



BUS PASS Q & A

1. Who is OR is not eligible to ride at town expense?

All students in grades K-6 residing over two miles from their respective school will ride free of charge. All students in grades K-6 who reside two miles or less from their respective school and all students in grades 7-12 regardless of distance are required to pay for transportation. Please note that this criteria is supported by M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 68.

2. How can I help improve transportation safety conditions?

Parents can help reduce traffic concerns by having their children take the bus or by carpooling. If your child is not a bus rider or a walker, you must pick up your child in the designated parking/pick up areas. Failure to follow this important directive creates a safety hazard to students, staff and the community.

3. How is the two-mile determination made?

In accordance with State law, distance is measured using the shortest vehicular route from the sidewalk or public way in front of or nearest to the child's home to the public way in front of the school the child attends. You may review your mileage determination by examining the Town map along with the master list of mileage determinations which are conveniently located at both schools as well as the administrative offices.

4. What do I do if I disagree with the school department's mileage measurement?

You may contact the Transportation Coordinator at 978-456-4140. If the official mileage is contested, the school measuring method will be the final determination.

5. Where will my child be picked up or dropped off?

The bus routes will be similar to the current ones but are still being developed. Please note under state law students are not entitled to door-to-door pick up or delivery; children may have to walk to a common bus stop. Whereas everyone's safety is our first and foremost objective, distance, pick up and drop off procedures will be determined in accordance with those safety concerns. Bus stops will be set up, approved, maintained and verified by the bus company in order to keep the total trip times insofar as possible at 45 minutes or less. Bus route lists will be published in the local newspaper and posted at the schools and administrative offices prior to the start of school. All stops will be at street corners, whenever possible, to make them consistent and fair for all. Bus stops are set up in accordance with School Committee policy and state law as noted previously. Parents are responsible to ensure their child is at the correct bus stop. Any child standing at unauthorized locations, or bus stops not assigned by the bus company, will not be picked up. Do not assume bus stops are in the same location as last year as they are apt to change due to student location, bus routes and population. School bus drivers are not permitted to make changes, additions or deletions to any bus stop.

6. Who is responsible for supervision at bus stops?

While the law requires school departments to furnish transportation to those students residing within the state guidelines, it does not relieve the parent of the responsibility of supervision of the child until the child boards the bus at pick up and the child leaves the bus at delivery. Once a child boards the bus, the child becomes the responsibility of the school district. Consequently, any child who exhibits improper bus conduct while riding the bus may forfeit ridership privileges. The school district's responsibility for the child shall end when the



child is delivered to the bus stop at the end of the school day. At that time, responsibility for the child reverts to the parent/guardian.

7. Kindergarten student pick up/delivery?

All kindergarten students must be met and taken from the school bus stop by an adult. Kindergarten students will be returned to the school if no adult is present for pick up.

8. Can I have my child picked up or dropped off at a bus stop other than their home bus stop?

All bus fees are based on home addresses. In cases of alternate bus stops (i.e. a licensed daycare facility, shared custodial parent, etc.), parents should submit a letter of interest to the Transportation Coordinator. The following criteria must be met for consideration of alternate bus stops:

- A) Space Availability, the stop must be located within the school district's area and within one of the scheduled bus routes (please note that availability cannot be determined until ridership statistics can be evaluated on or about October 1, 2008);
- B) The student has not and does not become a discipline issue;
- C) Only one alternate stop per child is allowed. The alternate stop, **if approved**, must be consistent (i.e. the same day every week);

One time cases (i.e. visits to friend's houses) are not permitted. Parents must arrange for their own transportation for this and temporary addresses for use while parents are vacationing, on business trips, etc. This policy must be instituted because both the elementary and high school buses will be at their maximum capacity.

9. Late buses for Grades 6-12.

Any student seeking to ride home on the elementary school bus (i.e. late bus) shall have a signed late bus pass from an appropriate staff member at the Bromfield School. Seats will be determined on a first come, first served basis. There shall be no guarantee of seat availability, and students should be prepared with a back up plan should a seat not be available.

10. What if I only need the bus one way or only 2 or 3 days per week?

The bus fee for all students is the same. The amount of time you use the bus does not matter. Bus costs are budgeted fiscally and cannot be prorated according to varied daily usage.

11. How much will the bus cost?

The amount of the fee shall be determined annually. The fee for the 2008/09 school year is as follows:

\$225.00 per child, with a family cap of \$600.00 if paid by August 1, 2008

There shall be no prorating of fees

There will be a LATE FEE of \$50.00 per family for all applications received after August 1, 2008. The late fee applies whether your child(ren) ride for free or you are required to pay the bus fee.

12. When will I be required to pay for the bus service?



All bus fees must be paid in full prior to getting on a bus for transportation to and from school. **There shall be no refunds of any monies after the start of school.**

13. Is there any provision for a fee waiver?

The School Committee has put in place a Bus Transportation Fee Waiver application. Families who receive any type of state assistance or benefits or those whose household income is less than double the federal poverty guidelines may qualify for a reduced fee. Waiver applications will be sent to those who have requested them on the application form. All applications are kept confidential. If you are unsure of your eligibility, please check the following federal website for the federal poverty guidelines:

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/poverty.htm>

Applications must be completed accurately and submitted along with the required documentation, or it will not be processed. We will attempt to process your application as soon as possible; however, until a determination is made, you are responsible for transporting your child to and from school. Applications will be processed in the order they are received. You will be notified via US mail of the fee waiver decision.

14. Lost passes?

All students will be afforded a one time lost bus pass. Additional lost passes will be issued for an administration fee of \$10.00 per pass.

15. Emergency Dismissal Plans

If you are not purchasing a bus pass for your child, it is imperative that you make emergency dismissal plans in the event of an early school closing. There will not be a bus seat available for every child to ride the bus home in an emergency. Parents or their emergency designees should be prepared to pick up the child.

16. Bus Pass Suspension/Revocation

The Harvard Public Schools Student Bus Policy is always in effect as riding the school bus is a privilege. Students are expected to behave in a manner consistent with providing optimum safety. Behavior issues will be dealt with in accordance with school policy. Suspension and/or revocation of riding privileges of any student will not afford a refund of bus fees for any reason.

17. Where do I submit applications and payments?

Forms must be returned to Transportation Coordinator, Harvard Public Schools, 39 Massachusetts Avenue, Harvard, MA 01451. Checks should be made payable to Harvard Public Schools – Referencing TRANSPORTATION in the memo section.

18. How will I receive the bus passes?

Bus passes will be mailed once the application has been processed. If your child does not receive a bus pass and you have submitted your application, please contact the Transportation Coordinator at 978-456-4140.