

ADMINISTRATIVE RULE – BOARD POLICY #810

AGSD – TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are established for providing transportation to all pupils residing in the Avon Grove School District.

I. GENERAL CONDITIONS

ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSPORTATION

- Transportation is not provided to students who live within one mile (one and one-half miles for secondary students) of their school unless the route has been identified as hazardous by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PENNDOT) or as potentially hazardous by the Transportation Coordinator.
- Generally bus stops will be designated within one-quarter mile of a students' residence. Pupils may be required to walk up to one mile to a bus stop, and one and one half miles for a secondary student from the residence to a bus stop.
- All distances are measured from the point where the driveway, private lane or private road from the students residence, enters a public roadway.

BUS ROUTING/STOPS

- Bus stops will not normally be scheduled more than four per mile, except when necessary due to a lack of visibility, lack of berm, speed limits, etc. Safety is paramount.
- Bus stops will not normally be established for less than the following number of pupils: elementary-6, secondary-10.
- Students will be transported from the registered home of record to school and return. Multiple pick-up/drop-off points can be assigned on a permanent basis if so requested by the parent/guardian in writing each year. This alternate transportation must be within the assigned busing areas of the public schools or close to existing busing of the attending non-public school.
- Whenever possible routes will be reversed if the run time is not unduly lengthened, i.e. first picked up in AM, first dropped off in PM.
- Buses will not travel on non-dedicated thoroughfares or into areas of construction or on other private roads or property.
- Whenever possible, bus stops will remain unchanged from year to year unless walking distances are exceeded or numbers of pupils necessitate the consolidation of stops.

- A.M. kindergarten students will only be dropped off when an adult is present at the bus stop. If an adult is not present, students will be returned to the school.
- Elementary buses will be loaded up to but not in excess of stated bus capacity. Secondary buses may be scheduled as necessary at less than stated bus capacity.
- Total time for students from home to school or school to home will be limited as much as possible to no more than (1) hour within the district boundaries. For students attending schools outside of the district, the riding time limit is extended past the one-hour limit according to the driving time needed to get to/from the school from the district boundary.
- For those students who are authorized to use District transportation but do not use it on a regular basis (within a 2-week period) may be removed from the bus list. Transportation may be resumed only when the Transportation Office is notified that the bus is required and may take up to three (3) days to be reinstated.

BUSSING FOR DEVELOPMENTS

- Buses may enter developments where conditions permit and when necessary to meet criteria contained elsewhere within these guidelines. However, buses will not enter cul-de-sacs or one-road developments.
- When possible, stops including those in developments will be at intersections except for special education and afternoon kindergarten pupils.
- All buses entering a development will, whenever possible, follow the same route. Stops for differing schools may be at different points along the route of travel of buses.

NON-PUBLIC STUDENTS & CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS

- Transportation shall be provided to and from school for the regular school program for all resident students attending nonprofit, non-public schools as required Section 1361 of the School Code.
- District busing will be provided to non-public schools for the same number of days and early dismissals as the District Public schools.
- District bussing will be provided to the charter schools for the same number of days and early dismissals as the District public schools.
- Any pupil transported outside District boundaries will not normally have a bus ride within the District of more than one hour.
- Transfer points will be used for buses picking up pupils from a geographic area for multiple schools.

- Transfer points are not bus stops.
- District buses will pick up at non-public schools for early dismissals the same number of times as District public school students have early dismissals. When an early dismissal is scheduled busing will be provided only for morning students.

SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

- Transportation for children with special needs will be scheduled individually for each child, dependent upon their needs and the programs they attend.

BUS DISCIPLINE

- The school bus driver shall be responsible for the discipline of students while they are being transported to or from school. All discipline infractions shall be referred to the school principal for investigation and possible disciplinary action.

II. RIDING BUSES OTHER THAN AS ASSIGNED (DAILY EXCEPTIONS)

The decision to permit Avon Grove School District students to ride a bus other than the one to which they are regularly assigned shall be made by the building principal or his/her designee. Such requests shall be required in writing from the parent and countersigned by the approving administrator for presentation to the driver.

