

TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES MANUAL



PLEASE SEE IMPORTANT INFORMATION RELATED TO Dismissal Procedures on page 5.

Effective August 2024

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this manual is to have available a set of guidelines covering all areas of student transportation. This set of guidelines will be used to ensure an ongoing transportation system that is safe, economical, and consistent throughout the Northern Potter School District.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Section I: General Information	2
A. Eligibility	2
B. Transportation Personnel Line of Command	2
C. Outline of Service	2
1. Walking Policy	2
2. K-4 and Kindergarten Bus Stop	2
3. Child Care Arrangements	3
4. Non-public Transportation	3
5. Special Education Transportation	3
6. Extra-curricular Transportation	3
7. Route Preparation	3
8. New Students	4
9. School Closings, Delays and Early Dismissals	5
10. Dismissal Procedures	5
Section II. Administrative Guidelines and Procedures	5
A. Drivers	6
1. Qualifications	6
2. Record Keeping	6
3. General Driving Rules	6
4. Loading and Unloading	7
5. Student Discipline	8
6. Accident Procedure	8
7. Emergencies and Evacuation Drills	8
B. Students	9
1. Behavior on School Buses and Vans	9
2. Discipline Policy	10
3. Bus Stops	10
4. Extra-curricular Trips	10
5. Problems	10
Section III. Transportation Request Forms	11-12

SECTION I

General Information

This section will explain who is eligible for district transportation; administrative line of command; and will outline the Northern Potter School District's transportation system.

A. Eligibility

Transportation will be provided to all Northern Potter School District students, Pre K through grade twelve, as outlined below. Transportation will also be provided for district students enrolled in an approved non-public school who are eligible for transportation based on the same criteria as public school students. Students not eligible for transportation will not be provided bus transportation unless special education or medical reasons warrant.

B. Transportation Personnel Line of Command

The Transportation Director, who reports directly to the Superintendent, is responsible for the overall to and from school transportation throughout the School District and for all the Northern Potter School District student transportation.

All contractors are directly responsible to the Transportation Director.

All drivers are responsible to the Transportation Director for all matters required by the Northern Potter School District and responsible to their respective contractor for the various conditions of employment.

Each building principal is responsible for bus discipline issues of their students.

All transportation inquiries shall start with the Transportation Director.

C. Outline of Service

1. **Walking Policy**

Policy for Walking to Bus Stops

Elementary students may be required to walk up to one and one half miles (1.5); high school students may be required to walk two (2) miles, according to Pennsylvania Department of Education, to get to a bus stop. The decision requiring a student to walk will be determined by the following criteria:

- a. Age of student
- b. Availability of a safe turnaround
- c. Hazards of the road (hills, curves, etc.)
- d. PA vehicle laws, posted roads and bridges
- e. Efficiency of the bus route **See Section I, number 7, page 3 and 4*

2. **K4 and Kindergarten Bus Stops-IMPORTANT!**

K4 and Kindergarten students will not be permitted to exit the bus at their stop unless a parent/guardian or other authorized individual is present to meet the child. If a responsible adult is

not visible from the bus the child will be returned to the school and the parent will be notified to pick up the child at school.

3. Child Care

Parental requests to pick up or deliver students at child care providers will only be approved if the request does not alter the original bus route and will not increase the bus load to over capacity. The District will accommodate different transportation arrangements for AM and PM but these must be consistent Monday through Friday unless a parental custody situation exists (paperwork must be on file in the transportation department). All requests must be approved by the Transportation Director- See **“Joint/Shared Custody Transportation Request” Form in the back of this manual.** If students move into an area which will cause a bus to be overloaded the last non-resident child/children assigned based on a child care provider’s location will be removed from the route until the bus is not overloaded. Non-resident students will be selected based on age (oldest first) and siblings (siblings will not be separated). At least five (5) days notice will be given when reassigning non-resident students.

4. Non-Public Transportation

Under Act 372 of 1973, the district is required to provide service to resident students who are lawfully enrolled in any private non-profit school within ten miles of the school district’s boundaries.

