



Chelsea Public Schools

Business Office ▪ City Hall ▪ 500 Broadway ▪ Chelsea, MA 02150 ▪ Phone: 617.466.4463 ▪ Fax: 617.889.8328

YOUR CHILD

AND THE

SCHOOL BUS

*A Parent Guide for Door to Door Transportation Services
McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act*



QUICK TRANSPORTATION REFERENCE GUIDE

(write your child's bus information below)

Bus Company Name: _____

Bus Company Phone: _____

Driver's Name: _____

Driver's Phone: _____

Vehicle Number: _____

Pick-Up Time: _____

School Name: _____

School Phone: _____

The Business Office is responsible for organizing and directing the day-to-day operations of pupil transportation for the Chelsea Public Schools. The School Department Business Office provides information for the parent/guardian, school personnel and transportation companies.

The information provided will give you a better understanding of what you as the parent/guardian can do to help your child enjoy a safe bus ride to and from school. Information on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is also available in the Chelsea Public Schools website www.chelseaschools.com. For your child's safety, please discuss this material with him/her.

If you have questions regarding pupil transportation, or need to contact the **School Department Business Office**, please contact:

Lourdes Garcia
Phone: 617-466-4463
Fax: 617-889-8328
Email: lgarcia@chelseama.gov
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00-4:00

Jacqueline Bevere Maloney – Homeless Liaison

Chelsea Public Schools
99 Hawthorne Street
Chelsea, MA 02150
Phone: 617-466-5150
Fax: 617-889-8425
Email: beverej@chelseaschools.com

Parent Information Center

Chelsea Public Schools
99 Hawthorne Street
Chelsea, MA 02150
(entrance located on Shurtleff Street)
Phone: 617-466-5500
Fax: 617-889-7531

TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

Door to Door Transportation:

The Chelsea Public Schools provides transportation services for homeless students in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. In determining the type of transportation to be offered, the homeless liaison for the Chelsea Public Schools will take into account the best interest of the student, the student's age, the distance to be traveled, access to public transportation, and the parent's circumstances.

After a transportation decision has been made, a parent/guardian may choose to provide transportation and may be eligible for reimbursement under certain circumstances. **Any parent/guardian who plans to transport their child to school should notify the School Department Business Office.**

Transportation services are also provided through the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), if public transportation is appropriate. Student Charlie Cards are pre-loaded with a monthly pass for the entire school year and it allows students to receive the half-fare everyday (Monday-Friday) during MBTA hours of operation. Students without Charlie Cards pay full fare. Children under the age of twelve ride for free when accompanied by a paying adult.

Students on transportation due to homelessness have to adhere to the Chelsea Public Schools bus rules and regulations. They must also abide by the transportation guidelines and policies that have been established to assist in servicing all students and parents/guardians involved in the transportation program. Failure to obey all regulations governing transportation, can ultimately result in loss of the privilege of bus transportation.

- Students who choose to take advantage of the option of bus transportation must ride their assigned bus every day in the morning and afternoon. Children participating in after-school programs may request approval to ride the bus in the morning only. All requests must be submitted to the School Department Business Office in writing and will be taken into consideration on an individual basis.
- If a student does not ride the bus consistently, he/she may lose bus privileges for the remainder of the school year. The parent/guardian will be responsible for transporting the student to and from school.

- Riders will be picked up at the address on file at the Parent Information Center and dropped off at that same address at the end of the school day. Any special arrangements and/or requests must be submitted to the School Department Business Office in writing and will be taken into consideration on an individual basis. Special arrangements are not to be made directly with the bus driver and/or monitor. Special arrangements to drop off a student at the end of the school day at an address outside of the City the parent/guardian is currently living in will not be granted. Special arrangements will not renew from year to year, from the regular school year to any summer program or from a summer program to the regular school year.
- The transportation company will give you an approximate time they will pick up your child. If you are waiting more than 10 minutes from the scheduled pick up time and the bus has not arrived, contact the School Department Business Office.
- Changes in pick up and drop off times happen during the school year due to unforeseen situations. The transportation company will inform you of any schedule changes.
- The student should be **ready 10 minutes prior** to the scheduled pick-up time and should be waiting at the door or outside with a responsible adult. The school bus will wait only 3 minutes after arrival before continuing on with the route.
- The parent/guardian or approved designee, will be **available to walk the child to the bus** in the morning and will be available to receive the child at the end of the school day. The parent/guardian, or approved designee should be home at least half hour before the child is due to arrive in the afternoon. The school bus will only wait three minutes before continuing on with the route.
- **Middle and High School Students:** At the end of the school day, the bus will only wait up to ten minutes before continuing on with the route. After five minutes of waiting, out of courtesy, the transportation company and the School Department Business Office will try their best to have the student paged through the school intercom system. If the student is not in the school bus five minutes after he or she has been paged, the school bus will continue on with the route. The parent or guardian must ensure that alternate arrangements are in place in the event that the student misses the bus.
- **If you bring your child to school, please contact the transportation company or the School Department Business Office by 9:00 AM so arrangements can be made to transport the child back home in the afternoon.**
- **If you dismiss your child from school early, please contact the transportation company or the School Department Business Office to inform them that your child will not need a ride home in the afternoon.**
- If your child's bus is often late, or fails to show, contact the School Department Business Office immediately.
- The bus monitor will assist the student on and off the bus, if applicable.

