

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. How can I be sure my child's bus driver is certified?

All drivers must meet the minimum standards of their position in accordance with the regulations set forth by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, Bureau of Traffic safety, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Public School Code, Public Welfare Code, Owen J. Roberts School District's contractual and procedural guidelines and Gross School Bus Services Employees Manual. Employment checks and screening are as follows:

Bus Services Employees Manual. Employment checks and screening are as follows:

- Driver's license – all drivers must possess a valid driver's license.
- Medical Examination – All drivers must pass a medical examination conducted by a licensed health care professional and be issued a Medical Examiner's Certificate, which must be carried at all times and be renewed every year.
- MVR – Motor vehicle record check will be made of all driving related activities for the preceding three years as well as annually.
- Criminal History Review – All drivers are subject to a criminal history review by the Pennsylvania State Police to determine if the individual has a record indicating a criminal concern. Criminal history clearances are subject to a periodic review.
- Federal Criminal History Record Check – Drivers are subject to a FBI record check to determine if the individual has a Federal recording indicating a criminal concern.
- Child Abuse Review – All drivers are subject to a review by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare to determine if the individual has a record indicating a child abuse concern. Child Abuse Clearances are subject to a periodic review.
- Drug Testing – All drivers are subject to a Pre-employment Drug test. Federal law mandates this test. Follow up drug testing of CDL drivers is done by random selection by an independent drug testing company.
- CDL Permit – All potential drivers must obtain a Commercial Driving license Permit. If there is an outstanding citation a CDL permit will not be issued until the citation is rectified.
- Drivers Training- All school bus drivers in Pennsylvania must be certified and hold a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). To become certified as a school bus driver for the District, an individual must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age, possess a valid driver's license, pass a physical examination, attend at least fourteen (14) hours of classroom instructions, receive a minimum of six (6) hours of behind-the-wheel training, and pass a series of school bus driver's tests administered by the Pennsylvania State Police or third party licensing examiner.
- CDL License – All school bus drivers must possess a valid CDL license with a passenger and school bus endorsements.

Additionally all bus drivers are required to complete the following re-certifications:

1. Annually pass a physical examination
2. Annual check of their motor vehicle record
3. Random drug testing
4. Every four (4) years:
Attend fourteen (14) hours of classroom instructions, receive three (3) hours of behind-the-wheel refresher training and retake a school bus driver's test and have a review of their Criminal and Child Abuse Clearances.

Safety is the main concern when transporting the District's students. In addition to the requirements set forth, a minimum of five school bus driver's seminars are provided annually emphasizing the District's regulations and procedural safety guidelines.

2. What are the expectations for my child(ren) when waiting for the school bus?

Students are expected to leave their residence in sufficient time to avoid having the bus wait or avoid missing the bus entirely.

Students are to ride only on their assigned bus.

While waiting for the bus, students should:

- Be at the bus stop five (5) minutes before the scheduled time.
- Whenever the bus is delayed because of weather or mechanical failure wait for a reasonable length of time, depending on the weather conditions.
- Stay off the road at all times while waiting for the bus.
- Do not push or crowd when boarding the bus.
- Be considerate of private property - keep off lawns and stay away from parked cars.
- Do not attempt to board the bus at school loading zones until the bus has been brought to a complete stop; and
- Do not run after the bus in an attempt to board once the bus has been put into motion.

3. What is expected of students while riding on the school bus?

- Students are expected to obey and respect the orders of the bus driver. The bus driver is required to report any discipline problem(s) to the appropriate school administrator.
- While riding on the bus, students are to remain in their assigned seats and not exhibit any behavior that could be detrimental to the safety and welfare of other students and/or bus driver. Strictly forbidden activities are:
 - ❖ Throwing of objects within the bus;
 - ❖ Moving around within the bus; and
 - ❖ Hanging out of the windows or throwing objects out the window.
- Students are required to ride facing forward at all times. If seat belts are installed, they must be fastened.
- Students may talk quietly but should avoid loud, boisterous behavior that could distract the bus driver. Obscene or vulgar language is strictly prohibited.
- Avoid unnecessary conversation(s) with the bus driver.
- Eating and drinking of any kind is strictly prohibited on the school bus.
- Smoking is strictly prohibited on the school bus and/or anywhere else on school property.
- Students are expected to keep their bus and all school property clean and free of litter.
- Students are not to mar or damage the school bus in any way. Students caught willfully damaging a school bus and/or school property will be held financially accountable and may be subject to criminal prosecution.
- Certain items are prohibited from being brought on the school bus:
- Animals of any kind are not permitted on school buses; large musical instruments that could block the aisle, preventing an emergency exit; and objects that could be harmful, such as glass containers, sharp metal objects, knives of any kind.