- In no case shall a bus be permitted to operate with a load that is above its rated capacity.
- Changes in bus assignment should be permitted only for urgent reasons such as:
 - a) Medical services
 - b) Tutoring (as approved by the school)
 - c) Home emergencies
- Students not residing in the Avon Grove School District may not ride public or non-public school buses unless special permission has been granted by the Transportation Coordinator.

III. TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS TO BEFORE SCHOOL/AFTER SCHOOL CARE

- The District may provide transportation services to/from before school/after school care located within the boundaries of the Avon Grove School District, if there is space available on an established bus route.

- Students attending such programs must be picked up/dropped off at the same location each school day.
- When transportation services to a care center are terminated at the request of the parent or guardian, transportation to a location other than the permanent residence will be reinstated only on a space available basis as determined by the transportation department.
- Should new students move into a permanent residence in an area served by a route transporting students to before school/after school care, and space is not available for the new student, a child attending before/after school care could be “bumped” in reverse order that permission was granted.

IV. LARGE OBJECTS AND/OR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

- The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation mandates in Title 67, Chapter 171, that the interior of a school bus must be free of objects, which could cause injury. Objects must be secured and the aisles and emergency exits cannot be blocked. The following must be adhered to at all times;
- No items can be placed in the driver’s compartment, doorway or aisle. These areas must be kept clear to exit in case of emergencies. Animals are not permitted on the bus, the exception being an assigned guide dog from an approved agency or program.

V. PARENT DISAGREEMENT OVER ASSIGNED STOP/ROUTE

- Requests for changes or additions of bus stops or routes shall be directed to the Transportation Coordinator in writing. Such requests may come from a parent, guardian or concerned member of the community.
- Building principals, on behalf of the parent(s), may request a change or addition of a stop or route by contacting the Transportation Coordinator directly.
- A decision to grant a change or addition shall be made by agreement of the Transportation Coordinator representing the District and the independent bus contractor. Implementation of the decision shall normally occur within a 5-day period. The final decision rests with the Avon Grove School District Transportation Coordinator.
- Notification of any changes shall be made in writing to the following concerned parties: Transportation Coordinator, independent bus contractor’s representative, building principal, bus driver, and parents.

- Appeals to the decision shall be made in writing to the Business Manager.

VI. GUIDELINES FOR EMERGENCY EARLY SCHOOL DISMISSAL

- Schools will be normally dismissed in the regularly scheduled order (i.e. high school, middle school, elementary school) unless specific circumstances at a school building warrant otherwise.
- The Superintendent or his designee shall make the decision regarding an emergency school closing and will notify the Transportation Coordinator.
- Whenever possible, the decision to close schools early shall be made as soon as possible in the morning.
- The Superintendent's designee shall notify:
 - Independent bus contractor
 - Building principals
 - The public through appropriate radio stations, TV stations, website and emergency closing number
 - Police departments within Avon Grove School District boundaries and the State Police if necessary
 - Food Service Manager
 - Other calls as required

The Transportation Coordinator shall notify:

- CCIU and other special program administrators
- CAT Building Administrators
- Non-public school principals
- Other calls as required
- Principals shall put their building early dismissal plan into effect.
- When the School District is closed, all afternoon and evening activities are postponed.
- Principals shall dismiss students as soon as a bus arrives, rather than waiting for all buses to arrive.
- The Superintendent of Schools shall have the responsibility of dismissing professional and non-professional staff.
- All principals shall call the Transportation Coordinator when the last bus leaves the building.

- Elementary and middle school principals shall remain in the building until the last bused child is home. Building principals shall develop a calling system. When all children are home, the contractor shall notify the Transportation Coordinator who will then notify the school principals.
- The Transportation Coordinator shall remain accessible to the independent bus contractor and building principals until all bus runs are complete.
- The Transportation Coordinator shall make available to all Central Office administrators a complete list of buses, which includes the names and phone numbers of each student assigned by school/by bus route. These lists shall be used in case of an accident/emergency to assist the independent bus contractor as requested.
- The Transportation Coordinator shall supply each principal with a list of buses and the names and phone numbers of each student assigned to that school by bus route.
- The Bus Contractor will provide to the Transportation Coordinator an accounting of buses returning to the bus parking lots at the completion of their routes.

