

Mason Public Schools

Pupil Transportation Handbook

Information for a
Safe and Orderly
Transportation System



Welcome

Pupil transportation is an integral part of the Mason Public Schools. Schools are operated for the instruction of students. Transportation is a support service to the degree that it helps to make instruction available to pupils who live long distances from school. Transportation of students should not be considered a door-to-door convenience, but a cost-effective method of bringing students to their schools and returning them after instructional programs are completed.

Mason Public Schools operates a fleet of 25 regular education buses over 390,000 miles a year and transport more than 2200 pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade students to and from school daily. We also provide transportation services for over 750 field and athletic trips each year.

Mason Public Schools is proud of its fleet of buses. We have a full time Master Mechanic on duty to provide preventive maintenance and repairs to the fleet. In addition to our maintenance program, each bus must pass an annual inspection performed by the Michigan State Police. Bus Drivers are an integral part of our fleet maintenance program by performing pre-trip inspections prior to each run and reporting defects.

School Bus Drivers qualifications and requirements include:

- **Commercial Drivers License type B, with P and S endorsements**
- **Certification by the Michigan Department of Education with bi-annual continuing education requirements.**
- **Semi annual DOT physical fitness exams**
- **Random drug and alcohol testing**

At Mason Public Schools we strive to provide the safest, most efficient transportation possible.

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Transportation Eligibility Requirements

Walk/Ride Policy:

Students may find it necessary to walk some distance to their designated bus stop or to school. In compliance with state laws, the Mason Public School's Policy is the following:

Elementary students are expected to walk up to one-half mile to bus routes where necessary.

Elementary students residing within one mile of an elementary school will not be transported.

Secondary students are expected to walk up to one mile to bus routes where necessary.

Secondary students residing within one and one-half mile of the school of attendance will not be transported.

Schools of Choice Students may be transported with the condition that buses not be diverted from the regular routes to enable such transportation.

Routing

Routes are designed with Safety and Efficiency in mind. Federal and State Laws, recommendations from the Department of Education and School Policy are followed in the designing of routes. When possible, bus stops will be grouped together to shorten ride times and/or improve the efficiency of routes.

Inclement Weather

Inclement weather can create many problems for a transportation department and our riders. Poor driving conditions often cause our buses to run late on the routes. During these times it is especially important that students be waiting for the bus when it arrives at the stop. We urge parents to dress their children appropriately for the conditions.

School Closing Information

School closing and delay information will be communicated via the Mason Schools Instant Alert System. Your child's school must have current phone numbers in their system in order for you to receive the Instant Alert. Information will be broadcast on local TV and radio stations as well. Please do NOT call the Transportation Office for this information. This unnecessarily ties up the phone so that normal calls cannot be made.

If the weather is believed to improve quickly, school may only be delayed for 2 hours. Add two hours to your child's normal pick up time.

School personnel make every effort to avoid sending students home early, however a heavier than predicted snowfall, severe storm or facility related issue may result in an early dismissal from school.

Family Emergency Plan

Parents/guardians should develop family emergency plans with their children. Does your child have a house key or know where to find one? Does your child have a neighbor to go to or a phone number to call if no one is home? Have you quizzed your child on the various scenarios to be sure he/she will take the proper steps? Check with your child periodically to make sure they remember the steps. Keep the procedure updated as situations change.

Lost and Found



LOST & FOUND – All items found on the bus are kept on the bus for one week before they are placed in our lost and found. Please have your child ask the driver about lost items. You are welcome to come and look in the largest lost and found in town during normal business hours. Please label all items with your child's name. Items unclaimed will be taken to Goodwill after one month.

Student Responsibilities

Improper student behavior on a bus can cause a driver to be distracted and endanger the bus and its passengers. Student responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

Students will:

1. Observe appropriate classroom behavior.
2. Be courteous to others. Demonstrate responsible citizenship through positive social interactions while on the bus. Use no profane or verbally abusive language.
3. Remember that eating, chewing gum, drinking, smoking, possessing illegal substances, weapons or obscene materials are not allowed on the bus.
4. Cooperate with the driver and follow the driver's instructions the first time they are given.
5. Remain seated while the bus is in motion. Students should sit erect, facing forward and remain inside the seating compartment.
6. Not bring anything on the bus that is too large to be safely transported while held in the students lap.
7. Extend nothing, including head, hands, and feet out of the bus window.
8. Be responsible for intentional damage to the interior or exterior of the bus and will be charged for such damages.
9. Arrive at their designated bus stop at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time. Buses cannot wait for tardy students.
10. Cross in front of the bus at all times when bus stops are across the road.

