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## SCHOOL PHONE NUMBERS

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>PRINCIPAL</u>	<u>SECRETARY</u>	<u>TELEPHONE</u>
<u>High</u>			
Brien McMahon	Ms. S. Koroshetz	Ms. M. Ahern	852-9488
Briggs	Ms. A. Lane	Ms. S. Elias	899-2820
Norwalk	Mr. L. Mecca	Ms. J. Rentas	838-4481
<u>Middle</u>			
Nathan Hale	Mr. R. McCain	Ms. K. Gamcsik	899-2910
Ponus Ridge	Ms. L. Sumpter	Ms. H. Holmes	847-3557
Roton	Mr. J. Vellucci	Ms. C. Razor	899-2930
West Rocks	Dr. L. Moore	Ms. L. Goldman	899-2970
<u>Parochial</u>			
All Saints	Ms. N. DiBuono	Ms. C. Cosgrove	847-3881
<u>Elementary</u>			
Brookside	Mr. D. Hay	Ms. M. Faugno	899-2830
Columbus	Ms. E. Lopez	Ms. P. Blake	899-2840
Cranbury	Ms. R. Ives	Ms. M. Davenport	846-3600
Fox Run	Mr. J. Martinez	Ms. D. Rastocky	899-2860
Jefferson	Mr. J. Reynolds	Ms. V. Palmer	899-2870
Kendall	Mr. A. Ditrio	Ms. K. Hopp	899-2880
Marvin	Ms. M. Tortorello	Ms. G. Capporino	899-2890
Naramake	Ms. K. Ocaczi	Ms. P. Miles	899-2900
Rowayton	Ms. S. Riley	Ms. M. Carriera	899-2940
Silvermine	Ms. I. Ellis	Ms. T. Stradford	899-2950
Tracey	Mr. P. Krasnavage	Ms. D. Riddell	899-2960
Wolfpit	Ms. F. Mahoney	Ms. I. Santarsiero	899-2980
<u>Charter</u>			
Side By Side	Mr. M. Nittoly	Ms. L. Rodriguez	857-0306
<u>Vocational</u>			
AIT/Rippowam	Mr. P. Gross	Ms. P. Giantomidis	977-4336
Westhill	Ms. Bingham	Ms. E. Fitzgerald	977-4838

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The safety of children is the prime concern of all persons involved in providing transportation to and from the Norwalk Public Schools. Within these pages you will find information regarding school bus safety, eligibility to receive transportation, behavior codes, driver and parent/guardian responsibilities, and student transportation regulations.

First Student Transportation, is the contracted operator and responsible for school bussing in Norwalk. As such they screen, hire, train and supervise all bus drivers and are in direct control of First Student employees.

It is hoped that this guide will serve to answer your questions and enable you to understand the process which provides safe, efficient and economic transportation for children. After reading through this booklet, if you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to call your school. This transportation handbook has been compiled in cooperation with First Student Transportation, the Norwalk Police Department, Norwalk Public Schools and the PTO Council and reflects the policies of the Norwalk Board of Education and the State Education Departments.

## **SCHOOL BUS STOP LAW**

PUBLIC ACT 86-155, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SCHOOL BUS STOP LAW took effect in Connecticut on October 1, 1986.

- It provides that cars must stop not less than ten feet from a school bus which is displaying its flashing red lights when the bus is on a highway, A PRIVATE ROAD, A PARKING AREA OR SCHOOL PROPERTY except when a traffic officer gives other directions. (Previously, the law pertained to a highway only.)
- Provides that upon receiving a written report from a school bus operator regarding a violation of a school bus stop law, a police officer SHALL issue a written warning or summons to the owner of the vehicle. (Previously, the law stated that the police officer *may* issue a written warning or summons.)

EVERY TIME A MOTORIST GOES THROUGH THE FLASHING LIGHTS OF A SCHOOL BUS, A CHILD COULD BE INJURED. THE PENALTY FOR PASSING A STOPPED SCHOOL BUS WITH ITS RED LIGHTS FLASHING IS \$100 - \$500 FOR THE FIRST OFFENSE. THE SECOND TIME IT COULD BE \$1,000 OR THIRTY DAYS IN JAIL.



## PARENT/GUARDIAN QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

In spite of much advanced planning and careful scheduling, it is conceivable that some problems may occur with the school bus schedules especially during the first few weeks of the opening of school.

Each year the volume of public inquiries and complaints concerning school bus transportation has been greater than can be handled by the small staff in the Transportation Office. Parents/guardians with questions regarding transportation should follow the guidelines below.

