

PENNFIELD SCHOOLS

2008 - 2009

TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

MISSION STATEMENT

PENNFIELD SCHOOLS TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

**The mission of the Transportation Department of
Pennfield Schools is:**

**To provide safe, orderly and efficient transportation of
students to and from school and school related activities.**

**To communicate effectively with students, parents and co-
workers.**

**It is a shared responsibility between parents,
co-workers and students to achieve this mission.**

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Dear Parent/Guardian and Students,

This handbook has been prepared to assist you and promote a better understanding between the school and home. It was the result of input by the Board of Education, a PTA subcommittee and school personnel.

The handbook represents an attempt to clarify questions and/or concerns parents may have regarding the school transportation system. It is intended to identify district and parent responsibilities. Please review the handbook and keep it on file for future reference. Comments and suggestions about the handbook are welcomed.

A primary priority of the district is to provide safe and efficient transportation for students while complying with state laws. By the same token we recognize and understand the need to access quality school-age childcare for a growing portion of the Pennfield Community. Sincere efforts are being made to accommodate your child care needs with the understanding that educational issues, cost effectiveness, safety, and distance are primary factors in any final decisions regarding student transportation.

We believe you will find the information helpful and that it makes the school year a better one. Should you have any questions, concerns or need to make changes in your child care arrangements, please contact the Transportation Office. Clear and timely communications are essential to providing safe, efficient, and quality transportation services.

Sincerely,

Sharlene Phillips
Pennfield Transportation Department

In June 1995, the Pennfield Board of Education acknowledged recommendations presented by the Child Care and Transportation Subcommittee. The recommendations addressed concerns regarding the importance of more child care options, the impact of transportation procedures and routes on being able to access quality child care options, and the need for better communication between the home and the Transportation Department.

Additionally, the Board of Education acknowledged the importance of quality childcare for a growing portion of the Pennfield community. At the same time, the recommendations stated that parents need to understand that educational issues such as equalized class size and demographics would continue to receive priority when determining student placements and bus routes.

The Board of Education directed that we consider bus traffic patterns and revised operational procedures that would allow maximum opportunity to access childcare options. It was acknowledged that the transportation department would make a continued effort to work with all existing and any new child care facilities and/or providers in the district. **However, the Board of Education does caution that there may be situations where it is not possible to accommodate all childcare requests.**

The resources (time, money, buses, and personnel) of the Pennfield Transportation Department are limited. Parents should not assume that it is possible to always transport their children anywhere they request. The transportation staff will work hard to say "yes" to as many requests as possible. Unfortunately, there may be some parent requests that they are unable to honor. In order to avoid potential problems please contact the Transportation Office **before** finalizing child care arrangements at locations somewhere other than your home.

Three (3) working days are needed in order to change a student's pick-up or drop off location. Once childcare has been established, buses **will not** be rerouted due to changes in day care. If a bus is presently routed to pass new day care request will be honored.

It is the parent/guardians responsibility that we have current phone numbers for each student in case of emergencies.

BUS CONDUCT AND SAFETY RULES

1. The bus ride to and from school and extra curricular events is an extension of the school day. The same conduct is expected on the bus as it would be in the classroom, and violators will be dealt with accordingly.

Our buses are equipped with video cameras. The video may be reviewed by school by school officials as required, or at the request of a parent/guardian. Due privacy issues, only school officials are authorized to view videos.

Occupy an assigned seat if told to do so.

Driver will assign seats as necessary to maintain an orderly atmosphere.

Driver's commands are final

2. **For your safety and the safety of other passengers,** please
Keep hands and head inside the bus at all times.
Sit in your seat, face forward, and keep the aisle way clear.
Do not sit backwards or sideways.
Respect others, and talk quietly.
Remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
3. To help keep the bus clean and orderly, we ask that you not eat or drink on the bus. Please report to your driver, any misconduct or malicious destruction.
4. In order for **all students** to safely cross the road they must:
 - a) Take at least ten steps (18 feet) in front of the bus.
 - b) **Wait for the signal from the driver before crossing.**
 - c) Stop at the traffic side of the bus and look left, right, and left to be sure it is safe to cross.
 - d) Walk across the roadway.

