

TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK

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Flemington-Raritan Regional School District

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The Flemington-Raritan Regional School District has published this Transportation Handbook as an information source for the parents/guardians and students of the district.

Background

The Flemington-Raritan Regional School District has a joint transportation arrangement with Hunterdon Central Regional High School. Buses generally make three runs in the morning and again in the afternoon, first transporting high school students, then middle or intermediate school students followed by elementary school students. Starting times for schools that our students attend are staggered in order to accommodate transportation schedules.

In an effort to increase efficiency, the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District implemented shuttle bus routes at the elementary schools beginning in the 1993/94 school year. A shuttle bus transports a busload of students to or from school, then returns for a second busload of students. Typically, bus stops with large groups of students in close proximity of schools are candidates for shuttle buses.

School buses owned or leased by our two school districts are housed at Hunterdon Central Regional and maintained on a scheduled basis. Some bus routes are contracted to independent busing companies.

The joint transportation arrangement between Flemington-Raritan Regional and Hunterdon Central Regional is monitored by the Transportation Committees of the two school boards along with the School Business Administrators from each district. Day-to-day operations are managed by the Director of Transportation, an employee of Hunterdon Central Regional High School. The phone number of the Transportation Department at Hunterdon Central Regional is 284-7154; however, questions or concerns should first be brought to the attention of your student's building **Principal**.