Call the principal of your child's school for information relating to: (generally, continued problems)

- accidents
- bus passenger capacities
- bus schedules
- eligibility to ride the school bus
- location/placement of bus stops
- pupil control on buses or at stops
- bus numbers
- bus passes
- buses running too early
- buses running too late
- new pupil enrollees
- safety/hazardous conditions

The phone number of each school can be found on page ii of this guide.

The Transportation Office of the Norwalk Public Schools can be reached by dialing 854-4074. This is for complaints pertaining to: (generally, immediate problems)

- accidents
- actions of driver
- buses that are more than 15 minutes late
- bus passenger capacities
- buses running more than 15 minutes early
- safety conditions other than those which relate to pupil control

As the direct provider of school bussing, First Student Transportation can be reached regarding any of the above by calling 855-1870.

**Student Transportation Regulations** pertaining to Bus Stop Placement and Hazardous Conditions can be found on pages 2-6; for passenger behavior and discipline, pages 11-18.

## **TRANSPORTATION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Norwalk pupils are eligible for transportation provided to and from school if their official place of residence is more than 1 mile for grades K-3, 1.5 miles for grades 4-8 and 2 miles for grades 9-12, from their district school or the walk to their district school has been declared hazardous. The walkway to school is measured as the shortest distance between the resident (or complex) property line and that of the school. Measurements are taken by a walking linear measurement wheel. Measurements taken with car odometers are less accurate because they measure to the nearest tenth of a mile (528 ft) and depend on tire size and wear.

Transportation is only provided for official home residence area to properly assigned schools. Transportation is not provided to any caregivers such as (but not limited to) grandparents' or other relatives' homes, friends, day care centers, before/after school programs or places of work.

Parents/guardians of elementary pupils are expected to accompany or provide adult supervision for their children to and from bus stops. While this is advisable for parents/guardians of all elementary school pupils, it is a requirement for parents/guardians of preschool and kindergarten pupils.

Pupil transportation is a very delicate balance between safety and efficiency. The maximum number of passengers must be collected within the minimum amount of time and delivered to the school safely and on time. This means centralizing bus stop locations and consolidating as many passengers as possible. Once these schedules are tuned to achieve this balance, it is very difficult to make changes without upsetting the entire balance. During the summer, the bus company road tests the bus stop sequence and timing of stops to ensure that they are functional.

## **BUS STOP PLACEMENT**

- a. School bus stops are determined by the locations where the maximum number of eligible riders from residential areas can be consolidated and centralized.
- b. Location of bus stops are subject to change from year to year for various reasons such as in the case of consolidating stops due to population shifts and density or for safety, efficiency and economical reasons.
- c. Eligible riders may be expected to utilize a bus stop as far away as not to exceed the maximum of the eligibility distances found above.
- d. Buses will *not* stop:
  - 1) in areas other than for the current official home address as shown on file at the district school; such as babysitters, day care centers; except in cases of approved special needs students.
  - 2) at additional stops to established schedules since they may cause an imbalance in capacity or travel time.
  - 3) in transportation ineligible zones.

- 4) at another location because of reports of loitering, property damage, littering or trespassing at the assigned stop (such incidents should be reported to the Police Department).
- e. Parents/guardians must assume the responsibility for students getting to and from a designated bus stop.
- f. Parents/guardians are expected to meet buses.
- g. The bus driver is not to put any student off the bus at any time or place other than at the official scheduled stop for that student.

## **DETERMINING HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS**

"Hazard", as defined by State Guidelines, means a thing or condition affecting the safety of students walking to and from school, or a designated bus pick-up area; a possible source of peril, danger or difficulty, exposure to molestation or attack, considered morally degrading or physically harmful. "Undue, or reasonable hazard" means an unsafe thing or condition presenting difficulties or problems the solution of which is beyond the ordinary capability of a child of a *given age* or attainment.

Determination of a hazard for an elementary school student is not necessarily a hazard for a secondary school student.

