

Lynn Public Schools

TRANSPORTATION MANUAL SCHOOL YEAR 2021-2022

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I. INTRODUCTION

It is the intent of the Lynn School Department to comply with rules and regulations pertinent to the transportation of students. These rules and regulations are from the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles and the Massachusetts Department of Education. These shall govern any questions not covered by specific declaration of the policies herein.

As educational requirements permit, school schedules shall be adjusted to allow maximum use of each vehicle in the system.

Vehicle routes have been established with safety, efficiency and fairness in mind. They are designed to get the students to school in the shortest possible time.

Please familiarize yourself with the following guidelines and policies. They are there to assist in servicing all students and guardians involved in the transportation program.

II. TRANSPORTATION POLICY OVERVIEW

A. Definitions

1. "Homeless Student Transportation" - For those that have been defined as homeless under the guidelines of the McKinney-Vento Act and are located outside of the Lynn Public School District, documentation must be provided by an appropriate agency. Transportation for these students will be provided in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act. If placement is within the Lynn Public School District then transportation eligibility will be determined using the same criteria for all other students.
2. "Regular Education Transportation" is meant to refer to routes that service qualifying non-Special Education students, traditional routes, field trips, athletic trips, or any combination of the above.
3. "Special Education Transportation" refers to specific transportation requirements as stated in a Chapter 766 Individual Education Plan, herein after referred to as I.E.P.

B. Elementary students ***eligible*** for transportation and attending a school other than school of residence, will receive transportation by first walking to the neighborhood school or designated stop and then receiving transportation to the school of attendance or designated stop. If a student attends the district school and has a change of address, they may remain at that school, but will not receive transportation. However, they may transfer to the new district school.

C. All ***eligible*** elementary students who live over one mile from the assigned school will be transported. The Transportation Department will be the sole factor in determining eligibility. Lynn Public Schools will not be required to transport to an address other than residence, designated bus stop or school. Eligibility is determined by meeting three (3) criteria. Student must be attending a school outside of their resident district, the school must be more than one (1) mile from the home address and they must be attending that school for desegregation reasons or have been placed there by the English Learner Education Department.

- D. Elementary students may be transported if a designated hazardous area exists between home and school and walking around it is greater than one mile.
- E. Only secondary students who are attending an out-of-district school for desegregation reasons or a bilingual program and live two miles or more from assigned school will either be issued an MBTA Charlie Card or receive contracted transportation. (School Department discretion)
- F. All special education students will receive transportation in accordance with their I.E.P.
- G. Students will not be required to walk down primary streets that do not provide adequate sidewalks. Secondary roads may be acceptable for such passage.
- H. Vehicle assignments and routes have been set up in accordance with School Committee policy. Routes and schedules along with the lists of eligible students will be distributed to schools before the opening of the school year.
- I. There will not be any transportation for any student that does not have a telephone number or an emergency telephone number for contact purposes.
- J. Pre-school and Special Education Policies:
 - 1. A.M. Session Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students transported from school of attendance at midday will be dropped off at home or to a person designated by the guardian. P.M. Session Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students at the end of the school session will be dropped off at home or stop to a person designated by the guardian. In both cases, guardians are to have an adult waiting at the designated stop or residence for the bus. If no adult is present, in the case of the A.M. Session student, the student will be returned to the school and the guardian will have to arrange for transportation. If the student is in the P.M. session, the student will be brought to the Lynn Public Schools or designated agency and again the guardian will be responsible to arrange transportation. Students enrolled in full day Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten will be picked up and dropped off at their assigned stop.

If at any time a guardian is not available and the student has to be taken to any alternate site, the guardian will be put on notice that if it should occur any additional times, then they will be reported to the proper authority and that transportation will be suspended for a definite or indefinite time period, depending on the individual case.
 - 2. If a guardian feels the student is capable of walking home alone from the bus stop, notification, in writing, must be made to the Transportation Department
 - 3. On early-release days, there will be no midday kindergarten buses. Kindergarten children will go home on regular buses and will be dropped off at the regular morning bus stop. Guardians are responsible for meeting the bus and insuring that the student arrives home safely.
- K. Homeless students will be provided transportation following the same criteria as the other students contained herein.

III. DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the Lynn Public School Department to provide safe, economical transportation to all eligible students living in the Lynn Public School District. Vehicle routes shall be established over the most direct roads feasible for vehicle travel to serve those entitled to transportation service. Where an alternative route may be selected without sacrifice of efficiency and economy, preference will be given to that route serving the larger number of students more directly. Routes will be designed to employ as nearly as practical the full carrying capacity of each vehicle trip. New routes will be established only when full capacity of the trips on existing routes has been reached or is imminent.

