

Bernards Township Public Schools Transportation Handbook

Coordinated by the Transportation Office of
Somerset County Educational Services Commission



Table of Contents

Rules & Regulations	Page 1
Bus Routes/Bus Stops	Page 1
Requesting a Bus Stop Change	Page 1
Special Needs Students	Page 2
Driver Qualifications	Page 2
Safety	Page 2
Student Expectations	Page 3
Disciplinary Measures	Page 4
Bus Accidents	Page 4
Subscription Busing	Page 5
Day Care Transportation	Page 5
Parent Responsibilities	Page 5
Busing Reservation Form	Page 6
Day Care Center Form	Page 7
Second Bus Stop Criteria	Page 8
Second Bus Stop Application	Page 9
Information Contacts	Page 10

Transportation Rules and Regulations

The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to provide transportation for resident pupils of this district in accordance with the guidelines set forth in this policy booklet.

Bus Routes/Bus Stops

1. General Information:

Bus routes and designated stops are to be assigned annually by the Transportation Director in conjunction with school administrators. There is to be no deviation from these routes and/or stops unless authorized by the Bernards Township School District Board of Education or its designee, except for the immediate safety of students or extreme weather conditions.

If parents share joint custody of their child(ren), the student's bus stop will be assigned based on the domicile of the parent who has **primary custody** of the child(ren) on October 15.

Any driver-initiated route deviation shall be reported immediately to the Transportation Director, who shall immediately notify the Business Administrator.

Bus drivers may not transport any unauthorized person in any school vehicle. A student is authorized to ride his/her assigned bus and is assigned the same bus stop AM and PM. Requests to have a student ride home with a friend on another bus or to be picked up or dropped off at a different bus stop cannot be approved.

Residence-side bus stops will be assigned to certain roads due to either traffic or road conditions. The specific locations are approved by the administration.

2. Start of School:

Bus stops are assigned based on the student's home address on record at their school. Each student shall be notified of their school bus route number, bus stop location, and estimated times of pick-up and drop-off by mail during the 1st week of August. Parents shall review the bus stop information and submit written requests for changes to the Transportation Department no later than August 15th. If received by this date, the change shall be considered for the start of school. Requests for changes received after August 15th, if approved, shall be implemented the second Monday after the start of school.

3. Requesting a Bus Stop Change:

A student is assigned the same AM and PM bus stop five days per week for the length of the school year. Parents of students in grades pre-K - 8, including those who participate in subscription busing, will be entitled to request a change of the designated address for the bus pick-up and drop-off of their student for child care purposes. The new childcare address must be within the sending district of their assigned school. Pick-up and drop-off addresses cannot vary on a day-to-day basis.

If a parent is going away (vacation or business trip), they must arrange for the caregiver to transport the student to and from their assigned stop. Regardless of age, all students are discharged at their assigned stop. It is the parent's responsibility to make arrangements to receive their child as they depart the bus.

If a parent needs to change their student's bus stop during the school year due to childcare, address change, or other permanent change, they should contact the Registrar office. The Registrar office will then notify the Transportation Office of the request. The request shall be considered and the determination will be made contingent upon availability of a route, seating capacity on the school bus (exclusive of projected growth seats) and safety conditions in general.

A request for a bus stop change must be submitted, in writing, at least five working days prior to the effective date. The actual bus stop established to serve the request shall be determined solely by the school district. Requests for bus stops to vary on a day-to-day basis cannot be approved.

4. Special Needs Students:

In the AM, a parent will be responsible to bring the student with special needs on the vehicle and secure the student in their seat belt and/or specialized equipment. In the PM, a parent will be responsible to unfasten the student and escort the student from the vehicle. No special needs student will be released without an adult present at the bus stop. If the parent is not present, the student will be returned to the school and it will be the parent's responsibility to pick the student up. All bus stops will be curbside. School vehicles will not enter driveways. Parents are to provide the student's school with a current home phone number and emergency contact information.

Driver Qualifications

All school bus drivers are required to possess a valid New Jersey Commercial Driver's License and must meet all federal, state and local legal requirements, including state and federal criminal background review.

All bus drivers complete 10 hours of in-service training per year and additional training necessary for individual students and/or equipment.

