

Berkeley Heights Board of Education

Student Transportation Handbook

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Student Eligibility:

- a. Public school students residing *beyond* 2 ½ miles for high school and *beyond* 2 miles for elementary school (grades Kindergarten through eight). Distance is determined by the *shortest* route via walking, driving or any combination of the two modes of travel.
- b. Nonpublic school students who reside remote from their school of attendance and meet the eligibility criteria of N.J.A.C. 6A:27-2.2. Refer to *Aid in Lieu of Transportation* on page 6 of this document.
- c. Special education students who reside remote from their assigned school or who require transportation services in accordance with their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Notification of Student Eligibility:

Parents/guardians will receive written notification from the Berkeley Heights Public School District (BHPSD) in August to advise them as follows:

- a. Their child is eligible for busing
- b. Route #
- c. Pick-up time and location

Note: Bus rosters will be provided to school principals to assist them in performing periodic audits to ensure that only eligible students are being transported.

Inclement Weather:

Decisions regarding inclement weather and deteriorating road conditions are made to ensure the safety of all students whether they attend school in Berkeley Heights or are transported to schools outside the district. Please note the following:

- a. *Early dismissal and delayed opening times* are noted on the current school calendar which can be accessed by going to www.bhpsnj.org.
- b. If the decision is made to close school for the day *before* the start of school, there will be no transportation for any Berkeley Heights student including those attending schools outside the district.

Student Pick-up:

Students should be outside ready and waiting for the bus at the designated bus stop. Pick-up times are traffic dependent; there is a window of 10-minutes before and after the designated time. *The driver is not required to sound the horn.*

Student Drop-off:

- a. A parent, guardian or responsible adult must be home to receive 1) preschool special education students, 2) special education students with specific requirements and 3) all Kindergarten students. *The driver is not required to sound the horn.* If a parent/guardian or responsible adult is not home to receive a student, drivers will return him/her to the Main Office of the assigned school and the parent will be contacted. Drop-off times are traffic dependent; there is a window of 10-minutes before and after the designated drop-off time.
- b. Temporary requests for a change in drop-off location will not be honored.

Students New to the District:

Parents/guardians must complete a *Student Transfer Verification Form* to document their child is new to the BHPSD. The Transportation Coordinator will determine busing eligibility after receiving this form from the assigned school of attendance. If it is determined a new student is eligible for busing, he/she will be assigned a route and pick-up/drop-off location and the driver will be notified.

Change in Address:

Parents/guardians must *document in writing* all changes in address *within the district* by emailing the Transportation Coordinator. If it is determined the student is eligible for busing, he/she will be assigned a route and pick-up/drop-off location and the driver will be notified. *Changes in address must be submitted at least five weekdays in advance.*

Passengers:

Authorized passengers include 1) enrolled eligible students, 2) school personnel and 3) public safety officials. *Pursuant to New Jersey State Law, parents/guardians and the general public are prohibited from entering a bus without permission granted by the Berkeley Heights Board of Education.*

Student/Parent Handbook – School Property

Any means of transportation provided by the Board of Education is considered school property. Therefore, school rules are in effect during the period of time students are transported. All rules stated in the student/parent handbook apply. Students who do not follow these rules or behave inappropriately may lose their bus privileges for a period of time.

Accidents:

Parents/guardians are required to provide assigned schools with *current* phone numbers and email addresses. This will help to avoid confusion in an emergency situation and parents/guardians need to be contacted.

The procedures noted below will be followed in the event of a school bus accident:

- a. The driver will contact the local police and/or rescue squad, assigned school and Transportation Coordinator.
- b. School personnel will contact parents/guardians of students on the vehicle.
- c. The Transportation Coordinator will assist state, county and local officials in the investigation of the accident.

Safety:

- a. All school buses are equipped with seat belts. Upon entering the bus and sitting down, students are required to immediately fasten their seat belt.
- b. Student backpacks are permitted provided they fit under the student's seat or on their lap. Aisles and exits must always be clear to allow students to enter the bus and sit down and in the event students must evacuate in an emergency.
- c. To prevent accidental falls, eating and drinking on a bus is prohibited. Spilled drinks, wrappers and peels inhibit safe entrance and exit.

- d. *Student Conduct* rules and *School Bus Evacuation Drills* are noted on page 5.

Student Conduct:

To ensure that all students travel to school and home in a safe and timely manner, all passengers are expected to behave appropriately. If a driver determines students are not safe as a result of inappropriate conduct, he/she will safely stop the vehicle and call 911. Parents/guardians are requested to review the following rules with their children.

- a. Students must follow directions from the driver at all times.
- b. Smoking, eating and drinking is not permitted.
- c. Students must be seated, facing forward, at all times to avoid injury in the event of an accident or sudden stop. Sitting or standing in the aisles is not permitted.
- d. Care must be used when entering or exiting the vehicle; students must not run, push or trip other students.
- e. No part of the student's body may stick out from a window opening.
- f. Objects may not be thrown inside the vehicle or out a window.
- g. Fighting and misbehavior is prohibited.
- h. Students must exit through the front door unless the driver determines there is an emergency situation. In the event of an emergency and at the driver's direction, students may exit through the rear door.
- i. Foul and/or abusive language is not permitted.
- j. If it is determined a student has caused damage to a vehicle, he/she is financially responsible.
- k. No sound producing equipment such as radios and CD players may be used on the bus. Personal music players such as iPods where students wear earphones are acceptable.

Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Use is *not* permitted:

Students are prohibited from possessing, consuming or distributing drugs or alcohol in any form while at school, in co-curricular programs, on school grounds, attending a school-related function/activity on or off campus and when going to or from school. Students are further prohibited from smoking cigarettes or using other tobacco products in any form in school buildings or on school grounds including buses.

Drivers observing a student possessing, consuming or distributing drugs or alcohol or if the student appears to be under the influence of a chemical will report said behavior to the school administrator.

Student Conduct Report:

Drivers are required to report inappropriate student conduct to the Transportation Coordinator who in turn will advise the school principal for corrective action.

School Bus Evacuation Drills:

Emergency exit drills will be conducted twice within the school year for all students who are transported to and from school. All other students will receive school bus evacuation instruction once within the school year.

Parental Waiver of Transportation:

Parents/guardians are permitted to waive the right to transportation for their eligible student (transportation can be resumed in the event of family or economic hardship). All waivers and reinstatement requests must be submitted in writing to the Transportation Coordinator by completing either a *Transportation Services Waiver Form* or *Reinstatement of Transportation Services Request Form*. To view the BHPSD policy regarding Waiver of Pupil Transportation, please go to www.bhpsnj.org and click on the *services* link and *transportation* drop-down (*waiver* and *reinstatement* forms are also posted).

Aid in Lieu of Transportation

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians of private school students to submit to the private school an *Application for Private School Transportation (B6T)* on or before March 10th preceding the school year in which transportation is being requested. All applications collected by the private school will be submitted to the BHPSD Transportation Coordinator by March 15th. The Transportation Coordinator will notify parents/guardians as to the determination of each application by August 1st. The BHPSD will either provide transportation or pay *aid in lieu of transportation* to parents/guardians of eligible students. Checks comprising *aid in lieu of transportation* will be mailed in February and June of the current school year. In the event an application is late (after March 10th), transportation or *aid in lieu of transportation* is based on the date the application is received by the BHPSD.

Questions/Concerns/Complaints:

Parents/guardians should feel comfortable contacting the Transportation Coordinator with their questions and concerns. Complaints should be *submitted in writing* by emailing the Transportation Coordinator.