5. No live animals or anything in glass jars may be transported on the bus.

No musical instruments or large carry on items are allowed unless they may be held on the lap or between the legs.

No baseball bats, skate boards, balloons, yo-yos, basketballs, laser pointers,

No cell phones are permitted to be out or in use on the bus.

If in doubt, ask prior to taking an item on the bus.

6. **You must be at the bus stop 5 minutes prior to the scheduled time.**

Buses are not authorized to wait for students.

Students should stand 10-20 feet from the traveled portion of the road.
please stay off the roadway at all times while waiting for the bus.

7. The school district can not be responsible for students while waiting at the bus stop. Concerned parents may stay with their children until the bus arrives. We require that K thru 3 students have a responsible person at the bus stop for both pickup and drop off.
8. **Students must ride the bus that they are assigned**, to and from their assigned stop, not from other stops on the same run. Our buses are filled to near capacity and we are unable to grant passes except in **emergency** situations. Students must ride the bus they are assigned to and from school.
9. Students are to load the buses promptly in the afternoon. No student will be permitted to leave the bus once they have boarded.
- *10. Students must enter and leave the bus only by the front door.

- *11. Tobacco, alcohol, drugs, weapons, matches, lighters, profane/ vulgar language or obscene gestures, **will not** be permitted.
- *12. Throwing objects inside or out of the bus and any unsafe conduct in or around the bus **will not** be tolerated.
- *13. **No fighting on the bus.** Keep your hands to yourself.

Violation of the BUS CONDUCT AND SAFETY RULES will result in a verbal warning from the driver. Second offenses will result in a disciplinary report sent to parents, principal and bus supervisor. Third offenses may result in suspension. See attached disciplinary form. Discipline will be managed by building principals.

*** Violation of rules #10, 11, 12, and 13 will result in automatic suspension from riding the bus.**

BUS PASSES

Students are expected to ride the bus that they are assigned. Buses are generally filled to capacity and we are unable to grant bus passes except in **emergencies**. Please check with the bus supervisor (961-9793) in emergency situations to arrange transportation. **A written request from a parent/guardian must be submitted to the school office in order to get an approved bus pass. Notes given directly to the bus driver will not be honored.**

CHILD CARE CENTERS/PROVIDERS

The school district is aware of childcare centers and individual providers that are accessible, **but does not recommend or endorse any single provider. It is your responsibility to interview the providers and determine if the quality of childcare will meet your level of expectations and/or standards.**

Currently, there are licensed childcare centers and individual providers caring for children in their homes in the Pennfield District. The Transportation Department will be able to help in determining whether or not your child care provider of choice is on an existing bus route and/or which elementary school your child would be attending. Remember that after day care is established, and the route is set, **we will not reroute our buses due to changes in day care.**

CHILD CARE SCHEDULES/PART TIME

Whenever possible try to have your child dropped off at the same location every day of the week. Schedules that differ from day to day cause great confusion for both your child the bus driver, and especially a substitute driver. If you utilize child care only one to four days of the week, keep the same schedule every week. **The transportation department cannot honor requests to change drop-off locations week by week.** For safety reasons it is not appropriate to have a frequently changing schedule for bus drivers and young children to remember.

It is important that you contact the Transportation Office **before** finalizing any arrangements regarding childcare at least **three working days** prior to the requested change.

DENIED REQUESTS/APPEALS PROCESS

If the Transportation Department cannot honor your request, you may expect an explanation of the factors considered. Should you wish to appeal the decision, you may ask the Superintendent to review and reconsider the decision.

The final step in the appeal process is to request that the Board of Education review the decision. The Superintendent of Schools will provide information regarding how an appeal to the Board of Education is handled.

