

Transportation Policy
Blue Hill School Department

3100

The Blue Hill School Department provides transportation for all eligible school students residing in Blue Hill in grades K-12 who attend its public schools and George Stevens Academy. For students served through special programs and activities the district provides transportation in accordance with Federal and State laws and/or district policy. The district believes that transportation for students is both a right and a privilege and that the nature of school transportation requires students, parents, and school personnel to cooperate in assuring a safe and efficient delivery system.

The district recognizes that neither all circumstances, nor all rules, can be anticipated and written. However, students are expected to act in a responsible, courteous manner in conformance with written rules and mindful of the respectful consideration which must be afforded other passengers, bus drivers, and district property. The district supports its personnel in establishing and enforcing such rules of management and discipline as may be necessary to provide for the health, safety, and convenience of those served by this transportation system. Enforcement of reasonable rules is vital and, along with normal forms of discipline, may include suspension of bus riding privileges for students who do not comply with the rules.

The district expects parents to support its efforts by discussing with their children the shared responsibility for safety and cooperation, by bringing any problems or concerns to the attention of appropriate school officials immediately, and by supporting the disciplinary measures taken by the school.

The Superintendent of Schools shall provide transportation under the following regulations:

1. The location and assignment of bus stops will consider the ages and health of the students, the distances from residences to school or stops, the safety of the walking routes, the appropriateness of waiting areas, and the safety of the vehicles and their passengers.

2. Bus stops will not be established on roads within a housing sub-division.

3. Bus stops will not be established on roads that are not town roads.

4. It is the School Board's general policy to establish a bus stop no more than 1.0 miles (one mile) from the home of any student in grades K-8 and no more than 1.5 miles (one and one-half miles) from the home of any student in grades 9 -12. Bus stops may be located at greater distances in the case of K-8 and 9 - 12 students, but still as close as possible, whenever one or more of the following circumstances apply:

(a) The student lives in a housing sub-division;

(b) The student lives on a road that is not a town road;

(c) The student lives on a road that is impassable for any part of the school year, or if the road is determined to be impassable or unsafe for a school bus to travel, or if it is determined unsafe for a school bus to enter or exit from the road on which the student lives.

Note: The Superintendent of Schools and the Transportation Director are authorized to determine jointly any of the conditions in (a), (b), and (c).

5. Students in grades K-8 will be discharged only at their assigned bus stop unless the parent has provided written instruction to the driver to discharge the student at another specifically named stop.

6. Students in grades 9- 12 may be discharged at another bus stop without written permission but the district will not be responsible for students after they leave the bus.

7. Bus drivers are permitted to make rescheduled stops providing stops are on the regular bus route. Said rescheduled stops can only be made by the consent of the parent or guardian. In addition, such stops must be approved by the school administration officials.

8. While the law requires the school to furnish transportation, it does not relieve parents of students from the responsibility for students in grades K-8, of supervision until such time as the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child leaves the bus at the end of the school day. Once a child boards the bus - and only at that time - does he or she become the responsibility of the school. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the appropriate bus stop at the close of the school day.

9. Students may not transport any items which could pose a threat to their health or safety or to the health or safety of others. (e.g. animals, weapons, explosives, large objects, etc.)

10. To insure proper control of their bused, drivers will have broad discretionary authority in the interpretation of student rules, especially in unusual or emergency situation when immediate action is necessary.

11. Drivers will review the bus rules and emergency procedures with students at the beginning of the school year and at other times as necessary.

12. Drivers will conduct at least two (2) safety drills each year and report the results to the Director of Transportation in writing.

13. Drivers will report problems to the Director of Transportation and Principals on the "Bus Report Form" provided by the district. Drivers are encouraged to request assistance from the director or appropriate principal as soon as any problem or concern is encountered.

14. Drivers will be provided with training in the general areas of safety and discipline and support in the understanding and enforcement of necessary rules.

15. All vehicles used to transport children shall be maintained in such condition as to provide safe and efficient transportation service with a minimum of delays and disruption of such service due to mechanical or equipment failure. Buses shall be replaced at such intervals so as to provide good equipment at all times. All legal requirements shall be scrupulously observed.