Student Information:

A student profile sheet will be mailed home for each student with the transportation assignment letter. The parent/guardian will need to confirm or update information and return the student profile sheet to the Parent Information Center.

Emergency Contact Information:

Please be sure this information is accurate and up-to-date. Notify the Parent Information Center of any changes.

Address Changes:

When changing an address, the parent/guardian must provide an updated shelter letter to the Parent Information Center. Transportation changes will only be made after the required documentation is provided. Changes can take five to ten business days to go into effect, please plan accordingly.

A parent/guardian in transitional housing who has secured housing by signing a lease, must provide a copy of the lease and a recent utility bill dated within the past 30 days to the Parent Information Center. A 30 day grace period will be given if the parent/guardian has recently moved and cannot provide the current utility bill.

If the parent/guardian is in transitional housing and has secured housing outside of the City of Chelsea, the student can continue his/her education in the Chelsea Public Schools until the end of the school year in which permanent housing was obtained.

Absence of a Responsible Adult:

If a designated adult is not home, the child will be transported to the Parent Information Center. The designated adult is required to show a photo identification card when picking up the child. A parent/guardian may submit a prior written request to the School Department Business Office authorizing the child be dropped off at home without a designated adult present.

If a child is brought to the Parent Information Center, bus privileges may be suspended. Duration of a suspension will be solely at the discretion of the Chelsea Public Schools Homeless Liaison. A child may lose bus privileges for the remainder of the school year depending on the severity of the offense.

A parent/guardian can designate an alternate adult to receive their child from the bus. For safety reasons, the parent/guardian must introduce the alternate adult to the bus driver in advance. The child's emergency contact information should be updated with the Parent Information Center.

Attendance:

If your child is going to be absent from school due to illness, contact the transportation company directly between 6:00 and 7:00 AM or one hour in advance of the scheduled pick up time. If you know in advance that your child will not need transportation on any given day, a one-day advance notification must be given to the transportation company. In the event of an extended absence period, please contact the School Department Business Office.

If a student does not ride the bus for two days in a row, the service will stop due to non-use. The parent or guardian must contact the School Department Business Office to resume transportation.

Medical:

If your child is under medical care and has medical issues (e.g., allergies, Epi-pen, seizures) which would apply to the bus ride, **a release of information must be signed and submitted to the School Department Business Office in order for this information to be shared with the transportation company.**

Personal Belongings:

Personal belongings, sports equipment and electronic devices must be kept inside a backpack. Backpacks must be placed on the students lap. Use of cellular phones is prohibited. Cell phones must be out of view and in the OFF position during the bus ride.

Students with a specific special need which would apply to the bus ride: Exceptions can be made for students with a specific need due to their disability. Requests will be taken into consideration on an individual basis. Parental requests must be submitted to the School Department Business Office in writing. The School Department Business Office will collaborate with the homeless liaison and the school to determine a final decision.

Lost and Found:

Personal belongings left on the bus will be kept up front until it is claimed the following day. If it is not claimed after a few days, the item will be given to school personnel.

Inclement Weather:

Traffic delays are to be expected on days with inclement weather. Please be sure your child is dressed appropriately.

In the event of inclement weather, the Chelsea Public Schools may cancel classes. The radio and television stations will announce no-school days. The parent/guardian may also contact the transportation company to inquire on school cancellation due to inclement weather.

The District also uses an automatic telephone call system that will notify the parent/guardian about school closings. It is of the utmost importance for the Chelsea Public Schools to have on file a current preferred phone number. If the phone number changes, please notify the child's school or the Parent Information Center immediately.

If you receive a call from the system but do not pick up on time, please do NOT call the number back. This will tie up important telephone lines at a time when the district is trying to get important information to everyone in the school system.

If school is not in session in the City you are currently living in, it may be considered unsafe to transport the child to school in Chelsea. If the Chelsea Public Schools are still in session, the parent/guardian may choose to bring the child to school but the parent/guardian would be responsible for transportation to and from school.