- a. Declaration of unduly hazardous conditions will be made by a Joint Committee consisting of the Superintendent of Schools (or designees) and the Norwalk Police Department (or designees).
- b. Declared unduly hazardous streets or areas will be reevaluated annually by the Joint Committee based on a planned program, to be developed by the Transportation Coordinator in concert with appropriate City Departments, to eliminate or neutralize the hazardous condition. Such neutralized conditions shall constitute grounds for overturning a hazardous designation.
- c. Walking routes are considered to be a portion of the right-of-way, paved or unpaved, usually parallel to the traffic lanes; distinguished by some elevation above the street level, or shoulders (dependent upon the nature of the area), road width, traffic volume, speed limits and marked by curbing, drainage, grass area, brush, or fencing on either side of roadway/walkway.
- d. A street or road having a walkway as described above should be deemed unduly hazardous when in the opinion of the Joint Committee any one of the following conditions exists:
  - 1) For students enrolled in grades 1 through 3, absence of pedestrian crossing walk, light or guard where three or more streets intersect, and at street crossings where there are no stop signs, lights or crossing guards. This is for areas considered as busy thoroughfares, arteries and main roads. Residential subdivisions and side roads are examined on an individual basis. The same applies for older students, using traffic volume as a proportionate factor.

- 2) Any roadway with posted speed limits in excess of forty miles per hour which do not have pedestrian crossing lights, walks or crossing guards or other safety provisions at points where students must cross in going to and from school.
  - 3) The usual or frequent presence, for grades 1 through 8, of any nuisance blocking walkways, such as open manholes, construction, loading zones where delivery trucks are permitted to park on walkways, commercial entrances and exits where cars are consistently crossing walk areas at speeds in excess of five miles per hour.
- e. A roadway which has no walkway as described above may be deemed unduly hazardous for students enrolled in grades 1 through 3; but for pupils enrolled in grades 4 through 12, such roadway may be deemed unduly hazardous when in the opinion of the Joint Committee all of the following conditions exist:
- 1) There exists a line-of-sight obstruction by a hill, curve, out cropping, land form, planting, or other object or structure which may not be safely negotiated by a vehicle at speeds over fifteen miles per hour.
  - 2) The line-of-sight visibility together with posted speed limits does not permit vehicle braking/stopping distances in accordance with the Connecticut Driver's Manual.
- f. Any walkway or path in an area adjacent and parallel to railroad tracks shall be considered hazardous unless a suitable physical barrier along the entire pedestrian route is present and fixed between students and the tracks, that carry moving trains during hours that students are walking to and from school, and/or a crossing guard or other traffic control is present if crossing such tracks is necessary.
- g. Any street, road, walkway or path designated as a walking route for school students which passes through an area which currently and historically exhibits obvious actual or threatened physical or moral degradation during hours when students ordinarily walk to or from school shall be deemed unduly hazardous.
- h. A situation shall be considered unduly hazardous whenever a student enrolled in grade 1 through 8 or equivalent, is required to walk to and from school at any time prior to one-half hour before sunrise or one-half hour after sunset.

**IF IT IS DETERMINED THAT YOUR COMPLAINT FITS INTO THE ABOVE CATEGORY OF HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS, PLEASE CALL YOUR SCHOOL OFFICE; PHONE NUMBERS LOCATED ON PAGE ii.**

## **SAFETY**

### **Process for Reviewing Hazard Complaints**

1. Parent/guardian registers complaint (generally by phone) to the school principal.

2. School principal first tries to resolve issue in collaboration with Transportation Department. If unsuccessful, parent is referred to Transportation Department.
3. Transportation Department sends Hazard Complaint Form to the parent/guardian.
4. Parent/guardian returns completed form.
5. Committee reviews complaint.
6. Committee notifies parent/guardian of denials by letter.
7. Parent/guardian may resubmit complaint.
8. Committee reviews second-request complaint.
9. Committee notifies parent/guardian of denial by letter.
10. Parent/guardian appeals to Board of Education by letter to Superintendent.
11. Board of Education chairman appoints committee of at least one Board Member.
12. Parent/guardian is notified of hearing.
13. Hearing is held with appropriate minutes and tape recording as required by General Statutes.
14. Recommendation, if necessary, presented to full Board.
15. Full Board acts.
16. Parent/guardian notified in writing of decision with right to appeal.

## **Rights and Appeals**

- a. Norwalk Public Schools reserve the right to determine and change the type of transportation offered when it is considered feasible to do so, such as, issuing passes or reimbursing students to ride regular Norwalk Transit buses, using contracted school buses, reimbursing parents/guardians or using other non-school bus-type transportation.
- b. Decisions regarding whether or not transportation will be provided by Norwalk Public Schools will be made in accordance with this regulation by the Transportation Coordinator, in consultation with their immediate supervisor, the school principal, the police department and the appropriate program director involved, if applicable. Parents/guardians may appeal to the Board of Education if they do not agree with the second decision by submitting a written request to the Superintendent. Upon such a request the Chairman of the Board of Education shall order a hearing within ten (10) business days after receipt of the request. The hearing shall be held before one or more members of the Board of Education to be designated by the

Chairman, in accordance with the provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes. The Board of Education shall make a finding within ten (10) business days after such hearing.