All requests must be made in writing and acknowledged by the Northern Potter School District before transportation will be provided. Letters should be in the Transportation Office on or before August 1.

5. Special Education Transportation

Separate transportation will be provided to special education students **only** when requested by the Special Education Supervisor in accordance with the student’s Individualized Educational Plan (I.E.P.). All requests must be approved by the Transportation Office before transportation will start. Up to three (3) business days may be required to make special transportation arrangements.

6. Extra-Curricular Transportation

All extra-curricular activities requiring transportation must provide an approved field trip request form before a vehicle will be reserved. All requests must be presented to the Transportation Director so transportation arrangements can be made. All bus transportation for activities must have at least one school district employee per bus. The district employee will be the responsible person in charge.

7. Route Preparation and Bus Passes

- a. The Transportation Director is responsible for preparing the routes during the summer months. Bus stops assignments **cannot be customized to meet every individual need** and still be part of an efficient and economical transportation system.
- The following considerations are made in preparing each route:
The district is required by the state to create bus stops within one and one half miles (1 ½) for elementary students and two (2) miles for high school students. This stop is measured from their

residence. Driveways and privately owned roads are not calculated in that mileage. The district will strive to keep those stops around half mile (.5) where possible.

All stops must maintain the PA Department of Transportation's rule: Use of amber signals.--The amber visual signals shall be actuated by the driver of every school bus not more than 300 feet nor less than 150 feet prior to making a stop for the purpose of receiving or discharging school children and shall remain in operation until the red visual signals are actuated. Amber signals shall not be used unless the red visual signals are to be actuated immediately following.

Bus stops will be kept to a minimum, consolidating whenever possible, while keeping safety factors of the stop location, road and volume of traffic in mind.

Efficiency will be maintained by keeping the number of miles to a minimum. Bus loads will be maintained to the highest capacity whenever possible.

- The district **cannot** consider factors that are associated with individual family or parental situations. Such concerns are expected to be resolved by the family or parent/guardian, not the school district. Examples:

Parent/Guardian not being able to see child walking to bus stop and/or waiting at bus stop

Neighborhood feuds or conflicts with nearby residents

Unrestrained pets in neighborhood

Individual family circumstances

BUS PASSES- Bus Passes will be issued for emergencies only. By definition, an "emergency" is understood as an emergency. Over the years, and especially most recently, Bus Pass Procedures have been abused by some parents. Bus Passes will not be issued for transportation to birthday parties, sleepovers, parents running personal errands and will not be home when the bus arrives, or for trips to other family members' homes. (Exception is for special "custody situations" that are addressed in these procedures- See "Request for Long Term Alternate Bus Assignment" Form in the back of this manual). Day-to-day Bus Pass privileges will no longer be honored starting the new school year. It is up to parents and families to consider personal transportation options when family circumstances warrant changes in afternoon transportation. Any permanent route changes must be approved by the Transportation Director. No driver shall be permitted to change a route without authorization. Drivers are permitted route deviations for emergencies such as accidents, road closures, hazardous conditions, etc.

- b. If overloading requires students to be transferred from one bus to another, transferring students will be selected based on age (oldest first) and siblings (siblings will not be separated).

8. New Students

All new students requesting transportation or any students changing transportation must get approval from the Transportation Director. **New students and transportation changes require up to two (2) business days.** The Transportation Director will inform the bus driver of additions and deletions to the roster. The driver is responsible for keeping an accurate up-to-date route sheet and bus roster in the bus at all times.

9. School Closing, Delayed Start and Early Dismissal

- a. Whenever a decision is made for a delayed start or a school closing the decision will be made no later than 6:30 AM. Parents are advised to listen to the local radio stations or view our website at www.northernpottersd.org. Support staff, faculty, and students/parents will receive an automated message by phone via School Messenger. The delayed starting time will permit school district officials time to better evaluate roads and weather conditions when the forecast is uncertain.
- b. When a delayed start is initiated all starting times will be delayed by two (2) hours.
- c. All early dismissals must allow for at least one (1) hour prior to the closing for driver notification and pick-up time. Parents are advised to listen to local radio station, view our website, and again, Schoolreach will be utilized in the notification process.