If at any time a street is considered unsafe, the parent/guardian will be contacted by the School Department Business Office and asked to meet the bus at a different location, but keeping the safety of all students in mind.

Inquiries, Incidents, and Complaints:

The School Department Business Office confers with the parent/guardian regarding problems concerning pupil transportation. The Homeless Liaison confers with principals and district administrators regarding discipline. The School Department Business Office receives and responds to inquiries concerning routes as well as incidents and complaints and other transportation questions.

Behavior Problems on Bus: If you feel your child's safety is being jeopardized by the behavior of other riders, you should contact your child's school and the School Department Business Office.

Inappropriate Driver Behavior: If you suspect your child's bus driver is engaging in inappropriate behavior, you should contact the School Department Business Office.

For safety and on-time operations, no person is to board a school bus unless assigned or authorized.

If you notice a bus speeding, traveling in an unsafe manner, or the driver is talking on a cell phone, contact the School Department Business Office. Please note the name of the bus company, the bus number, and the time and location of the bus.

SCHOOL BUS RULES AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

Safety

The school department and the bus company will work together to transport students to and from school safely and on time. The school department, transportation company, parent/guardian and student are responsible for working together to meet this goal. Because the time before and after school is as crucial to your child's health and safety as the time during school, a safe bus ride is a key element of your child's education. Cooperation and communication between the parent/guardian and bus personnel will insure a safe bus ride for all riders.

Safety Rules:

- ◆ An adult will be available to escort the child to the bus in the morning and will be available to receive the child at the designated drop off location at the end of the school day.
- ◆ Students must be properly seated in a child safety seat or wear a safety belt at all times as set forth in M.G.L. c. 90, Sec. 7AA (see Appendix A) and Sec. 13A. **Seat belts are not to be unfasten while the bus is in motion.**
- ◆ Students will keep their hands and arms inside the bus and away from the windows and doors.
- ◆ The aisles must be kept clear at all times.
- ◆ Students are not to touch the rear (emergency) door for any reason except in an emergency and under the instruction of the driver.
- ◆ Upon arrival at school or home, students will wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before leaving their seat to exit.

Behavior

The school bus is "an extension of the classroom" which means we have the same standards of behavior on the school bus as we do in school. For example, students should remain in their seats; should not hang out of windows, push or fight with other students, throw things, or try to distract the driver.

Behavior Rules:

- ◆ Students should enter and exit the vehicle in a courteous manner without pushing other students.

- ◆ Students will use appropriate language at all times.
- ◆ Students will keep hands and feet to themselves.
- ◆ Fighting and bullying are strictly prohibited.
- ◆ Students will not damage or mark up any part of the bus.
- ◆ Students will not eat or drink any food or beverage while in the bus.
- ◆ Students will follow directions of the driver at all times while on the bus. Seat assignments are at the discretion of the driver. A student may be assigned a seat in certain cases.

The vehicle driver has the obligation to evaluate conduct and maintain order on the bus. When the student's behavior on the bus is dangerous and/or consistently disrespectful, the bus driver will file a report with their supervisor and notify the school principal/designee or the School Department Business Office. Transportation companies will report all infractions to the School Department Business Office in writing.

Students who violate the behavior rules while on the bus may be disciplined, and/or denied transportation. Some school buses are equipped with video cameras, and the video tapes may be used as evidence in disciplining students who misbehave on the bus.

Upon receipt of an **incident report**, the principal/designee may require the student to stay after school. In such instances, it will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian, to pick-up the student from school.

To ensure the safety of all children on the bus, the following disciplinary actions will be taken by the school principal/designee:

1. **For the first violation of rules**, the parent/guardian will receive a verbal warning.
2. **For the second violation of rules**, the parent/guardian will receive a written notice.
3. **For the third violation of rules**, the parent/guardian will receive a suspension notice. The student will be suspended from transportation. Duration of a suspension will be solely at the discretion of the homeless liaison or the school principal/designee. The parent/guardian will be responsible for transporting the student to and from school for the duration of the suspension.
4. **For the fourth violation of rules**, a meeting will be convened to determine other appropriate actions. The parent/guardian will be responsible for transporting the student to and from school until the final decision is made.

In the case of situations deemed to be severe by the homeless liaison or the school principal/designee, the progressive discipline process may be waived and suspension may be automatic. A student suspended from transportation, is not necessarily suspended from school.

The Chelsea Public Schools is the only entity that can suspend a student from transportation. Incidents are reported to the School Department Business Office, the homeless liaison or the school principal/designee will make disciplinary decisions based on these transportation guidelines.

It is important that the parent/guardian review the school bus rules and safety guidelines with their child to ensure that he/she is aware of them and understands them.