

BUS TRANSPORTATION & SAFETY

Free school bus transportation to public and nonpublic schools within the district is provided for pupils in grades K–5 who live 1/2 mile or more from school attended; for grades 6–8 who live 3/4 mile or more from school attended; and for grades 9–12 who live 1 mile or more from school attended. Distances for each grade level are measured along the shortest route between home and school. Other rules may apply to children with disabilities. Please consult with Pupil Services (441-4970) in this regard.

Children who require bus transportation because of a temporary physical disability or other illness must submit a written physician's diagnosis to the school nurse. Final approval for granting bus passes for medical reasons rests with the school physician.

A **courtesy pass** may be requested by pupils living less than the distances listed above, if there are existing bus routes with available riding space and scheduled stops in the area. Each school office will accept requests, select the students to receive passes according to prescribed criteria, and distribute the passes as soon as possible. Courtesy passes may be withdrawn at any time to provide room for new eligible riders or for students requiring medical passes. Please note: No new stops are created for courtesy passes.

Free school bus transportation to nonpublic schools outside the school district is provided under the same distances governing students attending schools within the district, provided the schools they attend are less than 15 miles from home.

Parents of students attending or planning to attend nonpublic schools must apply for free transportation in writing by **April 1**, for the following school year. This date, set by State Education Law, provides the district sufficient time to seek transportation contracts through competitive bids, to estimate costs for budget purposes, and to submit the required forms for State Education Department (SED) approval. Families who move into the school district after April 1 must submit a transportation request no later than 30 days after establishing residence. Requests made after these dates must be accompanied with an explanation for the delay. An application for only one school per pupil will be accepted. The Superintendent of Schools is authorized to modify the provisions provided space is available on an existing route and no additional cost is incurred. None of the above applies to a pupil with disabilities or a student approved for a special education program.

A student may be late getting home due to bus delays due to breakdown, weather, traffic, construction, a disciplinary problem, etc. You might want to call the homes of other students who ride on your child's bus, your child's school, or the Transportation Office (441-4060), which remains open until all bus routes are completed.

In inclement weather, bus drivers are instructed to respect weather conditions rather than maintain a time schedule. When weather conditions appear to make driving a problem, delays should be expected. In the morning, if a bus does not arrive within 15 minutes of its regularly scheduled time, please call the Transportation Office (441-4060). When inclement weather is forecast, consult the procedures in this calendar for emergency school closings, delayed openings, and early dismissals (see page 3).

Late-activity-bus or athletic-bus inquiries may be made by calling the Security Office (441-4911) after 4:30 p.m.

The responsibility of prekindergarten and kindergarten parents is to meet their child at the bus stop when they are expected home. Bus drivers are instructed to release prekindergarten and kindergarten children only when a parent or designated adult is present at the stop. The bus driver will return a child to school if a parent or designated adult is not at the stop.

Bus privileges may be taken away for continued misbehavior, vandalism, or failure to follow the driver's instructions. If a school bus cannot be driven in a safe manner, the driver can return to the home school and seek assistance from the school administrator. The driver may also call for assistance from the school administrator, the Transportation Office, or the police. The Superintendent, his/her designee, and/or the building principal is responsible for suspending or revoking a student's bus privileges. If a student is going to be denied school bus transportation for disciplinary reasons, his/her parents must be informed in advance of the action and must be given an opportunity for a conference with the school administrator. If vandalism has been committed, a student may be charged for the repairs.

Parents have a say in transportation matters through the United Parent-Teacher Council (UPTC) Safety and Transportation Committee, which welcomes parent involvement. Many recommendations made by the Committee have been adopted as policy by the Board of Education. (See page 34 for the name and phone number of the UPTC Safety and Transportation Committee Chairperson.)

School bus safety is a continuous program involving training, evaluation, and review. Many safety regulations exist with regard to drivers and buses through agencies such as the SED, Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). The Board of Education, in its concern for safe school bus transportation, has added regulations that exceed legal statutes. Safety regulations that have particular significance are:

1. All buses shall have a current inspection by the DOT. To supplement this, the school district sends its own trained personnel to inspect buses periodically throughout the school year.
2. Each driver shall satisfactorily complete an annual physical examination as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education prior to the start of service.
3. Each driver shall submit three character reference letters.
4. A driving record abstract of each driver shall be obtained from the DMV for review/approval.
5. Initially, each driver shall complete a basic school bus driver course approved by the SED. Thereafter, refresher instruction in school bus safety practices shall be required twice each school year.
6. Each driver shall be observed and evaluated periodically by a transportation staff member. An unsatisfactory rating in driving skills or failure to follow the safety precautions outlined in the contractor's specifications shall be the basis for initiating a dismissal action of a driver.
7. All bus seats and stanchions shall have an energy-absorption system for protection against exposed metal frames and bars.
8. Three school bus safety drills shall be conducted throughout the school year in accordance with the regulation of the Commissioner of Education. The first shall be conducted during the first seven days of school, a second between Nov. 1 and Dec. 31, and the third between March 1 and April 30.
9. Every contractor shall comply with Article 19A of the Motor Vehicle Law. This law sets standards for driver selection, disqualification, periodic review, and evaluation.
10. Bus speed limits are limited to 35 mph on all common roads except where reduced speeds are posted and there are existing hazards, and 45 mph on limited-access highways.
11. All buses are equipped with two-way radios, stop arms, and seat belts.
12. The Board of Education has authorized the use of electronic surveillance in school buses to ensure the safety of all passengers.