10. Dismissal Procedures

Parents/Guardians: Please complete the Emergency Form at the beginning of each school year and return it to the school. All persons listed on the Emergency Form and authorized to sign-out students must be 18 years of age or older. When a parent/guardian or individual listed on the Emergency Card arrives at the school to pick up a child for early release, they are to report directly to the main office. To increase student safety, photo ID will be required when picking up a child early from school. No child will be released from school without permission from the parent/legal guardian and a valid ID of the individual picking up the child. There will be NO exceptions to this rule moving forward. The photo on the ID must match the individual and the name on the ID must match the name listed on the student's Emergency Form. Again, all persons must be 18 years or older to sign-out a student.

Bus riders will be dismissed at 2:45 PM. Teachers will escort their students to the various exits to be dismissed to the buses. Staff members in assigned locations are to assist students as they load the buses.

****Northern Potter Children's School car riders will be dismissed AFTER bus riders. Teachers will escort students to the multi-purpose room (MPR) to patiently wait for their rides. After, buses leave the inner circle, parents/guardians may move to the inner circle in 1 LANE in order to park and enter the school building where he or she must show photo ID to the staff members (Ms. Bailey and Mr. Barber) supervising the car rider students. Once positive identification is confirmed, student(s) are to be released to that individual. PLEASE BE CAUTIOUS AS YOU DRIVE OUT OF THE INNER CIRCLE. IT IS ONE LANE AND ONE WAY ONLY.**

SECTION II: ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

The following section is a listing of rules, regulations, and procedures for drivers and students. With driver commitment and parent support of this manual, a safe, economical transportation system will continue as the safest means of transporting our children.

A. Drivers

This section will cover the most important area of transportation concerning the responsibility of the driver. It is the responsibility of each driver to know and understand all Federal, State, and Local laws governing student transportation safe driving. The safety of each student will always be our number one concern.

1. Qualifications

- a. Must be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
- b. Must obtain a Commonwealth of PA School Bus Driver's physical examination (yearly).
- c. Possess a valid Pennsylvania driver's license with an S and P endorsement.
- d. Certified by the PA the Department of Transportation as a school bus driver, license stamped with a Class A or B.
- e. Possess a driver training recert certificate every four years.
- f. Possess a clear criminal record, child abuse clearance, fingerprint, arrest/conviction report, (Act 24 of 2011, and Act 82 of 2012), and complete child abuse and neglect training.
- g. Each driver is responsible for knowing all sections of the Department of Transportation's School Bus Operator's Manual before driving.
- h. Drivers are responsible to report any traffic citation, or any charges brought against them for any reason to their contractor immediately. This includes any civil, criminal charge, lawsuit, or felony misdemeanor that may affect your employment.

2. Record Keeping

- a. Each driver will maintain an updated roster sheet to be carried on the bus at all times.
- b. All reports required by the School District shall be turned in on time.

3. General Driving Rules

- a. Each driver is responsible for obeying all laws that pertain to the transportation of students.
- b. Drivers will follow his/her route slips relating to assigned stops and are not to deviate from the stops without permission unless an emergency situation occurs.
- c. Drivers are to honor any request made verbally or in writing by any administrator unless the request would lead to a direct violation of a State Law; in such case notify the administrator

of the problem. If a driver feels a request is out of line, he/she should carry it out if at all possible, and then make a report to the Director of Transportation. If the driver is still not satisfied they may put their concern in writing to the Superintendent.

