

Updated 1/25/10

PUPIL TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK
ALLENDALE PUBLIC SCHOOL

TRANSPORTATION OFFICE: 616-892-3485

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....2
Transportation of Students in School-Owned Buses.....3
Eligibility.....4
Transportation Service Limitations.....5
Bus Stops and Bus Loading Procedures.....6
Transportation Rules of Conduct for Students.....7
Parent / Guardian Responsibilities..... 8
Bus Driver Responsibilities..... 9
Procedures for Changing Buses.....10
Tornado & Severe Weather Conditions.....11
Radio and Television Stations.....12
Other Information.....13

OTHER INFORMATION

After School Pick-up by Parents

If plans change and you must pick up an elementary child who usually rides a bus, **send a note to school**. Children will be released to the parent or other authorized persons from the office area. We do not want unsupervised children wandering around outside the building after school.

Injury Prevention Tips:

Please spend time reviewing safe walking practices, crossing streets, and school bus safety with your children. School bus safety is everyone’s business. You never know when a few moments of preparation is going to save your child from serious injury. Through safety education at school **and at home**, we can improve the probability that your child will always arrive safely at school and safely back home.

Teach Your Child To:

- Always **STOP** at the curb or edge of the road before proceeding.
- Look **LEFT – RIGHT – LEFT** before crossing streets.
- Walk on the sidewalk, not in the road. Walk facing toward traffic if there is no sidewalk.
- Never run into the street or between parked cars.
- Stand 10 feet back when a bus is approaching to pick-up students or when leaving a bus stop loading zone.

****The school district is not responsible for items damaged, lost or stolen while being transported on school buses. Drivers have the right to refuse to transport and/or confiscate items that are dangerous or illegal.**

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RADIO AND TV

Below are the call letters of all the radio and TV stations we notify when district schools are closed or delayed due to inclement weather. Stations are contacted as soon as the decision is made so that parents are alerted as early as possible. If the weather looks threatening, parents are encouraged to stay tuned to the local news media for updates.

TELEVISION

WWMT-TV
WOOD – TV
WXXM – TV

Channel 3 Kalamazoo
Channel 8 Grand Rapids
Channel 13 Grand Rapids

RADIO

WOOD FM 105.7
WOOD AM 1300

12

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide students and parent/guardians with general information about the Allendale Public School pupil transportation system. The State of Michigan and the Federal Government have established laws, regulations, and procedures that school districts must follow when providing transportation for students.

Each day, district buses transport kindergarten through 12th grade students to and from school. Students are also shuttled between elementary schools and numerous special activities.

Allendale Public Schools operates a fleet of 26 buses. They transport over 1500 students a day, traveling approximately 237,000 miles per year. In addition to regular home-to-school transportation, we provide bus service for hundreds of athletic events and field trips each year.

The support team at Allendale bus garage consists of a supervisor and twenty-five professional drivers who work diligently to safely transport your children back and forth every day. Each year, the Michigan State Police inspect the school bus fleet.

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TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS IN SCHOOL-OWNED BUSES

General Conditions

The primary purpose of the transportation system is to provide safe transportation for eligible students from the vicinity of their homes to the school they attend. Careful consideration is also given to efficiency and economy of operations. **Transportation of regular education students to and from school is not required by law.**

Therefore:

- A. It shall be considered a **privilege** to be enjoyed by students only as long as the students accept responsibility for their own personal conduct and carefully follow all rules and regulations.
- B. Most students, other than certain handicapped children designated by an Individual Educational Plan (IEP), will find it necessary to walk some distance to their designated stop.
- C. Transportation for transfer or out of district students may be provided on a limited basis on existing bus stops.
- D. DK-3 students may be required to walk up to ¼ mile along public roads to bus stops.
- E. 4th and 5th grade students may be required to walk up to ½ mile along public roads to the bus stop.
- F. 6-12 students may be required to walk up to one mile along public roads to the bus stop.

The following are instances that may require additional walking distance:

- 1. Entering subdivision where a turn around is necessary for exit.
- 2. Crossing a bridge with less than a ten-ton limit.
- 3. Traveling on unimproved roads or one that is impassable during the winter or spring.
- 4. Traveling on a private road or a public road that would require a turn around on private property.
- 5. Exceptions to these walking distances may be made when it is determined that a condition exist that can be demonstrated to be excessive or extraordinarily hazardous to the safety of children.

3

TORNADO & SEVERE WEATHER CONDITION

Allendale Public Schools' administrative office monitors the National Weather Service on a weather-alert scanner and notifies all buildings as soon as we are aware of adverse weather conditions. Our policy is:

Tornado Watch (means conditions are right for tornadoes to develop). The school program itself will remain unchanged. Schools will be notified of the Watch and school officials will be particularly alert for any further developments.

Tornado Warning (means a tornado has been sighted in the area). School will not be dismissed during a tornado warning. Students will be directed to prearranged locations selected for maximum safety in each building. Teachers talk about severe weather precautions with their students and schools do mock drills so those students are aware of procedures. If our immediate area is under a Tornado Warning at dismissal time, we will not send students home. They will not be allowed to leave the building unless a parent or duly authorized person signs them out or the warning has been lifted.