Parent Responsibilities

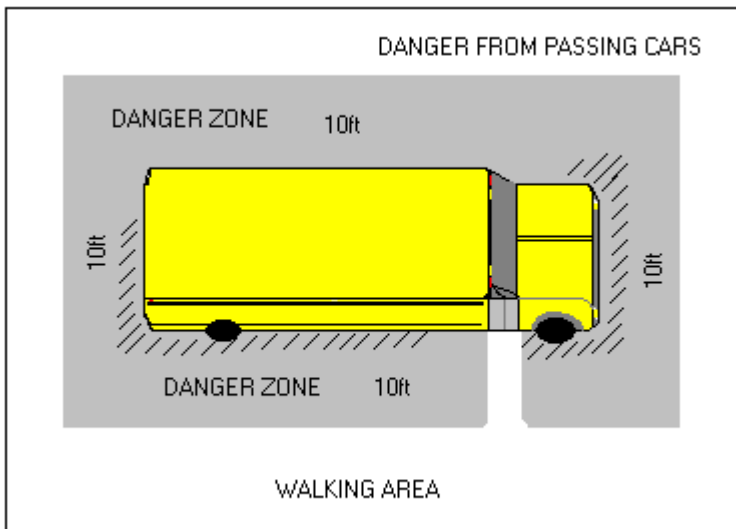
- 1. Have your child ready and waiting at the bus stop at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time. If they are waiting in your car make sure they are out before the bus arrives.**
- 2. If your child misses the bus, DO NOT chase the bus or flash your automobile headlights at the bus. Bus drivers are not authorized to stop. Take your child to school or call the transportation department to arrange a pick up at another stop. You must call before this can happen.**
- 3. Accept joint responsibility for proper conduct of your children on the bus or at the bus stop.**
- 4. Inform the transportation office if your child will not be riding for an extended period of time.**
- 5. Parents will provide transportation for their students if oversized objects or animals must be transported to school, or when students riding privileges have been suspended.**
- 6. Ensure that payment is made for damages resulting from vandalism to the bus.**
- 7. Have a family emergency plan if the student arrives home early or if parents/guardians are not present at the time of their arrival.**
- 8. Ensure Kindergarten students have an adult in view when they are delivered home without an older sibling.**
- 9. Become familiar with district policies, regulations, and principals of school bus safety.**
- 10. Make sure elementary students have supervision when they arrive at their stop.**
- 11. Parents must be prepared to show a pictured I.D. when picking up students at locations other than the normal schedule.**

Bus Driver Responsibilities

The Bus Driver Will:

- 1. Provide safe and orderly transportation for students.**
- 2. Establish proper rapport with students, parents/guardians and building administrators and work to ensure proper conduct with communications.**
- 3. Enforce reasonable bus rules in accordance with appropriate district policy and procedures. This includes teaching students the rules for safe bus riding and street crossing.**
- 4. Maintain the scheduled route and time each day providing conditions allow.**
- 5. Pick up and discharge students only at their designated stops except with written permission to do otherwise. Request a photo ID of parents/guardians picking up students at stops other than the normal stop as necessary.**
- 6. Assign seats at their discretion.**
- 7. Notify the office if the bus will be late in arriving to school.**
- 8. Check the bus by walking from the front to the back to make certain the bus is empty at an appropriate location after the last child exits the bus and between all runs before parking the bus.**
- 9. Make direct contact with parents/guardians and Transportation Supervisor regarding student behavior issues.**
- 10. Make every effort not to leave the bus unattended with students on board.**
- 11. Provide for school bus emergency evacuation drills on a regular basis as required.**
- 12. Only allow authorized persons to enter the bus.**
- 13. KG students arriving home without an adult visible will be brought back to the transportation department and the parent called to pick up.**

SAFETY AROUND THE SCHOOL BUS



Most fatalities involving school buses happen outside of the bus. Extreme caution should be used during loading and unloading. When crossing in front of the bus make sure you cross at least 10 feet in front so the driver can see you.

NEVER GO UNDER THE BUS FOR ITEMS YOU HAVE DROPPED. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RETURN TO THE BUS AFTER EXITING. IF YOU LEAVE SOMETHING ON THE BUS, CONTACT THE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT.

Many tragic bus accidents occur when students try to catch a missed bus. For safety's sake, when a student misses the bus, they must not chase the bus or board the bus at another location or time.