- d. Students shall be taken on and discharged from the bus only at designated stops. No students shall be permitted to get on or off the bus while it is in motion. No school bus operator shall start his/her bus or signal the driver of any vehicle who has stopped to proceed until after each child has reached a place of safety.
- e. No person other than school student, assigned teacher, or other school official shall be permitted to ride on the bus without prior approval of the Transportation Director.
- f. All school bus drivers of the Northern Potter School District are to be at the controls of their assigned bus and directly supervise all children during the entire time said students enter the bus until they leave the bus and shall assume complete responsibility for the safety and welfare of all students under said bus driver's supervision.
- g. The Board of School Directors delegate discretionary authority to school bus drivers to deviate from their established bus run in the event of emergencies that may impair the safety of passengers and/or the safe operation of the bus due to the extremely adverse environmental conditions, physical obstructions and/or serious mechanical malfunctions. In the event of serious misbehavior the driver shall return the students and bus to the school from which it departed. Bus drivers must justify and show good cause for his/her action.
- h. Driver shall not pick up nor let students get off the bus at any other approved bus stop than their own, unless the student has a bus pass.
- i. Smoking and/or tobacco products are not permitted on the bus.
- j. Cell phone use – cell phone usage, including texting, while driving is prohibited.
- k. Never exceed posted truck speed limit in a school bus carrying students.
- l. Under no circumstances should the breaks be used to jerk, or stop the bus quickly, unless it is an emergency.
- m. Any injuries to student while on or around the bus shall be reported to the Transportation Director or Principal.

4. Loading and Unloading

- a. Students are expected to be waiting at the bus stop approximately five minutes prior to the bus arrival. Drivers are required to stop at each approved stop on their route.
- b. When the bus has stopped, with the red lights flashing the driver shall signal the waiting students to board only after making sure all traffic is under control. The driver shall not start moving until all passengers are seated. The driver shall be careful of latecomers before proceeding.
- c. Students shall be discharged only at their designated bus stops unless approved in writing by an administrator or bus pass. Parent/Guardian requests for deviations from the student's normal busing arrangements should be in writing.
- d. Before discharging students, make sure all traffic has stopped and is under control.
- e. Instruct students to walk in front of the bus when unloading. They should cross at a distance where they are completely visible and should reach a point of safety before proceeding.
- f. If for some reason the driver is unable to return the student to the proper discharge point, the student shall be transported to a stop nearest the regular stop, or back to the school. Drivers should use their best judgment.
- g. Drivers shall not allow parents to take students off of the bus unless at the regular stop, under emergency circumstances, or with and administrator's approval.

5. Student Discipline

- a. Each driver is responsible for maintaining discipline on the bus. **The driver has similar authority in the vehicle as the teacher has in the classroom.**
- b. The driver should:
 1. Be friendly, cheerful and respectful
 2. Be businesslike and patient
 3. Be firm but fair
 4. Be consistent with rules
 5. Be honest
 6. Make no promises or threats you cannot carry out
 7. Avoid favoritism
 8. Stop the bus on the side of the road to reprimand a pupil. Never put any pupil off a school bus while it is in route unless they are endangering the safety of the bus. Call the State Police immediately. If a student is removed for safety of others, notify the contractor and Principal and/or Transportation Director as soon as possible. A written report must be submitted to the Principal within twenty-four (24) hours.
 9. Use the discipline reports provided to refer students for disciplinary action.

6. Accident Procedures

- a. In the event of an accident the driver shall follow these steps, if possible.
 1. If the bus is drivable move it off the road, stop the bus in as safe of a place as possible (state law).
 2. Set the parking brake and turn off the ignition (in warm weather).
 3. Check for injured students and administer first aid if necessary.
 4. Contact the State Police and Transportation Director for assistance. If you cannot get through, ask a passerby to get assistance. As a last resort only, send two responsible students to the nearest phone.
 5. Keep all students on the bus and in their seats unless conditions warrant their removal. During the crash investigation, do not release any students to anyone unless instructed by school administration officials or unless medical aid is required.
 6. Protect the scene and students from further accidents and injuries.
 7. Keep a record of all injured students.
 8. Keep the following in mind when speaking with others involved in the crash or bystanders: admit nothing; promise nothing; and do not argue.
 9. Within five days, School Bus Crash Report (DL-739) must be completed whenever there is any injury or property damage, regardless of how slight. Complete the form even when students aren't on the bus at the time of the crash. After completing the form, submit it to PennDOT.
- b. Post-Accident Procedure
 1. All accidents will be reviewed by the Transportation Director. If the driver is found to be at fault, a review will be made by the Contractor, Transportation Director and Superintendent to determine the driver's future employment.
 2. Drivers are subject to urinalysis drug testing for all accidents involving loss of life or a moving violation.

