

# SHRSD - Parent Transportation Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize parents with the South Hunterdon Regional School District's transportation system. We will attempt to answer many of the questions that parents have regarding their child's transportation to school.

South Hunterdon Regional High School supplies transportation for over 1000 students.

All vehicles are owned by the district and the drivers that operate these vehicles are employed by South Hunterdon Regional School District Board of Education.

In our district, we use a tiered system. The students attending South Hunterdon represent the first tier. The second tier transports West Amwell Elementary School.

While this handbook was specifically created for the parents of new students, more experienced parents may also find it to be useful.

If reading this handbook helps ease your child's entrance into our school systems, then we have met our goal.

## **ROUTING INFORMATION**

Bus Routes are designed annually by the Transportation Department in conjunction with school administrators. There is to be no deviation from these routes and/or stops unless authorized by the South Hunterdon Board of Education or its designee, except for the immediate safety of students or extreme weather conditions.

Bus stops are assigned based on the student's home address on record at their school. Each student shall be notified of their school bus number, bus stop location and estimated times of pick-up and drop-off by mail by mid-August. Parents/guardians shall review the bus stop information and submit changes, including child care, to the principal no later than the end of the third week of August. If approved by this date, the change shall be implemented for the start of school. Requests for changes received after Friday of the third full week of August, if approved, shall be implemented the second Monday after the start of school.

Roadways deemed hazardous by the Board of Education shall be considered non-crossing roads for students. Resident side bus stops will be assigned on these hazardous roads.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

1. All students must be **at the bus stop** ten (10) minutes before the assigned pick up time. This rule is in effect all year. Please remember, running down the driveway is not “**at the bus stop**”. Please have your child stand where the bus driver can see him/her.
2. Bus drivers are not allowed to wait for students who are late since this presents a significant traffic safety hazard.
3. If the buses run late in the morning on their high school run due to unforeseen circumstances such as traffic or weather, the subsequent runs for the younger students could also be affected.
4. Bus pass times may be valid for the first week only. Permanent pick up times will be established through consistent driver practice. This could take up to two weeks. Pick up times may vary during the school year due to constant fluctuations in traffic patterns.
5. Students shall only ride the bus to which they are assigned. Students are not permitted to ride another bus for any after school activities, which include but are not limited to scouts, visiting a friend, birthday parties, school projects, etc.
6. For safety reasons, students may only board and exit the bus at their assigned stop.
7. All buses have seat belts, which students are required to wear. Drivers are to report those who refuse to wear seat belts as directed.
8. Please instruct your child to wait off the roadway and to approach the actual boarding location only after the bus stops with its red school lights flashing.
9. If it is necessary to cross the road to get to your bus stop, students should wait until the driver has stopped the bus and activated the red lights. They should cross at least 15 feet in front of the bus and look both ways before crossing to make sure conditions are safe to cross.
10. All carry-on materials must be small enough to be held on the child’s lap. Backpacks must not be worn while students are seated. All large materials, large band instruments, and pets must be transported by car.
11. All bus stop change request must be made in writing to the Transportation Department. No phone requests will be taken. Please allow three (3) school days, after receipt in the Transportation Office, for the change to take effect.

12. Please make sure that your house number is clearly visible from the road. If the bus driver is unable to clearly identify the address on your house or mailbox, your child may not receive transportation the first day.

## **VEHICLE SAFETY / MAINTENANCE**

Each school vehicle is subjected to a thorough New Jersey DMV inspection twice a year. These inspections are conducted on-site and are school vehicle specific. Drivers must conduct a complete pre-trip inspection daily before taking their vehicle out on the road. If they take a different vehicle out on the road that same day, they must conduct a complete pre-trip inspection of that vehicle as well. Any vehicle that is found to be deficient during these pre-trip inspections is immediately taken out of service until a mechanic has corrected the deficiency.

All vehicles are routinely maintained during the school year according to a regular schedule that conforms to state guidelines. All vehicles are swept daily and thoroughly cleaned inside and out at least three times during the school year.

At the completion of each route, all drivers are required to walk to the rear of the vehicle to check for pupils who may have remained on board. Each vehicle is equipped with a two-way cell phone in case of emergency. If a vehicle breaks down, another vehicle is supplied within a short period of time.

Since each vehicle completes several runs each day, and since there is no area within the Transportation Department to accommodate lost items, all lost and found is maintained on the individual bus where it was found.

State law and Board policy prohibit the drivers from smoking on the school bus at any time, whether there are students on the bus or not.

## **CONDUCT ON THE BUS**

1. Show respect for the driver at all times and follow his/her direction.
2. Remain seated and in assigned seat until the bus comes to a complete stop.
3. Loud talking, laughing or other unnecessary behavior diverts the driver's attention and may result in a serious accident. Students shall talk quietly to their neighbor when riding the bus.
4. Do not litter or throw anything in the bus or out the window.
5. Students shall not use profanity.

6. Students shall not tamper with the bus or any of its equipment.
7. Any damage caused by pupils riding the bus, e.g., a cut seat, a broken window, etc., will be paid for by the students and/or their parents.
8. Students shall keep their head and arms inside the bus when the windows are open and keep aisles clear of feet, books, packages, coats, and all other objects.
9. Smoking is prohibited at all times.
10. Eating and drinking is not permitted on the bus at any time.
11. The driver shall be responsible for the orderly conduct of the students. While on the bus, the students are under the authority of, and directly responsible to, the driver.
12. The bus driver is responsible for overseeing the discipline of the students on the bus. In the event of misconduct by the student, the driver will complete a Student Conduct Report that will be submitted to the principal of the school that the child attends.