Safety

1. The safety of our students is the primary concern of the Board of Education. Safety concerns are inherent in and the reason for most of the guidelines set forth in this handbook.
2. All students will participate in school bus safety drills (NJAC 6:21-11.4) during the months of October and April. New students will be shown bus safety evacuation procedures.
3. New Jersey Administrative Code requires that all new buses shall be equipped with seatbelts (NJAC 6:21-6B.30). Students riding buses equipped with seatbelts shall keep their seatbelts fastened for the duration of the bus ride. Students who fail to comply shall be subject to disciplinary measures.
4. All school vehicles must be serviced according to State of New Jersey guidelines and inspected bi-annually by the New Jersey Division of Motor Vehicles.
5. Due to severe restrictions on visibility for the school bus driver and inherent safety concerns, it is not recommended that school buses back up.
6. Parents whose students are taking class trips or participating in athletics should notify or remind the teacher/coach of any medical problems that might impact a student upon a long bus ride.
7. Backpacks having long strings, wheels, and/or multiple ornaments are discouraged. The strings, wheels, and/or ornaments may get caught in seatbelts, fans and handrails creating a safety hazard for the students.
8. Oversized school projects and/or large musical instruments should be transported by a parent. In the case of an emergency evacuation, large objects could hamper the safety of students evacuating the school bus.

Expectations for Student Behavior

The following procedures have been designed to foster bus safety and to provide guidelines for appropriate student behavior:

At The Bus Stop Students Are Expected To:

1. Arrive ten minutes before scheduled time and wait quietly.
2. Avoid disturbing private property.
3. Walk facing oncoming traffic or on the sidewalk, if available.
4. Wait on the resident side; do not cross until the bus arrives.
5. Stay off the roadway while waiting for the bus.
6. Wait until the bus has come to a complete stop and the driver has given a signal before crossing the street both boarding and leaving the bus.
7. Walk to the stopped bus in an orderly fashion to board.
8. Walk away from the bus after unloading.
9. Make a conscious effort to be seen by the bus driver as he/she approaches or leaves a designated stop.
10. If crossing in front of the bus is necessary:
 - a) Walk away from the bus, then take several steps forward to clear the crossing safety gate.
 - b) Look to the bus driver for a signal to proceed before crossing.
 - c) Before starting to cross the road, stop in line with the left front corner of the bus to allow a clear view of traffic lanes to the rear of the bus.
 - d) Look left, right and left again, then look to the driver for his/her direction before continuing to cross the road.
 - e) Walk briskly across the road.
 - f) If something is dropped on the roadway while crossing the street, **DO NOT RUN BACK FOR THE ITEM**. Signal the driver for assistance and follow his/her direction.

On The Bus:

1. The bus driver shall assign seats. Students must take their assigned seats and remain seated until the bus arrives at its destination.
2. Seatbelts must be fastened.
3. Students must keep their entire body inside the bus at all times.
4. Students are expected to refrain from loud talking and other behavior, which may distract the driver.
5. Students shall not deface the bus in any way and should promptly report any damage to the bus driver.
6. Students are expected to keep the bus clean.
7. Students shall ride only the bus to which they are assigned.
8. Students shall board the bus and leave the bus only at their assigned stop.
9. Smoking, profanity, or violence is not permitted.
10. Students are expected to be courteous to the bus driver and their fellow passengers.

Disciplinary Measures

1. Satisfactory behavior is expected of students who ride buses.
2. The driver shall be in full charge of the school bus at all times and shall be responsible for maintaining order. A bus driver may not exclude a pupil from the bus, but if unable to manage a pupil, shall report the unmanageable pupil to the principal of the school he/she attends. (NJSA 18A:25-2)
3. A pupil may be excluded from the bus for disciplinary reasons by the principal and his parent shall provide for his transportation to and from school during the period of such exclusion. (NJSA 18A:25-2)
4. Students whose repeated actions have caused safety and welfare concerns on the bus are subject to disciplinary measures. Drivers shall report in writing to the building principal any unsatisfactory behavior on the bus. Depending on the severity of the behavior, the building principal may take any of the following steps:
 - a) conference with the student and give warning
 - b) written notification to the parents
 - c) after school detention
 - d) suspension of bus privileges
 - e) in-school or out-of-school suspension.

