

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

101 Peachtree Road
Basking Ridge, New Jersey 07920
www.bernardsboe.com

Nick Markarian
Superintendent of Schools

Phone: 908-204-2600
Fax: 908-766-7641
e-mail: nmarkarian@bernardsboe.com

September 2, 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I would like to draw your attention to the two important items noted below.

School Dismissal Policy and Third Party Private Transportation Services

Our schools dismiss students at the end of the day pursuant to [Board Policy 8601](#). Naturally, we want to make sure parents have a clear understanding of our school calendar and when students will be coming and going from school. To that end, we seek to post information on district and school websites, utilize newsletters, signage, and send blast email and phone messages to parents. As the school year opens, you will receive more information on school dismissal especially as detailed planning is needed to plan for the comings and goings of younger K – 5 students. As students become older at the middle and high school, their safety is of course of equal concern. However, there are some practical limitations that increasingly come in to play as students become more independent and engaged in a host of after school activities.

Regardless of the age of the student, a variety of options for student transportation are available. Bus transportation contracted through the Bernards Township School District, transportation provided by a parent/guardian (or their designee), or parents allowing students to take ownership of their own transportation by walking, biking or driving to school are all viable and usual ways that students travel to and from school and school sponsored activities.

However, there is a new and emerging market that has developed involving private for-profit third party transportation providers. While public transportation, taxis and the like, are nothing new, they are not typically used in the school setting; therefore, the release of students, especially our younger students, to third party entities at the end of school sponsored functions causes pause. We ask that if you are considering the use of private third party transportation services you understand that:

- Third party transportation providers are *not* vetted or insured by the school district. The district has no oversight or responsibility for the transportation provided or the driver. The district does not perform background checks on drivers, verify their insurance levels, or ensure that they are properly licensed or inspect their vehicles.
- It may be necessary for you to communicate your plans and to provide authorization to the school in order for the school entity to release your child to a third party transportation provider.
- In some cases, if the identity of a driver, or their authority to drive a pupil is impossible to confirm, we may not be able to release the pupil from the school activity.

District personnel will communicate their dismissal policies going forward and if it proves to be necessary or appropriate to revise Board Policy 8601 that will be communicated to you.

Contact Information in Aspen Student Portal

Briefly, one other item. We are aware that parent contact information needs to be cleaned up in Aspen. You may notice this need when viewing contact information in the Aspen Student Portal. We will be correcting these issues prior to rolling out the Aspen Parent Portal. In the meantime, know that we have your contact information in our old system.

We are looking forward to having the students back on Thursday, September 7! Enjoy the holiday weekend!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Markarian', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nick Markarian