

## STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES POLICY

### I. GENERAL

The major purpose of the East Longmeadow school system's transportation services is to aid students in getting to and from school in an efficient, safe, and economical manner.

School bus services, free of charge, shall be extended to K-6 students living two or more miles from the school that they are assigned to attend. School bus services shall be extended to all other students on a fee-for-service basis.

The East Longmeadow Public Schools will provide transportation services to public and private school students as required under Chapter 71, Section 68 and Chapter 71B, Section 8 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Safe Schools Practice: Kindergarten students will not be dropped off at the designated bus stop unless there is a caregiver to receive the student. If no caregiver is present, then the child will be returned to the Meadow Brook School and the parent/guardian will be responsible to pick up the child.

School buses under contract to a school system may transport pupils to and from summer school.

The school system may contract for transportation services or may choose to operate its own transportation services. If the transportation services are contracted to a private vendor, contracts will be awarded on a competitive bid basis by the School Committee. The School System and the contractor (if applicable) will be held responsible for the safe operation of school buses and will comply with all applicable state laws and regulations, including but not limited to:

1. specifications for school bus design and equipment
2. inspection of buses
3. qualifications and examinations of bus drivers
4. driving regulations
5. small vehicle requirements, if applicable
6. insurance coverage
7. adherence to local regulations and directives as specified in bid contracts.

The Superintendent or designee, working with the bus/fleet contractor and other appropriate administrators, will be responsible for establishing bus schedules, routes, stops, and all other matters relative to the transportation program.

## II. FEE FOR SERVICE

- A. According to Massachusetts General Laws, the school district is required to provide free transportation for K-6 students whose legal residence is in excess of two (2.0) miles from the school that he/she is assigned to attend. The Department of Education's policy regarding the "measurable distances" provisions set forth in M.G.L., c 71, s 68, is as follows:

Portal to portal shall mean the sidewalk or public way in front or nearest to a pupil's home of residence to the entrance way of the school building the pupil is attending. When there is more than one entrance way to the school building either entrance way may be used for measuring distances if both of the entrances are ordinarily accessible. Commonly traveled route shall mean a sidewalk or public way which, in the ordinary course, is open and accessible to pedestrian traffic.

For practical purposes, the measurable distance shall mean two (2.0) or more miles and will be measured from the sidewalk or public way in front of or nearest to the student's home to the location where the school buses drop off students at the school.

- B. In addition to this requirement, the East Longmeadow Public Schools offers transportation services for other students for an annual fee. The yearly rate may be reviewed occasionally by the School Committee to determine whether the rate yields sufficient funds to provide for these services. This rate is a set amount for the entire year whether or not students utilize the service both in the morning and the afternoon or whether or not students utilize the service for the entire year or any portion of the year. This fee will not be pro-rated. The only exceptions to this shall be:
- Students who move in or out of East Longmeadow or move from a non-fee address to a fee-based address within the Town of East Longmeadow during the school year shall have their fee pro-rated according to the number of days that the student(s) will be utilizing the service for that school year.
  - CAP. Mapleshade and Mt. View students, who are classified as "fee transportation", but who utilize the "shuttle service" to or from the CAP (Children at Play) program at Meadowbrook School only, shall be charged a fee of \$90 per year.

### III. REGISTRATION

- A. Free Transportation (see paragraph 1) – Registration for children who are eligible for free transportation is from June through August 1<sup>st</sup> each year on a form supplied by the school district. Registration will close on this date and will reopen the first week of October. If the form is not returned, it will be assumed that the eligible student(s) will not be riding the school bus. Special requests for day-care will be honored only if seating is available and re-routing is not required and the bus stop is the same Monday – Friday.
- B. Fee For Transportation Service – This program is a voluntary option for parents. Parents are required to register for fee-based transportation yearly by August 1<sup>st</sup> for their student(s) on a form supplied by the school district. A non-refundable deposit of 1/3 the annual rate shall be due with this registration. The balance will be due prior to September 1<sup>st</sup>. Any family that does not complete payments in full will be subject to termination of services. **Fees are capped at \$540 per family. A family is defined as students living in the same household.**
- C. Registration will close on August 1<sup>st</sup> each year for current residents. Registration will reopen during the first week of October. Late registrants, after October 1, will be added only if: (1) seating is available, (2) re-routing is not required, and (3) pre-payment is received in full.
- D. Transportation includes late bus service at the Middle and High School when available. The level of service provided is based on the grade level of the individual student, the location of the residence, and applicable safety factors.