Bus Accidents

In the event a school bus is involved in an accident:

1. Based on the seriousness of the incident, all students on the bus at the time of the accident will be checked by the school nurse upon arriving at school. If necessary, students will be taken immediately to the nearest hospital. At the hospital, students will be examined by an emergency room physician before being released. The school will make every attempt to contact the parents of all students who were on the bus at the time of the accident. Parents may be asked to pick up their students. In the case of a morning accident, released students will be taken to their school if not picked up by their parents. If the accident occurs in the afternoon, students who cannot be picked up by their parents will be delivered to their home by the Transportation Department as soon as the entire busload is examined and released.
2. An administrator will be at the hospital as soon as possible after the accident occurs and will remain until the students are either picked up by a parent or placed on a bus to be taken to school or home.
3. A report of the accident will be filed with the State of New Jersey.
4. Under New Jersey's No-Fault Insurance Law, all medical expenses associated with a bus accident are to be submitted to the parent's personal auto insurance carrier. Coverage is provided under the "Extended Medical Expenses Benefit" provision with a usual limit of \$10,000. The bills are not subject to a deductible. In the event that parents do not have auto insurance, the parent's medical insurance will be responsible for the costs, subject to any deductible and coinsurance. By law, the district does not provide any additional coverage unless the parents have no insurance of any kind.

Subscription Busing

The subscription busing program is for all K-8 students who live 2.0 miles or less from their elementary school or 9-12 students who live 2.5 miles or less from their high school. Mileage is determined by taking the most direct route from the front door of the home to the first door of the school building. Bus contracts are awarded based on the number of riding students. **Once the routes have been established, refunds will not be available.** Please make sure you intend to use this bus service before completing the application.

To ensure that your child has a seat for September, you must complete the subscription busing application form online at Bernardsboe.com and return it to the Business Office by June 24th. Applications received after June 24th will be accepted on an available seat basis only. **Payment for the full amount should accompany your application** and should be mailed to the Bernards Township Board of Education, Transportation Department, 101 Peachtree Road, Basking Ridge, NJ 07920.

Day Care Transportation

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>DAY CARE FACILITY</u>
Cedar Hill	Blue Kangaroo
Mount Prospect	Children's Corner
Oak Street	YMCA

Parent Responsibilities

It is the parent's responsibility to review this handbook with their student. Parents should:

1. Help the driver maintain the schedule by making sure your student is at the bus stop 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time.
2. Refrain from asking the driver to stop at places other than approved regular stops.
3. Cooperate with the district in its attempt to limit the number of bus stops, particularly in more densely populated areas. Additional bus stops add to the time length of the route.
4. Encourage your student to cooperate with school officials.
5. Accompany young students to the bus stop each morning and meet the bus each afternoon. **All students will be dropped off at their stop whether there is someone there to meet them or not.**
6. Keep in mind that the school cannot assume responsibility for your student until he/she boards the bus. Parents are responsible for their student's safety and behavior at the bus stop.
7. Be aware that if the student walks to school, parents are responsible for the student until he/she enters school.
8. Insist on correct behavior from your student while waiting for and riding on the bus.
9. Support the school's safety program by cooperating with school officials in discharging disciplinary measures.

**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
BUSINESS OFFICE
101 PEACHTREE ROAD
Basking Ridge, New Jersey
908-204-2600**

2011-12 SUBSCRIPTION BUSING RESERVATION FORM

A subscription-busing program for all students who are 2.0 miles or less from their elementary (K-8) school or 2.5 miles or less from their high school will be provided by the Board of Education for the coming school year. Mileage is measured by taking the most direct route from the front door of the home to the first door of the school building. The cost per student for this service will be \$690.00 for the upcoming school year.

If you would like to secure a seat on the bus for your student(s), you must complete the application form below and submit it to the Board of Education Business Office at the above address **no later than June 24th.**

Full payment in the form of a check made payable to the Bernards Township Board of Education, or an online payment for \$690.00 must accompany your application. Your canceled check will be your receipt. Any application received without full payment will be returned to you without processing.

Bus contracts are awarded on the basis of the number of riding students. Once the route has been determined, the costs are fixed. **Please make sure you intend to use this service before completing the application. Refunds will not be available.**

Student's Address: _____

Parent/Guardian Daytime Telephone Number: _____

NAME OF STUDENT	GRADE AS OF SEPTEMBER	SCHOOL STUDENT WILL ATTEND AS OF SEPTEMBER
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
Total Remitted: \$		<i>(\$690.00 per year x number of students)</i>

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have read and agree to the terms and conditions of the Bernards Township School District Subscriber Busing Program as listed above. I understand that refunds will not be available.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date_____

Please print name

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
 Basking Ridge, New Jersey
 TRANSPORTATION OFFICE

Wendy LaFontaine, Director of Transportation
Somerset County Ed. Services Commission
P. O. Box 68, Raritan, New Jersey 08869

Phone: 908-541-9574
Fax: 908-541-0472

2011-12 Day Care Center/Provider Transportation Form

Students may be bused to school from daycare and to daycare after school during the upcoming school year. Students applying for subscription busing may go online to Bernardsboe.com to access this form to arrange for day care transportation.

