

EEA - Transportation

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The Board of Directors will furnish school bus transportation to all elementary and secondary students to the extent determined by the administration and approved by the Board of Directors. The goal is to provide a safe, accessible and adequate level of service in a district with a variety of topography, occasional harsh climates and challenging traffic conditions.

In general, Maine law requires that a school district provide transportation for resident students. The Board of Directors has determined that students enrolled in grades PreK-grade 5 may be required to walk up to and including 3/4 mile to school or to a designated bus stop. Students in grades 6-12 may be required to walk up to and including one mile. While Maine law requires the district to furnish transportation, it does not relieve the parents or childcare providers from the responsibility to ensure the safety and proper behavior of students to and from, and at the designated bus stop.

MSAD #35 will operate its own fleet of school buses. However, as it is impractical to transport certain special education students by regular bus to programs outside the district, such students may be transported by other conveyance.

The District's transportation program will be under the direction of the Transportation Director who is responsible to the Superintendent of Schools and the Business Manager.

It is the desire of the Board of Directors that transportation be scheduled in such a way that the best educational interests of the students be served. Regulations are necessary to govern the operation of such a program, and it is not the intent of the Board to assume an unreasonable approach to this phase of the school program.

The Transportation Director, with suggestions from the bus driver, will determine the location of a designated bus stop and the route of the bus run. The location of a bus stop should be safe, accessible, and central. Requests for a change may be made in writing to the Transportation Director. The Transportation Director will review each request and render a written decision to the family, after consulting with the Superintendent and the Business Manager.

Childcare centers are defined as businesses that provide childcare for more than three (3) children. Requests for transportation to and from childcare centers must be made annually by the owner of the center. Each request will be considered by the Transportation Director who will render a written approval when such transport is reasonable and possible.

Bus Operations

1. School buses shall operate only on town approved or maintained roads.

2. It is the parents' responsibility to make arrangements for getting the student to the bus stop five to ten minutes before the scheduled pick up.
3. No bus shall pick up or discharge students outside the district. Buses shall not be rerouted to accommodate child care situations.
4. Students riding a school bus shall always ride from their designated bus stop to school and from school to their designated bus stop. Any exception to this rule requires written permission signed by the parent and approved by the principal after consulting with the Transportation Director as to the availability of space on the bus. Parents are encouraged to submit requests at least 24 hours prior to the requested change. In emergency situations, a principal may authorize a request made via phone by informing the bus driver in writing of the approved request. The Transportation Director will inform the principals at the beginning of each school year and as necessary during the year of all buses that have reached their maximum capacity. Opportune riders will not be accepted on these buses.
5. Students receiving special education services shall be transported as determined by IEP decision.
6. A late bus will operate to provide limited transportation for students who stay late for school-sponsored activities. The routes will not replicate the normal runs, but rather provide service to central locations within each town. The late bus run may not accommodate the needs of all students. It will be the responsibility of the parents or child care providers to provide alternate transportation for students who need a stop outside the late bus route.
7. Timeliness of transportation runs is important but extenuating circumstances may result in longer than usual runs. Examples of extenuating circumstances include but are not limited to weather conditions, driver shortages, traffic and new students.

Special Bus Usage

1. The Board will approve special requests for bus usage by municipally operated programs under the following conditions:
 - a. The municipality will obtain Board approval in advance of the event;
 - b. An hourly fee, according to the fee schedule as established annually by the Board, will be assessed for each bus used;
 - c. The Board may waive the fee for special town-sponsored events;
 - d. The municipality is responsible for any vandalism or accidental damage done to the bus.
2. The Superintendent of Schools will approve the use of buses for trips sponsored by student groups. The group will be assessed the cost of the driver's salary, benefits and the cost of fuel. The student group will be responsible for any vandalism or accidental damage done to the bus.
3. Only persons employed by MSAD #35 and properly licensed by the State of Maine will be allowed to drive a district bus.

Cross References: Student Conduct on Buses JICC

Student Code of Conduct JICDA

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