### IV. INTRA-DISTRICT TRANSFER REQUESTS

From time to time, family situations create hardships in which parents/guardians may request special consideration. The School Committee will consider parental requests regarding intra-district transfers between Mapleshade Elementary School and Mountain View Elementary School.

The following prerequisites must be met for an intra-district transfer request to be considered:

- a. The building principal of the receiving school must approve the request based upon available room. Careful consideration will be made to ensure parity and equity of enrollments between the two elementary schools.
- b. The requesting parent/guardian must provide any and all transportation due to the request. The school transportation department does not run buses across town to opposite attendance zones. Attendance zones are created to ensure balanced

- enrollment between elementary schools. Parents/guardians must submit a letter stating the will be responsible for transportation to and from school for the year.
- c. Students may be “grandfathered” into an attendance zone for a school only if the hardships created by the school due to the swing zone attendance zone boundary.
  - d. Siblings of a child may be “grandfathered” into a school attendance zone only if they are concurrently enrolled in the same school.

(note: the above four prerequisites all apply to students that have “grandfather” status.)

## **V. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR THE PROVISION OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

It is the intention of the East Longmeadow Public Schools to design routes that maximize safety and efficiency and minimize the amount of time a child will be on the bus. Bus routes will be established in August each school year and will not be changed for late registrants until the first week of October. This time period provides the opportunity to have routines settle in and to identify problems.

The guidelines for determining bus routes and stops will be:

- A. Distance from school.
- B. Distance an eligible student would be required to walk to a stop.
- C. Grade of student(s) to be serviced.
- D. Safety of the street(s).

Parents and students are reminded that pick up/drop off times printed on the bus pass, are estimated times. On any given day the bus may be delayed due to traffic, weather, or other conditions. A ten minute allowance either way is to be expected.

Centralized bus stop locations will be utilized whenever possible to reduce bus route mileage and time. They will be located in such a manner which will not require students to walk an unreasonable distance. Middle and high school students may be required to walk further distances than elementary school students. Consideration will be given to locating the stop at the home of the child in the lowest grade of the group.

Kindergarten students will be picked up as close as reasonable to the home, especially during the time that the other grade levels are not riding, i.e., mid-day route. A pickup and/or dropoff at every kindergarten student’s home is NOT guaranteed.

Kindergarten students will not be transported mid-day to or from the opposite district in which they reside (AM/PM Swing line).

It is important that students be out at the bus stop waiting for the school bus. There are many roads in town which are very heavily traveled; having a bus sit and wait for a child to come outside and walk to the bus stop is a hazardous situation for children on the bus, for children

walking to the bus, and to the driver. If the student's bus stop is at the end of a driveway, the student should stand approximately ten feet into the driveway. If your child waits in your car, please have them get out of the car as soon as the school bus is visible.

Exceptions – Exceptions will be made with extreme cold weather when temperatures are below zero. The school bus drivers are instructed to slow down and come to a complete stop when frost-bite can be harmful.

## **VI. SAFE SCHOOLS PRACTICES FOR PICK UP/DROP-OFF PROCEDURES**

In an effort to enhance our "Safe Schools" practices in this school district, the following procedures must be followed at all times.

### **A. Drivers:**

1. When picking up children at a bus stop, the driver must check for bus pass and/or check the route sheet to verify that students that are being picked up belong on that bus.
2. If a child at a bus stop is not on the list and/or does not have a bus pass, then the driver cannot pick up that child.
3. The same process needs to be followed at the end of the day. The driver must check for bus passes and/or check the route sheet and allow only those students that should be on that bus. The driver and school administration must enforce "assigned rider information" at all times as detailed on the route sheets.
4. If a child boards the bus that does not belong on the bus, the driver must tell the student he/she cannot ride the bus. Under no circumstances should the driver leave the school or bus stop with a child on the bus that is not on the route sheet. (See #1 below).
5. Absolutely no undesignated stops will be made.

### **B. School:**

1. Students may not ride a different bus or get off at a different stop except in an emergency. An emergency exception will be determined through school administration—not the driver. The Transportation Manager shall be notified by the school administration. Notes by parents or teachers to ride a different bus will not be honored, unless authorized by the Principal of that school.