Buses will not be required to back down a street or execute a three-point turn while in route.

Vehicle routes will be established so that an authorized vehicle stop will be available within a reasonable walking distance of the home of every resident pupil entitled to transportation service.

Vehicles will not be expected to operate over roads that are not passable or on roads where adequate turnarounds are not provided.

Walking to and from school when distances are reasonable is recognized as good for student's health provided, however, that safety hazards can be reasonably controlled. It is also recognized that there is no possible way to control hazards completely in a city even if the student lives only a few blocks from school. Risk is involved whether or not a child is transported. Through cooperation with the guardians, the Lynn Police Department, Lynn School Department and other city personnel, risks will be controlled to the fullest extent possible. Students can be required to walk up to one mile to a bus stop.

Bus routes are always available on the Lynn Public Schools website at www.lynnschools.org.

A. Communications between Transportation Contractors and Lynn School Department

Contractors should communicate with the Transportation Department on all issues regarding vehicles, drivers, monitors, business, etc.

1. Student changes: Additions or deletions of special education students will be submitted by the Special Education Department. Except in cases of emergency, there will be a minimum of a three-day wait for transportation to begin. Presently, the Special Education Department provides the Transportation Department with a Letter of Authorization with any addition or change.
2. Parent/Staff Complaint Form: Guardians or staff formal complaints will be recorded by the Special Education Department on the Special Education Transportation Complaint Record and they will follow up to obtain a resolution of the problems. Copies of this form showing the resolution will be given to the Parent Liaison, who will distribute to the person making the complaint as well as other persons designated to receive a copy. Guardians are encouraged to file or call in a complaint if they believe the service is unsatisfactory. The Transportation Department will investigate and take appropriate action.
3. Guardians of children picked up at home should notify the Transportation Department at (781) 477-7220 extension 1813 or 1814 before 6:45 A.M. if a student will not be going to school. Voice mail is available twenty-four hours a day.
4. Transportation contractors must submit a list of drivers, monitors and substitute personnel to the Superintendent of Schools or his designee for approval by the School Committee.
5. Contractors are subject to all statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts governing vehicles, drivers, inspections and licensing.

B. Student Lists

Desegregation students will be entitled to transportation as determined by the Parent Information Center. By the end of July, the list of special education students will be sent to the transportation vendor for routing. This list will include student's name, address, telephone number, emergency telephone number, assigned school, and other information. Regular Education lists (including Transitional Bilingual Education and Desegregation) will be made available during the first week of school and periodically updated.

C. School Schedules

School schedules will be available on or about August 15. This information will include the name and address of the school, opening and closing times, delivery and pick-up windows, and any other special information.

D. Evaluation and Reporting

The Transportation Department expects to obtain ratings of service from school staff on effectiveness and timeliness of service on a rating scale of "Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair and Poor" on a weekly basis.

E. Safety Hazards

Every effort will be made to insure the safety of all students that are transported on vehicles contracted by Lynn Public Schools.

This will include, that in the event of dead-end and narrow roads, if it is deemed by the vehicle's driver, contractor's safety personnel and Lynn Public Schools Transportation Department that the vehicle should not attempt to negotiate the vehicle onto said road, then the guardians will have to meet the vehicle at the nearest corner closest to the stop, but again keeping the safety of all students in mind.

In the event that the Superintendent of Schools cancels school due to weather conditions, including but not limited to snow, rain, flooding, etc. for the students attending Lynn schools, this will also apply to students leaving the city to an outside placement school. None of the vehicles will run that day.

If a city or school district where a child is attending as an out of district student cancels school or has a delayed opening, then that student will not be transported or will be transported in accordance with the delayed opening.

In the event of inclement weather, including but not limited to snow, rain, flooding, etc. in which school is still in session, the Superintendent has the option to cancel transportation services. If the guardian chooses to send the student to school, they would be responsible for transportation to and from school. If transportation is available, in the interest of the safety of children and at the discretion of the driver, if any street is considered unsafe, the guardians will be contacted and asked to meet the bus at the corner closest to the stop, but again keeping the safety of all students in mind.