CONTACTING THE TRANSPORTATION OFFICE

Whenever you have questions or concerns, please contact the Transportation Office, at the following:

Telephone: 961-9793

Mail: Transportation Office
Pennfield Schools
8587 Pennfield Rd.
Battle Creek, MI 49017

Hours: School Year 6:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Summer 7:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

MEDICATION

The Pennfield Board of Education and the Administration feel that for safety reasons medication **must** be brought to school by the parent. **Students may not bring medication to school on the bus without prior authorization.**

PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION

The school understands the frustration of not being notified regarding student placements and finalized bus routes until approximately mid August. With many changes in student enrollments that take place between May and the last student registration, which is approximately August 8th it is necessary to finalize the bus routes and notify parents after that last date of registration. To notify in June or July would only create more confusion and frustration.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To ascertain and insure that your child **arrives at the bus stop on time.**
2. To provide necessary protection of your children when going to and from the bus stop. **All K thru 3 students are required to have a responsible adult present at the bus stop.**
3. To accept joint responsibility with the School Authorities for the proper conduct of your children on the bus.
4. To make every reasonable effort to understand and cooperate with those responsible for pupil transportation.

SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS

School assignments for the DK-3 students are determined in part by the location of your primary residence. Factors such as program placement, class size, schools-of-choice, cost effectiveness, and distance are closely considered. Finally, requests for child care arrangements somewhere other than at home are addressed.

The issue of equalized class size is difficult and frustrating. It is not always possible to maintain equal class sizes at each elementary building without transferring students. In order to transfer students from one elementary to the other the

SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS (CONTINUED)

Transportation Supervisor and building principals will look at what we refer to as "swing areas". These are areas where buses may efficiently pickup students for either Purdy or North Pennfield Elementary Schools. Factors such as class size, schools-of-choice, and programming applies only to the Young 5's through 3rd grade programs at Purdy and North.

In the Spring of each school year parents have the opportunity to request consideration for a specific school, through a random drawing the Board of Education determines the order by which the requests will be honored, if space is available at that building and specific grade. **School-of-choice requests do not guarantee teacher assignments, transportation or which kindergarten session a student may attend.**

Young 5's (Developmental Kindergarten) classes are housed at Purdy and North Pennfield Elementary. The Transportation Supervisor, after the final registration in early August, determines the location of the identified students and develops bus routes that are most efficient. Consideration is given to childcare and a.m. /p.m. session requests. The district tries to honor as many of the requests as possible.

When parents request that their child attend a certain elementary school based on the location of a child care provider, the district tries to honor these requests within the higher priority of equalized class size, cost effectiveness, distance, and safety. **Transportation to day care providers cannot be changed during the year to another provider that is not on a designated bus route.**

SEVERE WEATHER AND SCHOOL CLOSING

Whether or not school will be in session or delayed because of poor weather conditions is left to the judgment of the Superintendent of Schools. Please tune your radio to WBCK (95.3 FM), WKFR (103.3) WNWN (98.5) or WRKR (107.7) or TV channels 3, 8 or 41 for this information. **Please do not call the school or the bus garage**

Regulations in the event of a tornado watch or warning: In the event of either a tornado watch or warning, school will be dismissed at the discretion of the Superintendent. Tune your radio or TV to the above channels for this information.

Occasionally school may have to be dismissed early. Parents should make provisions for children returning home early due to emergency situations. **Please make sure your child and the school they attend understand where they are to go and what to do when he/she arrives home and finds no adults present. Please do not call the school or the bus garage as this will tie up the phone lines.**

TORNADO WATCH: Weather conditions are such that a tornado may form but it does not mean one has been sighted. Students may be transported at the discretion of the Superintendent and Transportation Supervisor.

TORNADO WARNING A tornado has been sighted. Students will not be transported until an all clear has been issued. They will follow building procedures.

CANCELLATION OF ACTIVITIES: Extra curricular activities (Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.) will be canceled when school is closed early. All children will be taken home and dropped at their usual stop.

STATE LAWS AND REGULATIONS

There are many state laws and regulation that deal with the transportation of students. Regulations dealing with safety specifications, vehicle equipment, licensing, training requirements for drivers, loading and unloading procedures, etc. have accumulated over the years. However, the regulations are designed to promote greater safety. The Pennfield Transportation Department designs bus routes and implements daily operational procedures that comply with all State and Federal regulations. Should you want a complete copy of the Pupil Transportation Act of 1990, please write to the Michigan Department of Education, Transportation Consultant, PO Box 30008, Lansing, Michigan 48909 or call (517) 373-3314.

Adopted by Pennfield Board of Education, May, 2002
Add school board policy 8260