## **VII. KINDERGARTEN AND COMMERCIAL DAY CARE PROVIDERS**

East Longmeadow Public Schools offers both a full-day Kindergarten program (on a fee basis) and a half-day program. The half day program utilizes double sessions (a.m. and p.m.) to accommodate the number of Kindergarten students in our community. The East Longmeadow School Committee authorizes school transportation services as required under the Massachusetts General Laws. The obligation of the East Longmeadow School Committee is to provide services to and from the residential address for students in grades K-6 living two or more miles from the school. The Committee recognizes the needs of working parents in today's society. To this end, and in reference to East Longmeadow commercial day care providers, the School Committee has set for the following procedures in policy that assist parents in securing transportation arrangements that are above and beyond the statutory requirements under the law.

Transportation Kindergarten Stop Guidelines:

Commercial Day Care Centers located in the AM session of town will have:

1. Pick up in morning.
2. Drop off at mid-day from Meadow Brook for the a.m. K students.
3. NO PICK UP FOR PM KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS AT MID-DAY.
4. Drop off at end of school day.

Commercial Day Care Centers located in the PM session of town will have:

1. Pick up in morning.
2. NO DROP OFF FOR AM K STUDENTS AT MID-DAY.
3. Pick up at mid-day to Meadow Brook for PM K students
4. Drop off at end of school day.

Other Kindergarten students will not be transported mid-day to or from the opposite district in which they reside.

## **VIII. SCHOOL BUS SAFETY PROGRAM**

The safety and welfare of student riders will be the first consideration in all matters pertaining to transportation. Safety precautions will include the following:

- A. Children will be instructed as to the proper procedure for boarding and exiting from a school bus and in proper and safe conduct while aboard.
- B. Emergency evacuation drills will be conducted at least twice a year to acquaint student riders with procedures in emergency situations.

- C. All vehicles used to transport children will be inspected in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws for conformance with state and federal safety requirements.
- D. K-5 classroom instruction on school bus safety will be provided.
- E. Buses will not, in the course of their regular daily route, drive in reverse gear. Dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs too small or with other obstacles (basketball hoops, parked cars, etc.) will not be traversed. Unavoidable situations will be dealt with on an individual basis.

It is extremely helpful if parents have their mailbox clearly numbered on both sides with the house number.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 90:7b as amended by Ch. 246 Acts of 1986  
M.G.L. 90:1 et seq.; 713:2; 713:7L  
Highway Safety Program Standard No. 17

## **IX. BUS DRIVER EXAMINATION AND TRAINING**

The East Longmeadow School Committee will reserve the right to approve or disapprove prospective drivers or persons employed by a bus contractor to drive school transportation vehicles.

- A. Courteous and careful drivers will be required.
- B. Each driver will file with school officials a medical certificate.
- C. No person under 18 years nor over 70 years of age will be allowed to operate school buses, except as prescribed by law.
- D. If the school district contracts for transportation services, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall secure verification from the contractor that all legal and health requirements have been fulfilled and that all bus drivers have been properly licensed by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles. In addition a contractor shall:
  - 1. furnish the school committee with a list of names of drivers and their safety records for the last three years.
  - 2. In case of any change of bus drivers, notify school officials as soon as possible.
  - 3. Upon the request of the School Committee, remove a bus driver and replace by another driver.

All drivers must have a clean CORI and Driving Record, as prescribed by law.

LEGAL REFS.: Highway Safety Program Standard No. 17  
M.G.L. 90:7B; 90:8A; 90:8A ½  
49 C.F.R. Part 391

## **X. DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING FOR SCHOOL BUS AND COMMERCIAL VEHICLE DRIVERS**

The East Longmeadow School District shall adhere to federal law and regulations requiring a drug and alcohol testing program for school bus drivers and commercial vehicle drivers.

This program shall comply with the requirements of the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 49, section 382 et seq. The Superintendent or designees shall adopt and enact procedures consistent with the federal regulations, defining the circumstances and procedures for testing.

The East Longmeadow School District shall comply with the Department of Transportation's regulations for the drug and alcohol testing of school bus drivers and commercial vehicle drivers employed by the district. Such testing will be conducted for five different situations: pre-employment, randomly, following an accident, following an authorization to return to duty, and upon reasonable suspicion that a driver is under the influence of alcohol or using drugs.

The East Longmeadow School District will comply with Department of Transportation protocols regarding the collection and testing necessary to establish whether alcohol or drugs are present in the driver's system, and regulations will be established for the steps to be taken in the event that test results are positive.

LEGAL REF.: 49 U.S.C. sec. 2717 et seq. (Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991)  
49C.F.R. Part 40 Procedures for Transportation Workplace and Drug and Alcohol Testing Programs  
49C.F.R. Part 382 Controlled Substance and Alcohol Use and Testing  
49 C.F.R. Part 391 Qualification of drivers