- c. In accordance with the provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes, an aggrieved person may appeal the Board of Education's decision to the State Board of Education.

### **Procedures for School Bus Accidents**

In the event of an accident involving a school bus, the following are the procedural priorities:

**AID:** The driver of a school bus has the responsibility to call the dispatcher at the contractor's terminal via the radio (or any other means). The dispatcher will call Emergency 911 for emergency assistance, if necessary.

**NOTIFICATION:** The contractor will notify the police of bus accidents as required by law who will send an officer to investigate the scene and determine the status of passengers and mechanical condition of the bus. The bus may be taken out of service for mechanical reasons. A substitute bus will be dispatched when needed. The contractor will immediately notify the principal and Transportation Coordinator of the bus accident and the status of the passengers.

The principal will immediately arrange for the school nurse to interview as soon as possible all passengers involved in a bus accident. The principal will inform the Superintendent and Transportation Coordinator whenever a pupil is injured in a bus accident.

The school nurse will provide first aid and comfort to any student who shows or expresses complaints of injury. Only parents/guardians of students with injuries or complaints will be notified by the school nurse. The school nurse notifies the Director of Health Services.

Each school requests and maintains emergency information from parents/guardians for each student at the beginning of every school year. It is the responsibility of the parent to keep this information current.

When accidents occur after school dismissal, the school nurse will see student passengers the following school day. The police and hospital will provide medical aid and notification to parents/guardians in cases of serious injury.

In the event a parent/guardian is concerned that their child has not arrived home from school at the usual time during normal weather conditions, they may call at their discretion the police, 854-3000 or 854-4414, and/or the following:

1. School (individual phone number located on page ii)
2. Contractor's Terminal; First Student Transportation (855-1870)
3. Transportation Department (854-4074)

**REPORTS** The contractor will prepare a written accident report as soon as possible for all accidents. The police report is to be obtained by the contractor.

The principal will prepare a written student accident report for each pupil injured: Norwalk Connecticut Self-Insurance Program Form for pupils without school insurance or the Connecticut General Insurance Company Form for pupils with school insurance. These forms are to be sent to the Finance Department who in turn will create a file and forward copies to the Risk Management Coordinator.

### **School Buses; A Description**

School buses in Norwalk are built for the maximum safety of their passengers. Each is constructed according to the highest standards and specifications in accordance with state statutes. The yellow color is easily seen by all motorists. Each bus has dual brakes providing a back up of mechanical brakes in case of failure of the first set. All Norwalk buses are equipped with two-way radios which ensure that drivers can reach the dispatcher when an emergency arises.

School buses meet strict State of Connecticut and federal safety standards - more than any other land vehicle - and are inspected by the state vehicle inspector twice each year. The heavy diesel buses are suited for over ten years of use.

The size and low gear ratio of a school bus are often misleading factors in judging the speed of travel. At 25 miles per hour, buses make a considerable amount of noise because the engine is operating at a high speed although the actual speed of the bus is only 25 miles per hour.

A crossing control gate attached to the front bumper of each bus automatically directs passengers to cross well in front of the bus. A rear emergency exit door connected to an electrical buzzer warns the driver when the door is not secure. Each bus also has an outside alarm to indicate that the bus is backing up. An automatic switch activates when the door opens causing the red lights at the front and rear of the bus to signal motorists not to pass the bus while stopping for passengers. The front hood of the school bus is designed to allow the maximum visibility in front of the bus while the front fender mirrors are adjusted to allow drivers to see what's near the front tires while in the drivers' seat. Statistics show that these high safety standards and continual training make school buses the safest form of transportation - 14 times safer than your own car.

### **Seat Belts**

The seat belt law is not applicable to school buses. In view of the effectiveness of current safety standards and the excellent safety record of school buses, the position of the Norwalk Public Schools administration is that a requirement for seat belts in school buses is not warranted by available research. This issue is being studied on a regular basis.

## School Bus Drivers

School bus drivers are trained and tested according to State of Connecticut and federal mandates to get and keep their special licenses. They are fingerprinted for the state and FBI, they meet rigorous physical standards, and they are subject to random drug and alcohol tests scheduled by the State Department of Motor Vehicles.

School bus drivers are required to pass the State of Connecticut's CDL (Commercial Driver's License) Test before they are permitted to drive a school bus. The test consists of two parts - a knowledge test and a skills test. The skills test covers the applicant's ability to actually drive and pre-check a school bus.