A more detailed notice regarding the school district's procedures for tornado and other inclement weather conditions is furnished to parents each year. Parents/Guardians should have an emergency school-closing plan in place and review that plan periodically with their child in case they should arrive home and a parent is not at home to meet them.

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PROCEDURES FOR CHANGING BUSES

Changes to a student's regularly scheduled transportation need to be made *before school*. Written authorization signed by the parent/guardian, can be given to the bus driver or sent to the Transportation Department.

The **signed note** should include the name, address, and telephone number of the requested designation. The Transportation Department will then inform the bus driver so they can anticipate the new rider and transport the student to the new destination.

This includes requests for a student to ride home on another bus with friends or relatives. From time to time, students will attempt to board a different bus with a friend or relative without a signed note, or claim that prior approval was already obtained. Unless a signed note is presented, or the bus driver receives direct notification from the Transportation Department, the student **will not** be allowed to board the bus.

Please do not call the school office at the last minute to change your child's drop off location. If time does not permit for a written request, please phone the Transportation Department at 892-3485.

Because Allendale Public School is concerned about the safety and security of all students, we **cannot** accommodate **frequent** requests to change the established pick up and drop off location for a student on alternate days or weeks of the month. Your bus stop must be consistent (the same every day, either A.M. or P.M. or both). The Transportation Department will accommodate **short-term temporary** changes in a student's pick up/drop off location with advanced written authorization from the parent/guardian.

10

TRANSPORTATION SERVICE LIMITATIONS

Transportation Route Planning Criteria:

- A. Routes are planned to achieve maximum economy of operations with reasonable safety. Routes are scheduled to reflect 100% of the rated bus capacity of eligible students subject to the following conditions:
 - 1. Routes are not extended nor new stops scheduled unless an eligible elementary student would be required to walk in excess of six-tenths (.6) of a mile.
 - 2. A school bus does not make more than three (3) stops in any one mile and they must be 200 feet apart.
- B. Bus stops are set so students do not have to cross Lake Michigan Drive or 68th Avenue to board a bus or reach their residence upon disembarking.
- C. In the event of road closings, unsafe road conditions, etc., the transportation supervisor may, with approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee, temporarily alter routes until the condition is remedied.
- D. Routes are planned to keep individual riding distance and time to a practical minimum. One hour and fifteen minutes shall be considered as the **maximum** allowable riding time for a regular student going to or from school.

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BUS STOPS AND BUS LOADING PROCEDURES

Bus stops and bus routes are established on the basis of safety and efficiency. The district reserves the right to change stops and routes when necessary. Bus routes are planned to provide the maximum number of students at each pickup point with a minimum number of “turn-around’s” and “back-tracking” for each bus. The following information is offered to help make pupil transportation safe and successful.

1. Bus stops are chosen with care and are based on several important factors as well as the State of Michigan guidelines. Bus stops must avoid as much traffic as possible. Stops should not be on a hill or before or after a curve. Buses should be visible for 200-400 feet in both directions when stopped (depending on the speed limit), and stops shall be at least 200 feet apart.
2. Students should arrive at their bus stop five minutes prior to the scheduled arrival of the bus. This will allow time to catch the bus but not enough time for problems among students to arise. **PARENTS AND GUARDIANS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAFETY AND CONDUCT OF THEIR CHILD WHILE GOING TO OR FROM THE BUS STOP, AND WAITING FOR THE SCHOOL BUS.**
3. When walking to or waiting for the bus, stay off the street or road. At the bus stop, stay back at least 10 feet off the road to allow the bus to safely enter the bus-loading zone. Students should line up in a single-file line to board the bus. Students must not run up to, beside or behind a departing bus if they are late. Late students should only approach a bus if eye contact has been made with the driver and he/she signals that it is OK to approach.

BUS DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Bus Driver will:

1. Provide safe transportation for students.
2. Assign seats as necessary.
3. Know the bus regulations and provide for student safety and security in accordance with the rules.
4. Teach students the rules for safe riding and enforce these rules in an equitable manner.
5. Establish proper rapport with students and building administrators, and work to ensure proper conduct and communications.
6. Advise the Transportation Supervisor and the building principal of any student behavior issues.
7. Keep to the scheduled route and time each day. Notify the Transportation Department (who in turn will notify the school office) if the bus will be late in arriving.
8. **Pick up and drop off students only at their designated stops except with written permission to do otherwise.**
9. Provide for school bus emergency evacuation drills on a regular basis.
10. Assist in making direct contact with parents/guardians and make a disciplinary referral in the event of inappropriate behavior by the student.
11. Not leave the bus unattended. Check the bus by walking front to back to make certain it is empty after completion of every route. The empty sign will be placed in the back window of the bus to indicate the bus has been checked.

PARENT / GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Parent/Guardians will...