- Any sports item that could block the aisle and/or is not school related, Example: Skate boards, roller blades, sleds. If students must bring any of the above items to school (for music instruction, show & tell, science projects, etc.,) parents are expected to transport students.
- Students are to remain in their seats until their destination is reached and the school bus has come to a complete stop.
- Students are to leave the bus only at their assigned stop. After exiting the school bus, watch carefully for oncoming traffic and walk on the sidewalks; or, if there are no sidewalks, walk on the left side shoulder, facing traffic, do not cross the road behind the bus.
- When students misbehave on the afternoon buses, drivers are to take disciplinary measures in the same order as they do on the morning bus runs. However, in all probability, school administrators have departed for the day, therefore, all disciplinary fractions should be reported to the appropriate school immediately the following school day. Under no circumstances are students to be denied or removed from the bus.

TRANSPORTATION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Appropriate transportation services will be provided to all physically and mentally handicapped students in accordance with applicable local, state and Federal laws and regulations and in accordance with the student's I.E.P., (Individualized Educational Program).

SHARED CUSTODY TRANSPORTATION

In instances of court ordered shared custody arrangements in which both the parents request a bus stop for a student in the District, the parents must provide a copy of the court order to the transportation department. Stop locations cannot cross attendance boundaries for elementary students or incur additional cost to the District.

In instances of a non-court ordered custody arrangements, one permanent bus stop shall be designated and agreed upon by both parents. However, the Building Principal may give approval for a student to ride a different bus and disembark at an established stop location provided that a note of request has been provided by either of the parents.

If, as a result of a child custody agreement, a student is residing in the School District on a "shared schedule" the resident parent(s) must supply the Office of Transportation with a calendar of custody days.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES

The decisions not to open the schools or to delay their opening will be announced over AM radio stations KYW, WPAZ, WCOJ, WEEU, and WCHE. District Code number is 857.

Non Public students will be transported under the same guidelines as public children. When the District is closed due to inclement weather, the District will not transport students to any school. Also, when the District goes on a two- (2) hour delayed schedule, transportation to all schools will be delayed two- (2) hours.

In the event that a non-public school is on a 2 hour delay and the Owen J. Roberts School District is on a regular schedule, all non-public schools will be bused in accordance with the Owen J. Roberts schedule. The non-public schools must have someone at their facility to receive their students.

A decision not to open District Schools constitutes a decision that all transportation of District public and non-public students has been suspended. Any non-public students whose schools are

in session must provide their own transportation to and from their appropriate school. A telephone chain will be set in motion in the event schools are unexpectedly dismissed early.

VIDEO CAMERAS

The purpose for digital video recorders to be used on school buses is to aid in the safe transportation of student passengers.

A digital video recorder device with a camera and microphone is installed on all District contracted school buses. The digital recorder will be mounted in the vehicle to ensure its accessibility to authorized district personnel only. Only authorized district personnel are permitted access to any of the surveillance equipment. A warning notice will be posted in each bus notifying passengers that they are not to expect privacy and that their actions on the bus are monitored by a Video and audio surveillance system.

RADIO COMMUNICATION

The purpose of the Two-way Radio Communication system is to improve the efficiency of the District's transportation system and to ensure the safety of passengers. Radio communications are installed on all District contracted school buses. The radios are mounted in the vehicles to ensure their accessibility to the driver.

ACCIDENTS

Despite the District's strong concern about safety, its continuing emphasis on driver safety training and instruction, and the commitment to stringent vehicle safety specification and standards, accidents do happen. In fact, given that our buses travel nearly one million miles per year, it is our bus driver's commitment to safety that minimizes both the number and severity of accidents that do occur.

Whenever an accident, medical situation, and/or any other form of emergency exist, the bus driver will immediately radio the Dispatcher and/or Contract Supervisor to report the incident. Upon notification, the Transportation Department will immediately notify the proper authorities (Superintendent's Office, state and local police, ambulance service, and appropriate school(s)).

The Contractor and the District's Transportation Department will investigate all vehicle accidents involving the transportation of students. If the resulting investigation produces any suggested improvements or changes, appropriate action will be taken to implement the recommendations to help prevent future occurrences.