IV. GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES AND INVOLVEMENT

- A. Normally, all students would be transported from school or designated stop directly to their regular vehicle stops or homes.
- B. Guardians must not send children who are not students in school on the vehicle. Only eligible, enrolled students may ride the vehicle. Guardians may not ride the vehicle without prior permission of the Transportation Department, who will then notify the transportation vendor.
- C. Guardians must have students at the vehicle stop or ready at home (special needs) on time. In the case of regular transportation students, guardians should ensure the safety and proper conduct of the student going to and from vehicle stops and while waiting for the vehicle.
- D. In the event that the guardian wishes to take the student from home to school, or from school to home, arrangements must be made as much in advance as possible. The guardians should never attempt to stop the vehicle to remove the student.
- E. Guardians should understand that students must obey all regulations governing transportation on school vehicles or they will forfeit their right to transportation. Guardians must encourage the cooperation of students with the authorities responsible for transportation. Notice will be given prior to a student's exclusion with an opportunity to discuss the matter with a school administrator, if possible. The Transportation Department recognizes the problems of special needs students in this regard.
- F. Guardians are responsible for the safety of the student while walking or riding on vehicles other than school vehicles between home and school or home and authorized vehicle stop.
- G. Guardians should make sure the student is familiar with their bus stop so they will wait for the bus at the correct stop and know where to get off after school.
- H. All special education students must have an adult waiting to receive them at the end of the school day. This is especially important on days when school is dismissed early. In the event that the student is brought to an alternative drop off location on a regular basis, e.g. baby-sitter, relative or day care, the parent is responsible for notifying the Transportation Department of the address. This should be done no later than two weeks prior to the opening of school. These arrangements ***will not*** renew from year to year, from the regular school year to any summer programs or from summer programs to the regular school year. All alternative pick-ups and drop-offs must be in the City of Lynn. ***If a guardian wishes to give permission for a student to be dropped off without an adult present, notification must be made in writing to the Lynn Public Schools Transportation Department.***
- I. All regular education Kindergarten students must have an adult waiting when the student returns from school. ***Again, if a guardian wishes to give permission for a student to be dropped off without an adult present, notification must be made in writing to the Lynn Public Schools Transportation Department.***

V. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Bus Rules for Students

1. While waiting for or riding on the bus, students are expected to conduct themselves in the same manner as the student code in the school. The vehicle driver and/or monitor have the obligation to judge conduct, to maintain order and to report students to the principal when necessary.

B. Waiting for the Bus

1. Students should be on time for the vehicle but not arrive at the stop earlier than 10 minutes before the time at which the vehicle usually arrives. Special needs students should be waiting at the door or outside with a responsible adult.
2. Students should observe all safety precautions while waiting for the vehicle:
 - a. Do not play in the street.
 - b. Do not play ball.
 - c. If possible, avoid crossing streets.
 - d. Whenever crossing the street, do so only if there are sure no moving vehicles approaching from either direction.
 - e. Do not push, pull, or chase any other pupil(s).
 - f. Avoid trespassing on private property and being noisy.
3. As the vehicle approaches, students should line up at least six feet off the roadway, and not approach the vehicle until it has stopped and the driver has opened the door.

C. Loading the Bus or Van

1. Students should get on the vehicle as soon as the vehicle is stopped and be seated at once. All special education buses should be equipped with seat belts that must be buckled.
2. Students should listen carefully and obey any directions issued by the driver/monitor.
3. The assignment of seats is left up to the discretion of the vehicle driver or monitor. A student may be assigned a seat in certain cases.
4. Students should be sure to observe all safety precautions.
5. Violation of vehicle rules may result in loss of transportation privileges.

D. Unloading the Bus

1. Students should not leave their seat until the vehicle has come to a complete stop and the driver has opened the door.

2. Students should follow all directions issued by the driver.
3. Students should leave the vehicle quickly, but in a courteous manner without pushing other students.
4. If students must cross the street as they leave the school vehicle, they should be sure to walk in **front** of the vehicle, at a distance of at least 12 feet away from the vehicle. If they get too close to the front of the vehicle, the driver may not be able to see them and a serious accident could occur.

E. Unloading a Special Needs Vehicle

1. The monitor will get off the vehicle first and assist the student, if necessary, delivering custody to the guardian or other authorized adult.

F. Student Behavior

All students must behave appropriately as passengers on a school vehicle. Clearly understood and well-enforced rules are necessary for the successful management of students who ride school vehicles.