7. Emergencies and Evacuation Drills

Drivers are responsible for evacuating their passengers in the event of an emergency.

- a. When to evacuate:
 1. Fire
 2. Unsafe position of the bus when broke down (curve, hill, tracks, etc.)
 3. Tornado

- b. Procedures
 1. During an evacuation, students should be removed to a safe location at least one hundred (100) feet or more from the bus.
 2. During a tornado all students should be removed to a safe location when a tornado is sighted. The safest location would be in a sturdy building or in an open area, in a depression or ditch with all students lying face down.
 3. In any emergency situation, the driver must remain calm and use common sense in making decisions. Always keep student's safety in mind.

- c. Evacuation Drills

Bus drivers are required to exercise two emergency evacuation drills each year. The purpose of these drills is to prepare each student in case of an emergency.

 1. Each student is to cooperate fully with the driver's instructions.
 2. Rear and side doors are to be used only during an emergency or emergency drill. If they are used, older, stronger students should be designated to assist small students to evacuate the bus safely.

B. Students

Student transportation is a privilege, the following outlines what is expected of students who ride vehicles provided by the Northern Potter School District. Abuse of these rules will result in the loss of District transportation.

1. **Behavior on School Bus/Vans**

The following regulations will be strictly enforced:

- a. Students must be on time, plan to be at the bus stop five (5) minutes before the bus arrives. The bus will not wait for those who are tardy. Being on time keeps the bus on schedule.
- b. Students must board and leave the bus at their regular stop location, unless written permission from the office has been received by the bus driver. Students that board at a stop not assigned to them, without written permission from the office will be reported to the Transportation Director. Bus passes protect our students and drivers.
- c. Throwing objects of any kind on or around the bus is dangerous and will not be permitted.
- d. The driver has the right to assign seats. Students may be required to sit three (3) to a seat. Students shall remain seated at all times while the bus is in motion. Keep the aisle clear.
- e. There shall be no smoking, tobacco products, vaping, or lighted flames at any time in or around the bus.
- f. There shall be no drinking any liquid or eating of food unless permitted as a special privilege by the driver.
- g. There shall be no littering from the vehicle or in the vehicle. The bus is to be a clean at the end of the run as the beginning of the run.
- h. Students will keep all pencils and other sharp objects in pockets, purses or book bags.

2. Discipline Policy

- a. All rules and regulations concerning student behavior should be well known and clearly understood by the parents, bus drivers and students.
- b. Students transported by the Northern Potter School District are under the authority of and responsible to the driver of the vehicle.
- c. A driver cannot require a student to leave the bus before such student has reached his/her destination *UNLESS* the behavior of a student endangers the safety of other students or the bus driver. If such an emergency arises, the driver is to pull their vehicle out of the line of traffic, call the State Police to remove that particular student from the bus. As soon as possible, the driver will call the Contractor, Principal and/or Transportation Director and inform him/her of the incident. A written report must be submitted to the Principal within 24 hours. A parent, student, Principal and Transportation Director Conference is required before the student can be reinstated.
- d. ***If a student is suspended/expelled from the bus, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to transport him/her to/from school.*** Once a driver has received notification of suspension/expulsion of a student they shall not transport the student. The student is not permitted to enter any vehicle contracted or owned by the Northern Potter School District during the suspension.

3. Bus Stops

- a. Students shall be at the bus stop five minutes prior to the bus arrival. Students are required to get on at the stop assigned to them by the district. If a student gets on at a stop not assigned to them without written approval from the school office, they will be reported to the Transportation Director.
- b. Students waiting at bus stops shall wait at a safe distance from the road.
- c. Students should remain at assigned stops paying special attention to the rights of the property owners. Parents are responsible for students at the bus stop.
- d. As the bus stops and the red lights activated, the students shall board the bus only when given the proper signal by the driver.
- e. When leaving the bus, the students shall go directly to the side of the road where they live or have to walk, keeping a safe distance (12 feet) from the bus.
- f. Students loading or unloading at their school shall go directly to their building or bus.
- g. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to transport any student who misses their bus.

4. Extra-Curricular Trips

The above regulations also apply to all school-sponsored trips.

