

EEAA-Transportation Services

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 68 requires free public transportation for students only if they are in grades K-6 and only if they live more than two miles from the school they are entitled to attend.

The Northbridge School Committee has set the following mileage guidelines:

All Students Grades K through 5:

- Students who live more than 2 miles from school: Eligible for free bus transportation by law
- Students who live more than 1 mile, but not more than 2 miles from school: Eligible for bus transportation, subject to bus fee
- Students who live 1 mile or less from school: Not eligible for bus transportation from home residence

Grades 6:

- Students who live more than 2 miles from school: Eligible for free bus transportation by law
- Students who live 2 miles or less from school: Not eligible for bus transportation from home residence

Grades 7 through 12:

- Students who live more than 2 miles from school: Eligible for bus transportation; subject to bus fee
- Students who live 2 miles or less from school: Not eligible for bus transportation from home residence

Eligibility

Eligibility for transportation services is determined by the location of the student's home in relation to the school to which the student is assigned, and does not entitle the student to door-to-door service. If a student is not eligible for transportation as provided for by this policy, the parent/guardian is responsible for assuring that the student gets to and from school safely.

Students with special needs who attend out of district placements (outside the Town of Northbridge) and ride special vehicles or vans are NOT subject to the mileage boundaries or the fee. Students with special needs who attend Northbridge Public Schools are subject to the mileage boundaries and the fee under the same provisions as other students unless they have "special transportation" by a "special vehicle" indicated in their individualized plan (I.E.P.). Students with special needs with these two provisions in their I.E.P. will be transported regardless of mileage and are NOT subject

to the fee. Students who have a 504 plan are subject to the fee under the same provisions as all other students.

Bus Routes and Stops

School bus stops will be at centralized locations. Students are not entitled to street-by-street or door-to-door pickup and/or delivery. All routes and stops will be determined using these guidelines:

- Bus capacity
- Length of bus routes and travel time
- Distance that an eligible student would be required to walk to a bus stop, which will not exceed the statutory limit of one mile
- Grade of student(s) to be transported
- Student's individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan

Buses will not travel into cul-de-sacs or travel on unapproved town roads.

A parent/guardian or responsible person designated by the parent/guardian must be at the bus stop for the drop-off of all kindergarten through grade 5 students. A parent/guardian may write a note granting permission for his/her child to be dropped off and left at the bus stop without an adult being present. If no note is received, and no responsible person is at the bus stop, kindergarten through grade 5 students will not be dropped off and will be transported back to the school.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure safe passage of his/her child over roadways to an established bus stop. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure the safety of his/her child at the established bus stop. The district's responsibility begins when the child boards the bus at the pickup location and ends when the child disembarks the bus at the assigned drop off location.

Students must be picked up and dropped off at the same bus stop location five days a week. Whichever bus stop a student is picked up at in the morning, must be the same bus stop the student is dropped off at in the afternoon. A note requesting the student take the bus to/from a different bus stop on any given day is not acceptable.

Exceptions to any of the above guidelines may be made at the discretion of the Superintendent.

Fees

The School Committee may make bus transportation available on a fee-for-service basis to students who do not qualify for free bussing under state law, on a space-available basis.

- The School Committee will establish the level of service and fees for the next school year.
- Fees will be due during the month of May, and the District will notify parents and guardians of the specific due date each year.
- All fees will be due on or before the annually established due date.
- The Bus Privilege Fee is set at \$200 per student with a family cap of \$600. This fee is subject to change upon School Committee vote.
- A late fee of \$50 per student with a family cap of \$100 will be assessed for registrations submitted after 4PM on the first Friday in June.
- Online registration and electronic payment are recommended.
- Students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch are entitled to free transportation provided that all necessary forms have been submitted and approved. Students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch are still required to register for school bus transportation, and will be subject to the late fee if all necessary documentation is not submitted by the required deadline.
- Bus fees are not refundable and will not be prorated for partial years or one-way transportation. Refunds will only be issued on a case by case basis subject to the approval of the Superintendent for requests made one week prior to the start of the school year. A processing fee of \$25 per student with a family cap of \$50 will be deducted from the refund.

Request/Complaint Procedure

Requests/complaints must be submitted in writing to the transportation coordinator. A response will be provided within five (5) school days of receipt. In accordance with the Massachusetts General Law, a complaint concerning the district's compliance with the law may be made to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5; 71:7A; 71:68; 71B:5

Revised and Approved by Northbridge School Committee: 5/11/2021