Bus Discipline

Parents/guardians will be notified of inappropriate behavior on the school bus or bus stop. Please help us provide safety for all students by discussing appropriate behavior with your child and stress the importance of good conduct while on the bus as well as at the bus stop. To assist the bus driver, a video camera may be used to monitor student behavior while riding the bus.

Bus discipline will be progressive and cumulative depending on the severity of the offense.

Severe offenses include but are not limited to the following:

- Profanity / Obscene or abusive language
- Use of tobacco, alcohol or other controlled substances
- Defiance / gross insubordination – vocal, physical
- Creating unsafe conditions.
- Vandalism
- Fighting / Assault
- Spitting on another student
- Carrying a weapon on the bus: guns, knives, firecrackers, glass, etc.
- Carrying flammable materials
- Throwing anything on the bus.

Conduct Reporting

The district reserves the right to implement alternative discipline options based on individual circumstances. Signed conduct reports must be returned to the driver before student can ride the bus.

- Step one – Driver may issue a verbal warning.
- Step two – Driver will complete a conduct report and send it home for a parent/guardian's signature.
- Step three – Driver will complete a conduct report and send it home for a parent/guardian's signature.
- Step four – Driver will complete a conduct report and notify transportation supervisor. Student will be suspended from the bus for 3 days.
- Step five – Driver will complete a conduct report and notify transportation supervisor. Student will be suspended from the bus for 5 days.
- Step six – Driver will complete a conduct report and notify transportation supervisor. Student will be suspended from the bus for 10 days.

Suspensions beyond 10 days will be determined by consulting Central Administration. Meetings with parents may be called to communicate problems on the bus. Parents may request meetings with drivers and transportation supervisor to discuss issues.

Attempts will be made to call parents when students are suspended from the bus. If parents cannot be reached, a message will be left on voicemail or answering machine if available.

Half Day Student Information

Our younger riders often need extra help from our drivers and parents during the first several weeks of school.

Bussing Guidelines

Half day students follow the same guidelines as full day students. We try to keep ride times down to one hour; however there is not a maximum for routes. If students are required to walk to get to a bus stop or to school, parents should work with their child to ensure they are capable before leaving them on their own.

Teaching a child to cross in front of the bus

During the first couple of weeks the drivers are teaching the students the proper crossing procedures. During this procedure, students must be paying attention to the driver for instructions. Students are often distracted by parents who are waiting at the bus stop. Parents should support the driver by asking their child to pay attention to the driver.

Child Care Arrangements for Half Day Students

During our noon run we are transporting a very small number of students who are spread over 110 square miles. Our noon routes are built around those few kids, which limits our ability to accommodate every transportation request. If you are considering a daycare provider outside of your school zone or a permanent change is needed to you child's schedule, call the transportation department first to find out whether transportation will be provided to the new address.

Changes in Schedule

Routes are established based on residence and/or childcare arrangements. Changes in pick up or drop off location during the year are difficult to accommodate. Request for permanent changes must be made in advance and in writing. Parents/Guardians are asked to identify not more than two addresses for pick up and drop off of their children.

- If children need transportation to more than one address, a parent/guardian must provide a schedule in writing to the transportation department and the child's school. Parent/guardians must sign the schedule.
- Routes will be written to reflect schedules
- Daily, weekly, or monthly changes to a student's pick up and drop off point will not be allowed. If a student needs to be transported somewhere other than the where the schedule indicated, then the parent/guardian is responsible for providing transportation.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES – Parents throwing birthday parties for their children sometimes request other students to ride home on the bus with their student. Parents must contact the Transportation Department Supervisor 48 hours in advance to obtain approval for children to ride to their home. This is necessary to avoid overloaded buses. Each student must have a note from their parent permitting them to go home with the other student. The note must be signed by the School's Office before boarding.

Half /Early Release Days

Parents should be familiar with the school calendar and plan for supervision for their children on days when the bus arrives early.

Contact Information

Transportation Department676-6496
High School676-9055
Middle School676-6514
Alaiedon676-6499
North Aurelius676-6506
Steele St.676-6510
Early Learning/Clubhouse676-6504

Supervisor of Transportation – Kevin Doty
Transportation Secretary – Gail Hunt

Transportation address:
Mason Public Schools Transportation
801 Kim Dr.
Mason, MI, 48854

Office Hours: 6:00am – 5:00pm M-F – on regular school days