5. Problems

Students having issues in any area of transportation should report these problems to the:

- 1st Bus driver – students should make the driver aware of the issue
- 2nd School Principal
- 3rd Transportation Director
- 4th If one feels the issue has not been resolved one may bring his/her concern to the Superintendent of Schools.

*Allow five (5) school days for the issue to be resolved at each of the following steps – 2, 3, 4.

NORTHERN POTTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Bus Change Request Form

745 NORTHERN POTTER ROAD, ULYSSES, PA 16948

Mrs. SUSAN AMIDON, Assistant Transportation Director, (814) 848-7506

2024-2025 School Year

PLEASE ALLOW 2 SCHOOL DAYS for PROCESSING!

In order to utilize school bus transportation, the following regulations apply:

- 1. The child/children must be eligible for bus transportation. (Definition: The student's residence to school must be at least 1.5 miles for grades K4-6 or 2 miles for grades 7-12 or be located on "PennDOT" designated hazardous roads.)
2. The bus assignment is for one day only. Requests will not be honored for partial weeks or every other week. *See Joint / Shared Custody Transportation Request Form for alternate bus arrangements. Please call the Northern Potter School District Office (814) 848-7563 for all other transportation arrangements. ALL alternate bus transportation requests must be pre-approved.
3. Bus assignments are determined by the student's primary address and students will be transported to/from this location or the designated stop for this location.

PURPOSE OF REQUEST: [] New Bus Rider [] Change Registration (allow 2 days processing time)

STUDENT NAME(S) SCHOOL GRADE

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

State reason for bus change: _____

Parent/Guardian's Phone Number: _____ Parent email: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____

Bus STOP Requesting: (Please provide enough information so that we understand where you want your child(ren) dropped off. _____

Parents/Guardians will receive notification of student's bus assignment via phone call, US Mail, or Email.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES USE ONLY:

[] AM [] PM BUS # _____ STOP LOCATION: _____ New Stop: [] AM [] PM
[] AM [] PM BUS # _____ STOP LOCATION: _____ [] Hazardous Route
[] Emergency Request Denied Reason: _____ [] Non-Reimbursable

Parent Notification: [] Phone [] US Mail: [] Email Date by: _____ (initials and date)

**SCHOOL YEAR 2024-2025- NORTHERN POTTER SCHOOL DISTRICT
JOINT/SHARED CUSTODY or ALTERNATE Drop-Off Location TRANSPORTATION REQUEST**

This Request form is to be used when transportation is a Joint/Shared Custody situation. That is, both parents living in separate households, living within the district and are living in the attending school boundary in which the student attends. Transportation is NOT provided to the parent living outside of the attending school boundary or district. This form can also be used for permanently separate morning and afternoon locations- that is when the morning and afternoon addresses are different.

Students: PreK-6 grades pickup and/or drop-off locations may be two different custody household locations with the understanding the student is solely responsible for boarding the correct bus.

This request EXPIRES at the end of EACH school year. The form is to be submitted each year before the end of the first week of school. *Submit this form to the Northern Potter School District Office and allow one school week for processing. If submitted during the school year, the school will contact the parent with the start date and bus information once the request has been approved and the transportation is in order.*

Student Name: _____ Start Date: _____

School Attending: Northern Potter Children's School Grade: _____

Family 1:

Parent Name: _____ Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Address: _____

Family 2 or Location (*Please state relationship to child if not a parent*): _____

Parent Name: _____ Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Address: _____

GRADE PreK-6th - PICK UP STUDENT BUS STOP INFORMATION

BEFORE SCHOOL PICK UP LOCATION

Home _____

BEFORE SCHOOL PICK UP LOCATION (if student will be using more than one household for busing)

Home _____

GRADE PreK-6th - DROP OFF STUDENT BUS STOP INFORMATION

AFTER SCHOOL DROP OFF LOCATION

Home Address _____

AFTER SCHOOL DROP OFF LOCATION (if student will be using more than one household for busing)

Home Address _____

We agree and acknowledge the information on this form is correct.

1. Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____
(Family #1)

2. Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____
(Family #2)