1. Students transported in a school vehicle are under the authority of and directly responsible to the driver of the vehicle and the monitor, if present.
2. Continued disorderly conduct or persistent refusal to obey rules is sufficient reason for a student to be denied transportation on a school vehicle by a principal. Guardians will be given prior notice before exclusion, if possible.
3. No vehicle driver can require any student to leave the vehicle before such student has reached his destination except when such student is transferred to another authorized vehicle.
4. No school vehicle can stop to load or discharge students except at stops regularly designated by the school department. An exception would be granted in the event of an emergency (road closed, accident, etc.).
5. No student can engage in unnecessary conversation with the driver while the vehicle is in motion.
6. Smoking in a school vehicle is prohibited.
7. No intoxicating liquor or drugs may be transported at any time in a school vehicle.
8. No weapons of any type, except firearms carried by police officers may be transported on a school vehicle.
9. No person is allowed to occupy a position in a school vehicle that interferes with the vision of the driver either to the front, the side, through the mirror to the rear, or with the operation of the vehicle.

10. Nothing may be thrown inside the vehicle or outside of the vehicle. Windows may be opened or closed only by the driver/monitor. Students are **not** allowed to open or close windows
11. Any action by a student that in the judgment of the driver or monitor compromises the safety of others is prohibited.
12. No student should touch the rear (emergency) door for any reason except in an emergency.
13. Eating is prohibited on the vehicle.
14. Students should not extend arms or any other parts of their body out of the windows.
15. Changing seats may be allowed with the driver's permission and at his discretion, but only when the vehicle is **stopped**.
16. No shouting and other excessive noise will be allowed.
17. Students are expected to be courteous to and respectful of others.
18. Help keep the vehicle clean and sanitary.
19. Students may not leave the vehicle except when arriving at their designated pick-up and drop-off points.
20. Students who disembark from the vehicle at a stop other than a regular stop must have a note to do so from a parent or guardian endorsed by the principal and with permission of the Transportation Department.
21. Video Surveillance Equipment will be utilized on a rotating basis on all vehicles used in the transportation of Lynn Public Schools students. The purpose of which will be to record activities to assist in insuring that conduct codes are being followed and if necessary to be used as a disciplinary tool. . Due to privacy issues, only authorized employees of the transportation vendor, the Lynn Public Schools and law enforcement are allowed to view any video.

G. Student Bus Rules in Brief

1. Remain seated.
2. Obey the driver and monitor.
3. Walk – do not run.
4. Keep arms and head inside the vehicle.
5. No eating, drinking or smoking.
6. Do not disturb others.
7. Speak quietly.
8. Respect public property.
9. Keep hands, feet and other objects out of the aisles.
10. Use of cellular phones is not allowed. Cell phones carried on the vehicle must be in the OFF position.

VI. DRIVERS AND MONITORS RESPONSIBILITIES

Any significant violations of the rules and regulations for student behavior on school vehicles must be reported on an Incident Report as soon as possible to the Transportation Department. The Transportation Department will send a copy to the principal of the school involved as soon as possible. In the case of an outside placement, special needs student, the driver will give a copy to the school. A severe incident should be reported immediately. The principal will return a copy of the complaint form to the Transportation Department showing the action taken. A copy of this may be given to the transportation vendor so that they may know what action has been taken.

- A. Drivers must not remove any child from the vehicle as a disciplinary measure.
- B. Drivers must not touch a child, except to assist them or to render first aid.
- C. Vehicle drivers have no authority to appoint students as vehicle monitors and must not do so. If repeated misbehavior problems arise, they may take any or all of the following actions:
 - 1. Stop the vehicle and remain standing until order is restored.
 - 2. Report each incident to the designated authority.
 - 3. Request that the designated authority ride on one or more trips to observe the problem.
 - 4. Request that the school administrator board the vehicle and talk to the students.
 - 5. Require individual passengers to sit in the front seats so they can be observed.
 - 6. Radio the dispatcher at central (base) and call for a vehicle to remove the student.
- D. Although maintaining order on the vehicles is a driver responsibility, the main job is to drive the vehicle safely and in accordance with rules and regulations while insuring that all students are transported in a safe manner. Drivers should never compromise the safety and security of students while operating the vehicle.
- E. Extreme misbehavior problems affecting the safe operation of the vehicle shall result in procedures as follows:
 - 1. Stop the vehicle at the edge of the road.
 - 2. Turn off ignition.
 - 3. Set emergency brake and blinker lights, if appropriate.
 - 4. Separate the students (if applicable) and restore order.
 - 5. Radio for assistance, if needed.
 - 6. The school authority may have the student removed to another vehicle.
 - 7. As a last resort, the police may be called to come to the scene.
- F. Only the school principal and/or Transportation Manager are authorized to administer suspension of a student's transportation.
- G. When present, the monitor will assist the driver in all student-related factors outlined above.
- H. Significant cases of misbehavior on the vehicle or at vehicle stops should be reported to the Transportation Department. The Transportation Department may then contact the School Safety Officer or the Attendance and Discipline Officer for special handling.