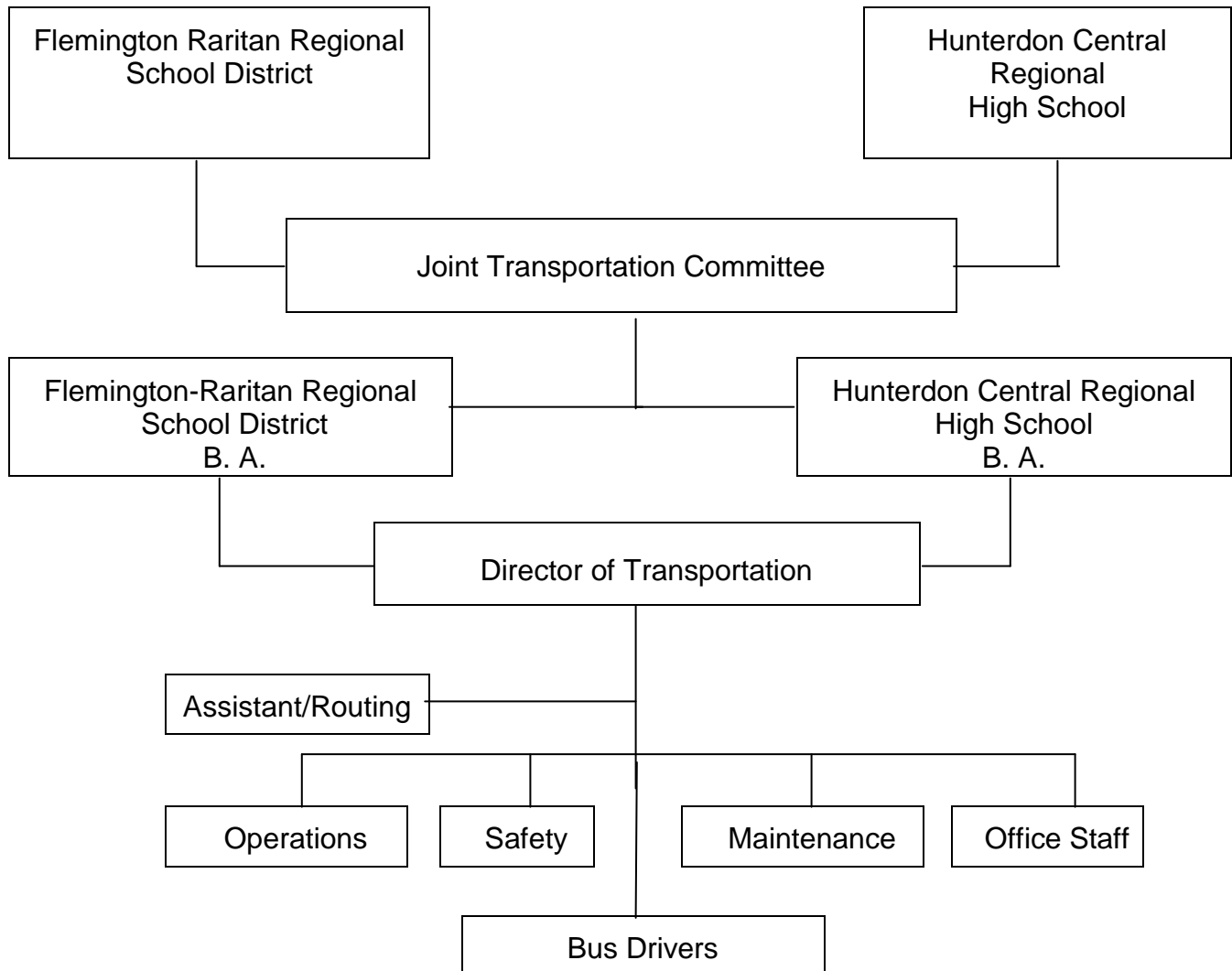
Transportation Rules And Regulations

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

Transportation Committee/Joint Transportation Arrangement

By separate agreement, the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District has a joint transportation arrangement with Hunterdon Central Regional High School. The Board appoints a Transportation Committee of board members plus an administrator. The Transportation Committee monitors the joint transportation arrangement and meets quarterly with the Hunterdon Central Regional High School Transportation Committee to review the arrangement and to discuss mutual and individual concerns. The Director of Transportation referred to in this policy is the Hunterdon Central Regional High School employee in charge of the Transportation Department. The combined Transportation Committees of the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Regional and Hunterdon Central Regional High School are referred to as the Joint Transportation Committee.

The line of responsibility for the Joint Transportation arrangement is as follows:



Bus Routes/Bus Stops

1. **General Information:**

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

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

A district or contract bus driver may not transport any unauthorized person in any school vehicle. A student is authorized to ride his/her assigned bus and is assigned one AM and one PM bus stop. 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 AM and/or PM will not be approved.

Roadways deemed hazardous by the Board of Education shall be considered non-crossing roads for students. Resident side bus stops will be assigned on these hazardous roads.

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 number, bus stop location and estimated times of pick-up and drop-off by mail by mid-August. Parents/guardians shall review the bus stop information and submit changes, including child care, to the Principal no later than the end of the third week of August. If approved by this date, the change shall be implemented for the start of school. Requests for changes received after Friday of the third full week of August, if approved, shall be implemented the second Monday after the start of school.

3. **Requesting a bus stop change:**

A student is assigned one AM and one PM bus stop five days per week for the length of the school year. Parents/guardians of students in grades K-8, including those who would normally walk to school, will be entitled to request a change of the designated address for the bus pick-up and drop-off of their students for child care needs. The designated address must be within the sending district of their assigned school. The designated pick-up address may vary from the drop-off address for child care purposes only. Pick-up and drop-off addresses cannot vary on a day-to-day basis.

If a parent/guardian needs to change their student's bus stop during the school year due to child care, address change or other permanent change, contact the school Principal for a change form. If approved the Principal shall direct the request to the Director of Transportation for review. 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 will not be approved.**

4. Kindergarten:

Special procedures are established for the mid-day pick-up and drop-off of kindergarten students. Mid-day bus stops for kindergarten students are established closer to home than the morning or afternoon stops when possible. This is for the safety of the kindergarten students at the time of day when older students are not present to accompany them. This is not a privilege to be extended for the morning and afternoon routes when kindergarteners are riding with other students.

Parents/guardians shall provide adult supervision at the bus stop for students waiting for bus pick-up at mid-day. Students being dropped off at mid-day must have an adult within line of sight of the bus driver before that bus driver will drop off the student. If an adult is not present in the vicinity to receive the student, the student will stay on the bus and be returned to school. Arrangements will be made at the school for the student to be picked up at the school by the parent.

For afternoon kindergarten students, the PM drop off will be made with or without an adult present. Students will not be kept on bus.

5. Special Needs:

Parents/guardians shall have the student ready and at the bus stop 5 minutes prior to the estimated pickup time. If a student is not ready, the driver will wait 2 minutes and continue to school. Parents/guardians shall meet the vehicle at drop-off time. The driver shall wait 2 minutes for parents/guardians at bus stop before returning the student to school.

Arrangements will be made at the school for the student to be picked up. No student will be released without an adult present at the bus stop.

In the AM, parent/guardian will be responsible to bring the student on the vehicle and secure the student in their seat belt and/or specialized equipment. In the PM, parent/guardian will be responsible to unfasten student and escort the student from the vehicle.

All bus stops will be curb side. School vehicles do not enter driveways.

Parent/guardian is to provide the student's school with current home phone number and emergency contact information.

Driver Qualifications

1. All school bus drivers are required to possess a valid Commercial Driver's License and must meet all federal, state and local legal requirements.
2. All bus drivers complete 6 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 Joint Transportation Committee. Safety concerns are inherent in and the reason for most of the guidelines set forth in this policy.
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 State Law states 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 a maintenance schedule established by the Joint Transportation Committee and inspected bi-annually by the New Jersey Motor Vehicles Commission. This shall be implemented by the Director of Transportation.
5. Due to severe restrictions to visibility for the school bus driver and inherent safety concerns, the school buses do not back up or enter driveways, dead-end streets or cul-de-sacs.
6. Parents/guardians whose students are taking class trips or participating in athletics should notify or remind the teacher/coach of any medical problems that might impact upon a long bus ride.
7. Back packs having long strings and/or multiple ornaments are discouraged. The strings 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 the parent/ guardian. In the case of an emergency evacuation, large objects could hamper the safety of students evacuating the school bus.

Student Expectations

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. Be punctual (*five 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, boarding or 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.
 - b) Look to the bus driver for a signal to proceed before proceeding.
 - 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.