VII. BUS ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

When an emergency call is received reporting a bus accident, the following procedures are in effect:

- Transportation Coordinator (or any available Central Office administrator) shall notify the building principals and the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee of the accident and any details known including location.
- Superintendent's designee will coordinate communications with the Superintendent's office.
- Transportation Coordinator and Business Manager or an available Central Office administrator shall respond to the scene with portable phone.
- Transportation Coordinator will contact the non-public school building administration for accidents involving non-public school students.
- Communication with the school office shall come from the Transportation Coordinator/Central Office Administrator at the accident scene.
- Upon arrival at the scene, the Superintendent's designee shall be called to verify that the Transportation Coordinator/Central Office administrator has arrived and to report a general description of the accident.

- The Transportation Coordinator/Central Office administrator shall find the individual(s) in charge at the scene and notify them of our presence and offer assistance as necessary.
- The Superintendent or designee shall inform the Board of School Directors.
- Building Principals will coordinate the communications to parents.
- Bus Contractor will provide a second bus if needed.

At the scene of serious accidents where bodily injury to students is evident:

- Transportation Coordinator and an available Central Office administrator and the building principal shall respond to the scene with a portable phone and follow the basic procedures outlined above.
- Police and/or ambulance crew have the authority to manage the details of accidents.
- The Superintendent's office or designee shall notify Board members.
- All students involved in the accident shall be taken to the nearest hospital for medical evaluation if deemed necessary by the ambulance crew and/or police in consultation with the Central Office administrator/Transportation Coordinator.
- The Central Office administrator shall notify Superintendent's Office of the details obtained to this point, including which hospitals students will be transported to. Superintendent's office or designee will contact School Board members.
- An administrator will travel to the hospital and secure names of students and home phone numbers.
- Superintendent's Office shall be called for an update. Superintendent's office or designee will provide update to School Board members.
- An administrator shall remain at the hospital and wait for the arrival of parents.
- Public Relations shall prepare for responses to questions from the news media.

VIII. TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Parents requesting special transportation services for their child based on the child's physical disability shall be evaluated by the Avon Grove School District as required by 22 Pa. Code § 15.6 and § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

- The Director of Pupil Services will send the appropriate information to parents requesting special transportation services through the transportation office including:
 - *504 Request Parent Cover Letter*
 - *Parent Request for Evaluation and Provision of Services for Protected Handicapped Student Form*
 - *SECTION 504 PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS*
- The Director of Pupil Services will send to the building principal the Section 504 TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT INITIATED REFERRAL form and a copy of the parent initial request.
- Public school parents must complete the *Parent Request* form and submit this form to their building principal. Nonpublic school parents must complete the *Parent Request* form and submit it to the public school principal in their child's attendance area.
- Within 25 school days of the building principal's receipt of the *Parent Request* form information, the District will complete the evaluation and notify the parents as outlined in the *504 Request Parent Cover Letter*.
- The Avon Grove School District Transportation Office will implement special transportation arrangements five days after receiving an initial or updated 504 Service Agreement from the building principal.

IX. OTHER TRANSPORTATION EXCEPTIONS

According to Section VIII of the transportation guidelines, the granting of special transportation services is based on the disability or physical handicap of the child transported as required by the Pennsylvania Regulations at 22 Pa Code Ch. 15 and § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The transportation policy provides a process for the handling of these exceptions.

The School District shall not grant special transportation services to accommodate the disabilities or other circumstances concerning caregivers, siblings or other individuals excluded from the legal requirements of Section VIII of the transportation policy. The transportation services include, but are not limited to, changing bus stop locations and changing walking distances.