BUS TRANSPORTATION & SAFETY (continued)

Student responsibilities for school bus safety include:

On the way to and waiting for the bus—

1. Be on time and at the stop at least 5 minutes before the bus arrival.
2. As the bus approaches, allow at least 10 feet of clearance from the designated bus stop. Don't approach the bus until it has stopped and the driver has opened the door. Don't push others in line.
3. Observe the following safety precautions:
 - a. Don't play in the road.
 - b. Look both ways when crossing a street and cross at a light-controlled or guarded intersection where possible.
 - c. Don't push, pull, or chase other pupils at the bus stop.
 - d. Don't bring large, bulky items on the bus, i.e., animal cages, big displays.
4. Don't bring preschool children or pets to the bus stop.
5. Don't trespass on or damage private property.

When boarding the bus—

1. Have bus pass ready to show the driver.
2. Board in an orderly manner and get seated quickly.
3. Follow the instructions of the bus driver.

When riding the bus—

1. Be courteous, kind, and respectful to the driver and everyone on the bus.
2. Engage in quiet conversation so as not to distract the driver.
3. Obey the driver's directions at all times.
4. Remain seated while the bus is in motion.
5. Sit safely in your seat with legs and feet facing forward (not in the aisle).
6. Head and arms should remain inside the bus at all times.
7. Eating and drinking is not permitted.

When departing from the bus—

1. Gather belongings before the stop approaches.
2. Don't leave seats until the bus has come to a complete stop.
3. Leave the bus promptly and in an orderly fashion, without pushing.
4. Walk 10 feet ahead of the bus at curbside and wait for the driver's signal to go, before crossing the street. Never cross behind the bus. Do not run. Carefully look left and right for cars that may be passing the bus illegally.



See also: Board of Education Policy on *Idling of School Buses & Other Vehicles*, 8414.6.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Great Neck Public Schools is committed to providing fair and equitable educational and employment opportunities for all of its students and staff. Pursuant to various applicable federal and state laws, the district shall not discriminate on the basis of any arbitrary criteria or applicable legally protected classes, including, but not limited to: age, ancestry, color, creed, disability (mental or physical), domestic violence victim status, ethnic group, gender, genetic predisposition, marital status, national origin, parental status, race, religion, religious practice, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition), sexual orientation, use of a guide dog, hearing dog or service dog, or weight, in the educational programs and activities of the district. For further details, please see the Board of Education Policy on *Discrimination and Equal Opportunity*, 0100, and *Staff Complaints and Grievances*, 9140.1.

The district's **Title IX Compliance Officers** are Jennifer Kirby, Director of Human Resources (441-4050), and Dr. Stephen Lando, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education (441-4009). Both compliance officers are located in the Phipps Administration Building, 345 Lakeville Rd., Great Neck, 11020.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Preventing and remedying harassment is essential to ensuring a healthy, nondiscriminatory environment that is conducive to working and learning. The Board of Education recognizes that harassment of students, employees (including all staff, applicants for employment, both paid and unpaid interns, exempt and non-exempt status, part-time, seasonal, and temporary workers, regardless of immigration status) and certain "non-employees" (which includes contractors, subcontractors, vendors, consultant and other persons providing services pursuant to a contract, or their employees, Board of Education members and volunteers) on the basis of sex, gender and/or sexual orientation is abusive and illegal behavior.

Sexual harassment includes harassment on the basis of actual or perceived or self-identified sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and transgender status. Sexual harassment can occur between persons of all ages and genders.

In order to enforce this policy and to take prompt corrective measures, it is essential that any targets of sexual harassment and persons with knowledge of sexual harassment report the harassment immediately to his/her immediate supervisor, building principal, assistant superintendent, Superintendent of Schools, the district's Title IX Compliance Officer(s) or the Board of Education. Students and other minors may also report any incidents of sexual harassment to teachers, guidance counselors, deans or school support staff. Any person who receives such a complaint shall immediately notify a Title IX Compliance Officer.

This policy is available in its entirety on the district website and in each district facility. (See Board of Education Policy on *Sexual Harassment*, 0110.)



Sexual Harassment Policy