



School District of the Chathams

Busing FAQs (updated 11/23/2022)

Q. Who must be transported?

A. In accordance with state law, N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1, all public elementary school students (grades K-8) who live more than two miles from their school and all public secondary school students (grades 9-12) who live more than two-and-a-half miles from their school are entitled to transportation. These students are said to live "remote from school." Whenever a school district is required to provide transportation to students attending regular public-school programs, students attending nonpublic schools who meet those distance requirements may also be entitled to transportation services. In addition, any student classified with special needs who either meets these distance requirements or for whom transportation is required in the student's Individual Education Plan must be transported.

Q. How is the distance between a student's home and school measured?

A. Measurement is made by the shortest distance along public roadways or walkways between the entrance to the student's home and the nearest public entrance of the school building. This measurement is for eligibility purposes only and is not necessarily the travel path to or from school.

Q. What happens if a public-school student is not entitled to free transportation?

A. The School District of the Chathams does offer transportation called *Subscription Busing*. Subscription Busing (policy #8611) is available for students who reside less than remote distance from school for a yearly fee. It is offered for Chatham High School, Chatham Middle School, Southern Boulevard School, Lafayette School and the Green Village area of Washington School.

Q. What is the process for Subscription Busing?

A new application must be filled out **every spring for the next school year**. Priority seats go to those who live remote from school, and the remaining seats are made available to subscription riders on an existing mandated route. If a bus is full, and a student moves into the district and lives remote from school, the last subscription rider added will be removed and the prorated dollar amount will be returned. Every effort is made to accommodate all pupils who desire subscription busing, however, the number of applications received will often exceed the number of seats available and will be denied, or placed on a waiting list. **If a student is no longer in need of the requested subscription busing service, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to request a cancellation in order to avoid fees associated with this service. A prorated amount will be charged for the days the student was assigned to the route.**

Q. Where can I view my child's busing information for Subscription Busing?

A. The Parent Portal in Genesis (on the Student Summary page, next to the Student Attendance record) will show the bus assignment. The bus tab will include the bus route, bus stop, and pick up and drop off time.

Q. Does my child need a parent/guardian to be present at the bus stop?

A. It is **mandatory** that there is a parent present for Kindergarteners and 1st graders. It is preferable that there is at least one parent per stop for children in grades 2 through 3. Upon school dismissal, if a parent/guardian isn't present when the bus driver arrives at the bus stop with the child, the bus driver will return the child to school.

Q. Can my child ride a different bus?

A. Students are only allowed on the bus they have been assigned to.

Q. What is my child's bus pick-up/drop-off time?

A. The Parent Portal in Genesis will list the pick-up location and the scheduled time for the students' pick-up. Due to unpredictable traffic patterns throughout the district, bus pick-up time can vary from day to day, students should be at their assigned bus stop **at least 5-10 minutes prior** to the scheduled time.

Q: How do I know if my child's bus is safe?

A. All school vehicles are required by law to undergo quarterly maintenance, (oil, fluids, brakes, etc.), and a twice yearly 900-point State Inspection by the Department of Motor Vehicles. The inspection process not only includes the bus, but all paperwork associated with the vehicle, (purchases for parts and fluids, repair requests and result of repair, review of quarterly maintenance records, and all driver records.) Buses either get a new 6-month sticker, a 30-day repair notice, or a red sticker which means that the bus is off the road. Board of Education vehicles have always passed inspection with a new 6-month sticker. In addition the bus driver is required to conduct a pre and post trip inspection before and after each route.

Q. What are the requirements necessary to obtain a bus driver's license?

A. Bus drivers have a special license called a, "CDL", (Commercial Driver's License). Applicants for a bus driver license must have a safe driving record with no criminal convictions, pass a special CDL physical, pass a pre-employment drug and alcohol test, have fingerprints taken for both State and Federal review, have a promise of employment from a school district or a contractor, and take a written test before obtaining a driving permit. The written test requires applicants to have knowledge of bus inspection, pupil safety, and braking procedures. Driver applicants are then required to have 30 hours of behind the wheel training, learn how to complete a pre-trip inspection, and take a driving test in the vehicle they will be using. Once all of this has been completed and the license has been issued, drivers are required to be part of yearly random drug and alcohol testing, a license review every six months, have a CDL physical every two years, and be fingerprinted every time their licenses are renewed.

Q. Is there an alternative to busing?

A. The district participates in the Safe Routes to School Program, where walking or bicycling is encouraged so long students live within walking/biking distance and there is a safe route to travel. Walking/bicycling provides physical activity, decreases congestion, decreases pollution, and promotes healthy habits that will last a lifetime. Please refer to the district's policy #8681 and #8682 for more information regarding liability and safety tips.

Q. Who can I contact with additional questions/concerns?

A. Please contact the Transportation Department via email at transportation@chatham-nj.org or phone at (973) 457-2526. In addition, the district's policies and regulations (8000 series) are available as reference on the district's website at <https://www.chatham-nj.org/page/554>. The state also provides information regarding transportation at https://www.nj.gov/education/genfo/faq/faq_transportation.shtml.