On The Bus:

1. Students must take their assigned seats and remain seated until the bus arrives at its destination.
2. Seatbelts must be fastened. The bus driver shall assign seats.
3. No food or drinks of any kind may be consumed on the bus.
4. Students are expected to keep their entire body inside the bus at all times.
5. Students are expected to refrain from loud talking and other behavior which may distract the driver.
6. Students shall not deface the bus in any way and should report any damage to the bus promptly to the driver.
7. Students are expected to keep the bus clean.
8. Students shall ride only the bus to which they are assigned. Students shall board the bus and leave the bus only at their assigned stop.
9. No smoking.
10. No profanity.
11. No violence.
12. No lasers
13. 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. (Title 18A:25-2)
3. The **Principal** is authorized to remove any student who does not maintain a reasonable standard of conduct. The parents/guardians will be notified of such removal.
Title 18A:25-2 states in part: "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."
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. Dependent on the severity of the behavior, the building Principal shall take the following steps:
 - a) Conference with the student and warning given.
 - b) Written notification to the parents/guardians.
 - 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. All students on a bus at the time of an accident will be taken immediately to the nearest hospital, regardless of the seriousness of the accident. At the hospital, they will be examined by an emergency room physician before being released. The school will make every attempt to contact the parents/guardians of all students who were on the bus at the time of the accident. Parents/guardians 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/guardians. If the accident occurs in the afternoon, students who cannot be picked up by their parents/guardians 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/guardian or placed on a bus to be taken to school or home.
3. A report of the accident will be filed with the Joint Transportation Committee.

Under New Jersey's No-Fault insurance law, all medical expenses associated with a bus accident are to be submitted to the parents/guardians 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/guardians do not have auto insurance, the parents/guardians medical insurance will be responsible for the costs, subject to any deductible and coinsurance. The district does not provide additional coverage.

Courtesy Busing

Courtesy busing is defined as transporting students who live within a two-mile radius of their designated school. Courtesy busing is not funded by state aid. The cost is borne entirely by the district. The board recognizes the necessity of providing courtesy busing for some students due to the rural nature of the district. The Board of Education shall determine when courtesy busing is to be utilized.

Parent Responsibilities

It is the parents/guardians responsibility to review this handbook with their student.
Parents/guardians should:

1. Help the driver maintain the schedule by making sure your student is at the bus stop 5 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.
4. Assume responsibility for training your student to cooperate with school officials.
5. Accompany young students to the bus stop each morning and meet the bus each afternoon.
6. Keep in mind that the school cannot assume responsibility for your student until he/she boards the bus. Parents/guardians are responsible for their student's safety and behavior.
7. If the student walks to school, parents/guardians are responsible for the student until he/she enters school property.
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.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can my child ride to school or home from school with a friend if I send in a note?

This type of request will not be approved. This is a safety issue. Bus drivers become familiar with the students they transport. For instance, they know who crosses in front of the bus. An accident is more likely to happen when a student is unfamiliar with his surroundings and when a bus driver is unfamiliar with the students he/she is transporting. (See Bus Routes/Bus Stops)

If my child misses his bus at his assigned bus stop can they go to another stop and get the bus?

No. This is a safety issue for the same reasons as outlined in the first question.

How do I arrange for my child to ride a bus to or from a child care facility?

Submit a written request to the building Principal of the school your student attends. Remember that the location of the child care facility **must be within the sending areas of your student's school**. (See Bus Routes/Bus Stops)

Can my child really be eliminated from the bus if he misbehaves?

Yes, according to Title 18A:25-2, the Principal has the authority to take this step. **Parents/guardians** are then responsible for transporting their student to and from school.

My AM kindergarten child is dropped off at my driveway at mid-day. Why can't he be picked up there in the morning?

Mid-day bus stops for kindergarten students are frequently established closer to the home than the morning or afternoon stops. This is for the safety of the kindergarten students at the time of day when older students are not around to walk with them. It is important for students to learn appropriate bus stop behavior at an early age. This procedure of keeping the kindergarten students with the older students at the AM or PM bus stop helps when the transition to first grade is made.

Can my child be dropped off at another location every Tuesday and Thursday as long as it's consistent?

No, this type of request will not be approved for the same reason stated in the first question.

My spouse and I are going out of town and we would like our students to stay with friends during our trip. We have made arrangements with friends whose students ride a different bus. Will the district transport our students to and from the friend's home during this time?

This request will not be approved. This request is considered a day-a-day change. (See Bus Routes/Bus Stops)

Whom should I call if I have questions or problems regarding transportation?

Call your student's building principal, or better yet, put it in writing. A phone call may seem quicker, but often a letter gets a better response.

Building Principals:

Barley Sheaf School	Ms. Karen Gabruk	284-7586
Copper Hill School	Mr. Kevin McPeck	284-7660
Francis A. DesMares School	Mrs. Carol Howell	284-7540
Robert Hunter School	Dr. Becky Hutto	284-7620
Reading-Fleming Intermediate School	Mrs. Kathy Suchorsky	284-7650
J. P. Case Middle School	Mr. Robert Castellano	284-5100

Write to any of the above at the following address:

Flemington-Raritan Regional School District
50 Court Street
Flemington, NJ 08822