1. Accept joint responsibility with school authorities for proper conduct of their children when riding the bus. Discuss with their children appropriate bus stop/bus rider behavior. Review and discuss bus safety rules with their children.
2. **Make certain their children arrive at the bus stop on time in the morning, five minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time. Parents will not chase down a bus at a future stop along the route to board their students because they were tardy or missed the bus at their designated bus stop. Parents must call in advance and get permission from the transportation department to have their students board at a different designated stop.**
3. Provide necessary supervision and/or protection of their children while going to and from the bus stop, and be responsible for them until the bus arrives.
4. Work with school personnel to reinforce appropriate behavior whenever necessary.
5. Provide alternate transportation for their students if suspended from the bus.
6. Ensure that payment is made for damages resulting from vandalism to the bus.
7. Restrict the size of objects that may be transported. Objects are limited to items that can be safely held by a student in a bus seat. Skateboards, pets, and unauthorized substances are not allowed on the bus.
8. Support emergency evacuation and early dismissal plans as established by the school district. Teach and remind children of the family's emergency plan if they arrive home early and no one is there to meet them.
9. **Elementary grades DK through 3 and certain special education students may require a family member or guardian to receive them at the end of their ride home at the scheduled drop off time. If in the judgment of the driver any student's safety is in question the student will remain on the bus while dispatch attempts to reach the parent or guardian. If no parent or guardian is contacted the child will be returned to the elementary school "Good Time Friends" program. A message will be left on the home phone of the location, address and phone number where the child will be taken. There may be a charge if this occurs.**
10. We will pick up at one (1) location and drop at another, but cannot pick up or drop on different days at different locations.

(Bus Stops and Bus Loading Procedures Continued)

4. All student riders must board the bus at their designated bus stop location. Permission to board the bus at another stop along the route must be approved in advance. The drivers are not authorized to allow student riders to board their bus at a different location, and parents should not chase down a bus or show up at a stop further ahead on the bus route with hopes of boarding their students at that stop without permission.
5. When a bus stops to pick up or drop students who need to cross the street: the students should cross the street **at least ten (10) feet in front** of the school bus and only **after** the driver has signaled the student that it is all right to do so. Riders will receive instruction on proper crossing procedure from the bus driver. Students must **never** cross the street behind a school bus.
6. Once students board a bus, they must remain on that bus until they reach their final destination. The only exceptions are regularly scheduled shuttle buses between schools.
7. When students depart from a bus, they must wait for a signal from the bus driver before crossing the street, and always in front of the bus. From the bus stop, students must go straight to the place their parents expect them to go. When there are no sidewalks along the road, it is safer to walk on the left-hand side of the road facing oncoming traffic. All parents should review and instruct their children on which walking routes they expect them to take to arrive safely at home.

Parent cooperation is required to make sure students ride the bus they are assigned. This ensures that the District knows exactly who is actually on a bus, that a student can be located in an emergency, that overcrowding is controlled, and that other possible problems can be prevented.

TRANSPORTATION RULES OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS

Students Responsibilities:

1. Realize that riding a school bus is a **privilege**. Exercise appropriate passenger behavior on the bus at all times.
2. The bus driver is the sole authority on the bus. Follow the bus driver's instructions the **first time** they are given. Students are not to distract the driver by misbehaving, yelling, or moving out of their seat while the bus is in motion.
3. Show proper respect for the rights, safety, and comfort of others on the bus. (No profane, abusive, or vulgar language, gestures, threats, inappropriate racial or ethnic comments directed towards another student such as: racial slurs, racial jokes, or instigation of fights due to racial/ethnic comments or intimidation will be tolerated). Keep your hands to yourself.
4. Be at the bus stop 5 minutes before the scheduled pick up time. Stay off the roadways by at least 10 feet while waiting for the bus. Buses cannot wait for tardy students. Fighting, pushing, shoving, and other inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.
5. Cross ten (10) feet **in front** of the bus when necessary and only after the driver has signaled to you that it is all right to do so. **Never, ever, run behind or in front of a school bus to pick up something that you dropped.**
6. Remain seated while the bus is in motion. When the bus comes to a stop, keep your hands, feet, and other objects out of the aisle so others can exit safely. The emergency door is to be kept free and available at all times.
7. Open windows only with permission. **Nothing** may be extended out of a bus window and students are not to shout at other vehicles or persons.
8. Remember that eating food, candy, chewing gum, drinking liquids, smoking, and possessing illegal substances or obscene materials are not allowed on the bus. Aerosol hair spray, deodorant, or perfume can not be used on a bus.
9. Do not bring unsafe items onto the bus. Animals, skateboards, pocketknives, and the like may not be transported on a bus.
10. Be aware that **ANY** driver distraction is potentially hazardous to the safety of all passengers.
11. Report any damage to the driver. Intentional damage to a bus will result in disciplinary consequences including restitution.

BUS RULE PENALTY POINT DESCRIPTION

1. Bus riding privileges will be removed for five school days after a student accumulates seven (7) penalty points.
2. Bus riding privileges will be removed for an additional ten school days after a student accumulates ten (10) penalty points.
3. Bus riding privileges will be removed for the remainder of the school year after a student accumulates thirteen (13) penalty points.
4. Points will zero out at the end of the school year and start fresh with a new school year.