**Upon the violation of any rules, the following procedure, which may vary depending upon the school, will be followed:**

**First Offense**: Discussion with the Principal or Assistant Principal.

**Second Offense**: Contact with the student's parents.

**Third Offense**: Exclusion from the bus for one school day.

**Fourth Offense**: Exclusion from the bus for five school days.

**Fifth Offense**: Exclusion from the bus for thirty school days and/or other consequences determined by the administrator on an individual basis. Serious Violations may require skipping steps and imposing immediate extended exclusion from the bus.

**Note: When a student is excluded from the bus, parents are responsible for transporting the student to and from school.**

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Delayed openings for South Hunterdon Regional High School and West Amwell Elementary School run 2 hours late. The start time for the South Hunterdon is 9:40 and West Amwell 10:25. Students that attend out of district special education schools will follow South Hunterdon delayed schedule.

In the event that school will be closed early, each school is equipped with an alert now calling system to notify parents of the early dismissal. It is the discretion of the Transportation office based on the roads for out of district children to be picked up early. In this case the Transportation Department will verify that someone is home for the child.

## **TRANSPORTATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS**

In the AM, parent/ guardian will be responsible to bring out the student and secure the student in their seat belt and or specialized equipment. In the PM, parent/guardian will be responsible to unfasten student and escort the student from the vehicle. Parent/guardian is to provide the student's school with current home phone number and emergency contact information.

If the child will not attend on any given day, the AM bus driver should be notified. At the beginning of the year, the driver will give each parent his/her phone number. The parents will inform the driver no later than 6:30 AM in the morning that the child will not be attending school that day. In the event a situation arises after the given time and the child cannot attend school, the parent may call the South Hunterdon Transportation Secretary at (609)397-0486. Every effort will be made to notify the bus driver not to pick up the child.

If the parent plans to pick up the child; therefore, only requiring AM transportation, the parent should notify the AM driver, who in turn will notify SHR and transportation home will be canceled.

If it is necessary to make a change in the car or booster seat the child uses, the Special Services Office (609-397-1311) should be notified. Special Services will advise the transportation department of any adjustment that needs to be made.

If the parent has any concern regarding a particular route, call the SHR transportation department at 609-397-0486

If the student is not out of his/her home within 5 minutes transportation will leave and will not be provided for that day.

## **WEST AMWELL ELEMENTARY SPECIAL DROP OFF RULES**

All students that are age Kindergarten – Second grade are **NOT** permitted to depart the PM bus route without an adult present.

If a K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade parent is not present the driver must pull over and immediately inform WA that they will be bringing a student back to the school. 609-397-0819.

## **BUS STOP CHANGES**

A student is assigned one AM and one PM bus stop five days per week for the length of the school year. Parents/guardians of students in grades K-12 will be entitled to request a change of the designated address for the bus pick-up and drop-off of their students for child care at another student's residence. The designated address must be within the sending district of their assigned school. The designated pick-up address may vary from the drop-off address for child care purposes only. Pick-up and drop-off addresses cannot vary on a day-to-day basis.

If a parent/guardian needs to change their student's bus stop during the school year due to child care at another student's residence please fill out the request in the forms section of transportation and send the request to your school Principal. If the change is approved by the principal, the request shall be directed to the Transportation Department for review. The request shall be considered and the determination will be made contingent upon availability of a route, seating capacity on the school bus (exclusive of projected growth seats), and safety conditions in general. A request for a bus stop change must be submitted in writing at least five working days prior to the effective date. The actual bus stop established to serve the request shall be determined solely by the school district. **Requests for bus stops to vary on a day-to-day basis will not be approved.**

Submission of this bus stop change request does not obligate the Transportation Department to make the change. The first implementation of formal route changes will not occur until the change is reviewed by the Transportation Secretary.

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is the parents/guardians responsibility to review this handbook with their student. Parents/guardians should:

1. Help the driver maintain the schedule by making sure your student is at the bus stop 5 minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time.
2. Refrain from asking the driver to stop at places other than approved regular stops.
3. Cooperate with the district in its attempt to limit the number of bus stops, particularly in more densely populated areas.
4. Assume responsibility for training your student to cooperate with school officials.
5. Accompany young students to the bus stop each morning and meet the bus each afternoon.
6. Keep in mind that the school cannot assume responsibility for your student until he/she boards the bus. Parents/guardians are responsible for their student's safety and behavior.
7. If the student walks to school, parents/guardians are responsible for the student until he/she enters school property.
8. Insist on correct behavior from your student while waiting for and riding on the bus.
9. Support the school's safety program by cooperating with school officials in discharging disciplinary measures.
10. Required to have an emergency plan for their children in the event that no one can be home for them. i.e., keys to the home or supervision by a neighbor.

## **South Hunterdon Regional School District Transportation Contacts**

Transportation - Roger Ford - (609) 397-0486

Business Administrator - Andrew Harris - (609) 397-0323 Option 2