



Frequently Asked Questions



The Department of Education frequently receives questions pertaining to the transportation of school students.

Q. Are school districts required to transport students?

A. With the exception of charter school students, Pennsylvania law does not require a school district to provide transportation to its students.

Q. When does a school district have to provide transportation to a charter school?

A. The law requires school districts to provide transportation to resident students attending a charter school "on such dates and periods that the charter school is in regular session" if:

The charter school is located within the school district, or
The charter school is located not more than ten miles by the nearest public highway beyond the school district boundary, or
The charter school is a regional charter school in which the school district participates.

Q. When a school district provides transportation, who is responsible?

A. The board of directors of a school district is responsible for all aspects of pupil transportation programs. The school board may ask their solicitor (an attorney) to interpret educational laws and regulations for them.

Q. How long may a child be required to ride on a bus?

A. This is a local decision (based on geography, population distribution, etc.). There are no time limits set by law or regulations.

Q. How far may a child be asked to walk to a school bus stop?

A. The law allows a school district to ask a child, regardless of age, to walk up to a mile and a half to a bus stop. The mile and a half is measured by public roads and does not include any private lane or walkway of the child's residence.

Q. May a fee be charged to pupils who ride a school vehicle?

A. No. Section 1361 of the School Code states that when a school district provides transportation to its students, it is to be free and paid for out of school district funds. Additionally, Section 1365 prohibits districts from demanding, requesting or accepting compensation for transporting students.

Q. I think the road my child has to walk along is hazardous. What can I do?

A. The law provides for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to review potentially hazardous walking routes. The request for this review must be made by the school district to the local PennDOT engineering district office. PennDOT regulations do not address hazards other than road or traffic conditions. The local district may assess conditions such as bad neighborhoods, secluded wooded areas, snow removal, etc., when developing transportation routes.

Q. I think the bus my child rides on is overloaded. What can I do?

A. Address your concern to the school district. All questions relating to school vehicle regulations, such as seating, aisle clearance, warning devices, etc., should be addressed to the Pupil Transportation Section of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation at (717) 787-6453.

Q. May a school district suspend busing services for a child?

A. Yes. Transportation is a privilege, not a right.

Q. When does a school district have to provide transportation to a nonpublic school?

A. When a school district provides transportation for its public pupils, it must provide transportation services to nonpublic pupils of the same grade level that it is providing for its own pupils. The nonpublic school must be nonprofit and located within ten miles of the district's boundary, measured by the nearest public road. If the school building in which the pupil is enrolled is not located within the ten-mile distance, the nonpublic pupil is not eligible for transportation, nor are his parents eligible for payment towards transportation costs.

Q. Is the local school district that transports my child to a nonpublic school required to transport her on days when the nonpublic school is in session and the public school is closed?

A. Yes, unless the closure is due to weather conditions.

Q. May a school district ask a child going to a nonpublic elementary school to ride on a vehicle with public high school students?

A. Yes.

Q. If the teachers are on strike, must the school district still provide transportation for eligible nonpublic pupils to their schools?

A. Yes.

Q. Must transportation be provided for exceptional children?

A. Transportation must be provided as required by a child's individualized education program (IEP). An intermediate unit may provide this transportation for the school district.

Q. What can I do about transportation problems such as (1) the bus was late, (2) the bus never came, (3) the bus stop location seems dangerous, (4) the bus driver is speeding, and (5) another child hit my child on the bus?

A. You must work with your school district to address such problems.

Q. Does the state provide funds for pupil transportation?

A. Yes. On a statewide average, the pupil transportation subsidy covers approximately half of a school district's transportation costs.

Q. Which school district is responsible for transporting a homeless student?

A. See the document [Transportation - Homeless Children Q & A](#).