- I. Upon completion of the route, the driver will perform a visual inspection of the vehicle by walking from the front to the rear and back to assure that there are not any students on board.

VII. DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

- A. Any violation of behavior standards on the vehicle is expected to be resolved the day of the occurrence. Bus drivers or monitors must report any serious infraction to the principal or transportation vendor no later than the same day in writing on a form provided by the Transportation Department. Discipline will be imposed for violations of these rules of behavior. Cooperation and communication among the parties, drivers, monitors, teachers and parents are especially important for special needs children. The vendor will place recording cameras on all routes. These recordings will be used to further assist the vendors and Transportation Department in resolving conduct issues. These recordings may be viewed by school staff, including teachers, the Transportation Department staff and the vendors' management staff for purposes of determining the identity of students. Due to privacy issues, guardians are not allowed to view these recordings without permission of the Superintendent of Schools.
- B. For the first violation of rules, the student will receive a verbal warning. For a second violation of rules, a letter will be sent to the student's guardian describing the violation and the possibility of future disciplinary action up to and including suspension from transportation. For a third violation, the parent will be required to attend a conference with the school principal. For a fourth violation, the discipline will be suspension of transportation. In the case of situations deemed to be severe by the school principal and/or Transportation Manager, the progressive discipline process may be waived and suspensions may be automatic. If a student is suspended from the vehicle, he or she is not necessarily suspended from school. The guardian must arrange for other transportation during the duration of the student's suspension. The principal will advise the guardian of all disciplinary actions. Duration of suspensions will be solely at the discretion of the school principal and/or Transportation Manager.
- C. When it is necessary that a student remain in school beyond the time that the student is usually dismissed, for whatever reason, transportation will not be provided. The guardian must be notified so that they can pick the student up at the time indicated by the principal. The Lynn Public Schools will **not** provide transportation. Again, it will be the responsibility of the guardian to provide transportation.
- D. Guardians are urged to cooperate in the transportation of the student by explaining the importance of good behavior while they travel between home and school. For more information, please call the Transportation Office at (781) 477-7220 extension 1813 or 1814.

VIII. ACCIDENT REPORT

A copy of the Accident Report Form used by the transportation vendor must be submitted to the Transportation Department. Accidents are to be reported immediately by telephone to the Transportation Department and followed up with a full, detailed written report within 24 hours. If a minor accident occurs on the way to school, the school personnel shall be notified immediately by telephone. If a minor accident occurs on the way home, parents will be notified. Accidents where serious injury or death occurs will be addressed immediately and the School Committee will be notified.

IX. MEDICAL POLICY

It shall be the sole responsibility of the guardian to transport any student who cannot walk to their assigned school because of certain medical conditions including but not limited to asthma, bronchitis, or broken or sprained limbs.

There shall be no exceptions to this policy except for students who are extreme cases or who are confined to a wheelchair. These cases must request transportation through a 504 Plan. The Principal or designee of the school that they attend must submit a written plan and documentation from a treating physician to the building 504 Plan Coordinator who will forward to the District 504 Coordinator, currently the Compliance Officer, for approval.

All of these cases will be reviewed annually and they will not renew automatically.

X. AUTHORIZED ACCESS TO VEHICLES

No one is to enter a school bus for any reason except for a police officer or other emergency personnel, who, in the case of an emergency, presents him or herself in uniform and with proper identification. School personnel sometimes ask to enter a bus, which may seem appropriate on one hand, but on the other hand, drivers often do not know who these people are and anyone could present themselves in this manner and create an unsafe situation. The driver is fully responsible for the safety of the children on that vehicle and drivers have been instructed to not allow anyone to enter their vehicle.

The Superintendent will identify district personnel who are authorized to enter a school bus and will provide those names to bus companies at the beginning of the school year. If one of those people asks to enter a bus the driver will call dispatch and dispatch will match the name with the list provided. If there is a match and if the person has proper identification that person will be allowed to board the bus. No other person will be allowed to board a school bus.