16. All bus drivers shall hold a valid Maine school bus drivers license, be competent, of temperate habits, and capable of maintaining discipline among students on their buses. They shall be in good health and adequately trained in accordance with legal requirements and with the Board's policy of providing a safe, efficient transportation program for the students of the district. Drivers shall be approved by the Blue Hill School Board before transporting students.

The driver of a school bus is charged with a serious responsibility for the welfare of the children in his/her care; their safety and health should always be the first consideration.

Each bus driver shall be thoroughly familiar with the booklet Motor Vehicle Laws compiled by the office of the Secretary of State, and abide by its code.

17. In case of inclement weather or other emergency, the Superintendent of Schools shall determine the need for school cancellation, delayed opening, or early dismissal and shall inform area radio stations and district personnel.

18. Special Use of School Buses - School bus services may be used as transportation for student field trips and extra-curricular activities in accordance with amounts budgeted for such purposes and subject to rules and regulations established by the Superintendent.

All arrangements for bus services for special trips shall be made by the school administration.

All regulations pertaining to student conduct on school buses shall also apply to special trips. Chaperones shall be responsible for maintaining order on the buses. There must be adequate chaperones as determined by the Principal.

Drivers shall keep strictly to the previously approved route, and shall make no unwarranted stops or detours without specific permission from the school administration.

Bus company vans may be used to transport students and may be driven by either bus company employees or by school personnel. Staff members who drive bus company vans must have on file in the superintendent's office written proof of adequate liability coverage and must have a current driver's license for the State of Maine.

19. Use of Private Vehicles on School Business - Certain school employees, parents, and community members use their own cars for school purposes regularly or occasionally. To safeguard the district in matters of liability, particularly as this relates to transporting a student or students, the policy shall be observed:

a. To use a private vehicle for school purposes, a staff member, parent, or community member shall be required to submit proof of liability coverage of at least the state minimum for hire vehicles. The staff member, parent, or community member must also have a valid driver's license, and their vehicle must have a current inspection sticker and registration.

b. It should be understood that if the above restrictions are maintained, the school's liability policy will cover individuals transporting student on school business. damage to private vehicles, however, will not be covered.

c. The School Committee shall not assume responsibility for liability in case of accident unless the staff member, parent or community member has submitted the proof of liability as stated above.

d. No students shall drive motor vehicles o school business.

Bus Rules

1. The bus driver is always the boss.
2. Be at the stop on time...
3. Line up at the bus stop.
4. If you have to cross a road to get on or off a bus, wait for the bus driver's signal before crossing.
5. Get to your seat immediately when boarding ... stay in your seat until the bus comes to a complete stop before leaving.
6. Do not stand up or move from seat to seat.
7. Do not eat, drink, or smoke.
8. Do not throw things on the floor or out the windows.
9. Do not damage the bus.
10. Do not bother others or touch the property of others.
11. Emergency doors are for emergencies only .. do not tamper with them.
12. You can not bring things such as animals, weapons, explosives, or large packages on the bus.
13. If you are in grades K-8, you need a note from your parent in order to get off the bus at a stop other than the one where you usually get off.
14. If you are in grades 9-12, you can get off the bus at a different stop without a note, but... You are on your own!
15. In case of bad weather the Superintendent of Schools will decide if schools will be open or not. He/she will call the radio stations. Listen to the radio. If there is no school, there are no other school activities for students in grades K-8.

If you break the rules, here is what happens.....

1. First Time - The driver will give a bus report to the Director of Transportation and your Principal. If you feel you were not treated fairly, you or your parent may call the Director of Transportation.

2. Second Time - The driver will report you to the Director of Transportation and the Principal. The Principal can suspend you from the bus for up to five (5) days.

3. Third Time - The Director of Transportation will report you to the Principal. The Principal can suspend you from the bus for as long as the Principal thinks it is necessary. If you feel you were not treated fairly at steps two or three, you or your parents can call the Superintendent of Schools at 374-9927.

You know right from wrong...use your head. Your life and the lives of others depend on you! In short, be considerate, cooperative, and responsible!

Copy of the Bus Rules is to be sent home with each student during September of each school year.

Legal Refs: MRSA Title 20A - Section 5401

Adopted: Blue Hill School Committee - August 10, 1977

Amended: Blue Hill School Committee - December 9, 1992

Amended: Blue Hill School Committee - January 13, 1999

Amended: Blue Hill School Committee - December 11, 2002

Amended: Blue Hill School Committee - August 26, 2009