus stop.
 5. Bus riders are not permitted to move toward the bus at the school loading zone until it has been brought to a complete stop.
- B. While on the bus:
1. Keep hands, arms and head inside the bus at all times to avoid injury.
 2. Assist in keeping the bus clean and sanitary by not throwing trash on the floor.
 3. Avoid loud talking and other unnecessary confusion as it diverts the driver's attention and makes safe driving difficult.
 4. Bus riders are not to tamper with the bus or any of its equipment.
 5. While on the bus, the rider is to keep books, lunches and other articles in his/ her possession.
 6. Riders are not to throw anything out of the bus windows.
 7. Each student may be assigned by the driver to a particular seat which he/she will be expected to occupy on regular routes to and from school. Students are not permitted to leave their seats while the bus is in motion and will be held responsible for the condition of assigned seats and their surroundings.
 8. Bus riders are not to engage in teasing, scuffling, throwing of objects to annoy others or other actions which will distract the driver.
 9. Absolute quiet while approaching a railroad crossing is required. Students will remain quiet until the bus has cleared all sets of railroad tracks.
 10. In case of a road emergency, students are to remain on the bus unless instructed by the driver to leave.
 11. Eating and drinking are not permitted on the bus.

12. Students are not permitted to bring radios, tape recorders, live animals (caged or uncaged) or glass containers or bottles on the bus.
13. Large music instruments are permitted as long as they may be held on the lap or placed under the seat.
14. There shall be no profanity, swearing or inappropriate language used on the bus. This rule applies to all persons, youth or adult, who ride school buses.
15. Riders are to board only their regularly assigned bus and get off at their regularly assigned stop. In case of an emergency, notify the building principal.
16. Emergency bus exits are to be used only at the direction of the bus driver.
17. Prior to leaving the bus, students will be required to close the windows.
18. The use of cell phones and other electronic devices are prohibited on buses.

C. After leaving the bus:

1. It is a Michigan state law that all motor vehicles are to stop for school buses that are loading or unloading students. If it is necessary to cross the road after getting off the bus, the rider is to pass at least ten (10) feet in front of the school bus, only after looking in both directions to be sure no traffic is approaching. **Students are never to cross behind the school bus for any reason.**
2. The rider is to respect and be alert to any warning signal from the bus driver.
3. The bus driver will not discharge riders at places other than the regular bus stop, at the home or at the school unless by proper authorization from the parent and school official.
4. After leaving the bus, students are not allowed to grab the bus or throw anything at the bus.

D. Extracurricular trips:

1. The above mentioned rules will apply to any trip under school sponsorship.
2. Pupils shall respect the direction of a chaperone appointed by the school.

Any infraction under the title of "Student Bus Riders" (A. Previous to loading; B. While on the bus; C. After leaving the bus; and D. Extracurricular trips), the driver will proceed with the steps listed under the "Disciplinary Process".

V. **Parents**

- A. Student bus riders are to arrive at their assigned bus stop on time each morning so that the bus does not have to wait. However, parents are to regulate their children's arrival so that it will not result in a long wait, permitting time for mischief or unsafe behavior. The State allows a ten (10) minute window both ways of scheduled arrival time of the school bus.
- B. Parents are expected to know bus rules and procedures, accept the need for such rules for safety and behavior and support the school in enforcement procedures.
- C. Even though a student has had their bus riding privileges suspended, this does not necessarily mean the student has been suspended from school. It is the parents' responsibility to transport their student to and from the school they attend.
- D. Parents must accept responsibility for students' behavior at the bus stop prior to the arrival of the bus or after delivery. Where a large number of children congregate at a stop, parents are expected to alternately share the responsibility of supervision.

VI. The Disciplinary Process

- A. **Procedure Process:** In all instances of disciplinary action, particularly in Procedures B, C and D, the right of students and parents will be carefully observed and respected.
1. Verbal Warning: For minor infractions, the driver may need to contact parents by way of a phone call or through a note. The driver may issue sentences, assign the students to a seat or ask the student to assist in performing bus related tasks. Documentation is kept in the Transportation Department.
 2. The first "infraction" will constitute a formal written warning and/or Procedure A, B or C. The student copy must be signed by the parent or guardian and returned to the bus driver before he/she will be permitted to resume riding the bus. Issuance of "infraction" slips shall be solely at the discretion of the bus driver.

Procedure A requires a suspension of one to three (1-3) days of bus riding privileges. The student copy must be signed by the parent or guardian and returned to the bus driver before he/she will be permitted to resume riding the bus. Issuance of "infractions" shall be solely at the discretion of the bus driver and documentation is kept in the Transportation Department.

Procedure B requires a suspension of one to five (1-5) days of bus riding privileges. The student copy must be signed by the child's parent or guardian and returned to the bus driver before he/she will be permitted to resume riding the bus. Issuance of "infractions" shall be solely at the discretion of the bus driver.

Procedure C requires a suspension of five to ten (5-10) days of bus riding privileges. A parent conference may be held involving the principal, bus driver and the Director of Transportation to review the particulars of the incident. The conference is to inform the parents of the student's behavior and what will result from the issuance of any further "infractions".

Procedure D is an automatic ten to fifteen (10-15) day suspension from the bus, a parent/guardian conference is required, possible bus expulsion for the remainder of the year and/or a referral to the appropriate police authorities.

VII. Infractions

Physical restraint shall be exercised solely in the event that a student presents safety issues to himself/herself and/or others.

- A. Aggressive Behavior: Physical contact or threat of physical contact towards the school bus driver or fellow rider will result in Procedure A (suspension one to three days), Procedure B (suspension one to five days), Procedure C (suspension five to ten days) or Procedure D (suspension ten to fifteen days). If a weapon is used, the bus riding privilege is immediately suspended. Under Section 1313 of the School Code, the local law enforcement will be notified along with the student's principal and parent/legal guardian.
- B. Destruction or Theft of Property: Destruction or theft of property from a driver or fellow rider will result in Procedure B, C or D. Damage to the bus will result in reimbursement to the District for repair or replacement costs. Under Section 1313 of the School Code, the local law enforcement will be notified along with the student's principal and parent/legal guardian.
- C. Verbal Abuse of a driver or fellow rider will result in Procedure B, C or D.
- D. Sexual Harassment of a driver or fellow rider will result in Procedure C or D.
- E. Habitual Offenders: A student who has received four (4) or more infractions in a single year may result in an automatic suspension for the remainder of the school year, upon recommendation of the Transportation Director.
- F. Specific automatic penalties: Due to the seriousness of the behavior involved, the following infractions will result in the immediate penalties listed below:
 1. Smoking is an automatic ten to fifteen (10-15) day suspension from bus riding privileges and requires a parent conference on the first offense. The second offense will result in immediate suspension of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year. Parent conference is required.

2. Possession or use of drugs, alcohol or weapons: Automatic ten to fifteen (10-15) days and/or immediate suspension of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year, required parent conference and/or a referral to the appropriate police authorities and follow the School Code of Conduct and State Guidelines.

VIII. Appeal Procedures

In any aspect of the application of the provisions of this policy, a parent, guardian or adult student may appeal the decision of any official. A decision of a bus driver may be appealed to the Director of Transportation. A decision of the Director of Transportation may be appealed to the Superintendent and, if necessary, on to the Board of Education. The appellant should be prepared in every instance to both meet with the official involved and submit the specifics of the case in writing, if required.

Bus riding is a privilege which may be revoked. Parents are urged to appreciate the disciplinary action taken and to discuss this with their child to prevent further occurrences.