The Board of Education has established the following recommended after-school care providers for each elementary school. Transportation will be provided for students from the school to the approved care providers only.

If you are interested in Day Care Center/Provider Transportation, please fill out the form below and return it to the Somerset County Educational Services Commission at the above address **no later than July 8th.**

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>DAY CARE FACILITY</u>
Cedar Hill	Blue Kangaroo
Mount Prospect	Children's Corner
Oak Street	YMCA

CHILD'S NAME	
CHILD'S SCHOOL	
PARENT'S NAME	
HOME ADDRESS	
HOME PHONE NUMBER	
WORK PHONE NUMBER	
EMERGENCY CONTACT PERSON	
EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER	
DAYCARE CENTER/PROVIDER	
ADDRESS	
CONTACT PERSON	
PHONE NUMBER	

Second Bus Stop Application Criteria

Parents/Guardians in shared custody situations must meet the following criteria to be eligible for a second stop.

- a) The child custody arrangement must specify equal time joint custody (50/50) between two homes that are **both located in the district**.*
- b) Appropriate documentation must be submitted to establish both the custody arrangements and the dual residences.
- c) Any second stop residence that is approved will require payment equal to the subscription busing fee, per child, regardless of the distance from home to school (unless the second stop residence is on the same bus route).
- d) A set schedule for when the child would use each stop would be established.
- e) Second stops would only be approved through the office of the Business Administrator; applications must be **completed** for submission to the transportation department by June 25th. Requests after June 24th (once bus routing has begun) will be considered on an available seat basis only.
- f) Only students in grades 6-12 will be considered for second stops.

*In absolutely no other circumstances will a second stop even be considered.

If you believe you meet the criteria and would like to apply, please begin by completing the application and submit it with the appropriate legal documentation regarding the shared custody arrangement to the Business Administrator.

**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
BUSINESS OFFICE
101 PEACHTREE ROAD
Basking Ridge, New Jersey
908-204-2600**

2011-12 SECOND BUS STOP APPLICATION

The BTBOE is only obligated to provide transportation to students in grades k-8 whose primary residence is more than 2 miles from their school and to students in grades 9 –12 whose primary residence is more than 2.5 miles from their school. Parents/Guardians are hereby notified that second bus stops are not an entitlement by law. The district provides this service as a courtesy to qualifying families where possible. **BEFORE COMPLETING THIS APPLICATION, PLEASE REVIEW THE CRITERIA ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE.**

- 1) Child's Name: _____ Child's ID#: _____

- 2) School attending in September: _____ Grade: _____

- 3) Custody document review (Signature of Business Administrator): _____

- 4) Second residence review (Signature of Registrar): _____

- 5) Primary address with parent/guardian name (must match primary address in school database):

- 6) Schedule the primary address stop will be used: _____

- 7) Address requesting a second stop with parent/guardian name (must match second address in school database):

- 8) Schedule the second bus stop will be used: _____

- 9) Parent/Guardian signatures below indicate that all information provided on and in support of this application are true and accurate.

Second Bus Stops require a check made payable to the Bernards Township Board of Education in the amount of \$690.00 (unless the second stop is on the same bus route as the primary stop). Payments are non refundable. Please submit a check with this completed application by June 24th. The application and check should be submitted to Business Administrator in the Board Office. Applications received after June 24th cannot be guaranteed since routing will be in process. Once routing is completed, no new routes will be added to accommodate second stops.

For information on subscription busing payments please contact:

**Bernards Township Board of Education
Business Office
101 Peachtree Road
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920
908-204-2600 ext.106
Fax: 908-766-7641**

For information on permanent address changes please contact:

**Michele Vitiello
Bernards Township Registrar Office
268 South Finley Avenue
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920
908-204-2585 ext.105**

For information on buses and routes please contact:

**Martha Jones
Somerset County Educational Services Commission
Transportation Office
P.O. Box 68
Raritan, NJ 08869
908-541-9574 ext. 3053
Fax: 908-541-0472**