Prior to the CDL testing, a driver must have all of the following qualifications:

- valid operator's license for at least 5 years
- Pass a physical examination (including an eye test)
- pass a drug test
- no record of traffic violations
- a clean FBI record check

Once licensed, the driver must have 12 hours of continued training and be able to pass the skills section of the CDL test each year. The drivers are also subjected to random drug testing during the course of the year, specifically if they have a preventable accident or if there is reasonable suspicion. Each driver attends up to ten safety training classes throughout the year. Although State Motor Vehicle law requires 3 hours of training per year, the bus company exceeds those requirements. Two emergency evacuation exercises per year are required by the State of Connecticut which are carried out by the school bus drivers. School bus drivers abide by a set of regulations for operation of school buses issued by the State of Connecticut.

The Drivers:

- drive their buses on practice trips prior to the opening of school each Fall.
- are prohibited from using tobacco products while on duty.
- are prohibited from leaving their seat while the motor is running.
- shall not take on any extra passengers beyond the rated seating capacity.
- shall stop the bus 15 – 50 ft before crossing railroad tracks, open the door, look and listen, close the door and then proceed with caution across the tracks.
- shall not stop their bus on the main traveled portion of the roadway when discharging or boarding passengers when existing shoulders or adequate roadway width is available or when curbs, bus stops or special facilities exist.
- shall signal their intention to bring their bus to a stop, to receive or discharge passengers, by turning on the appropriate school bus warning lights no less than 50 feet before bringing the bus to a stop. When they have brought the school bus to a stop, they shall not open the entrance door far enough to discharge or receive passengers until it is clear that vehicles approaching and overtaking the bus have stopped in recognition

of their signal.

- buses are equipped with an "eight-light system" with both red and amber warning lights. Drivers are required to put on the amber lights at 100 feet before the stop. The red lights come on *only* when actually picking up or dropping off students. Motorists *must* stop when red lights are flashing (refer to page iv).
- shall switch off the school bus warning signals after all passengers to be taken on are safely aboard the bus and all discharged passengers are safely off the traveled portion of the roadway.

The Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles, Office of Public Transportation, encourages school bus drivers to discuss their problems with their supervisors during routine contacts and supervisors are encouraged to discuss and resolve behavior problems concerning school bus passengers.

### **Parents/Guardians**

Parents/guardians play an essential role in pupil safety. The parent/guardian should always be present when the child boards the bus and exits at the bus stop. A study of fatalities among young bus riders in the State of Connecticut over the last five years indicates that many accidents occur in the afternoon at the bus stop as young riders dash across the road because they are anxious to get home. There are many other scenarios that have resulted in injury or fatality. Most could have been avoided by better parent/guardian supervision.

Parents/guardians can prepare their children in advance of the opening of school by discussing safety precautions with them, walking with them to the bus stop and/or school in the early part of the year and pointing out where danger might exist and where it could be avoided. Principals in each elementary school in Norwalk instruct students about school bus safety. Parents are urged to review safety information in the remainder of this guide. This is essential to the safety of school youngsters.

### **Parents/Guardians SCHOOL BUS SAFETY ALERT**

**A child's clothing can be dangerous when getting off the bus. A number of children have been injured or killed when their clothing became caught when exiting the bus. Dangerous clothing that can get caught in handrails, doors, or other areas includes:**

- a. Jackets or sweatshirts with drawstrings
- b. Backpack straps
- c. Scarves or other loose clothing

**Please talk with your children about these Safety Rules:**

- a. Stay away from Danger Zones around the bus (see diagram below).
- b. If you drop something near the bus, don't pick it up. The driver may not see you. Tell the driver and follow their instructions.
- c. Remember that motorists don't always stop for the school bus. Use extreme caution when getting on or off of the bus.

**Passengers**

Students riding buses in the Norwalk Public Schools are required to obey the regulations below. Violators will be dealt with according to the policy of the Norwalk Board of Education.

Accidents can occur and can be caused from outside as well as inside the bus. Although each driver has many safety instruments, it is impossible to observe up to 77 pupils while driving. The driver mainly will be watching circumstances outside of the bus. If drivers are distracted by disruptive conduct, it diverts their attention from the traffic around them and could cause an accident resulting in serious injury to students.

## **REGULATIONS FOR PASSENGERS ON SCHOOL BUSES**

The safety of children is the prime concern of all persons involved in providing transportation to and from school. As in all instances where persons gather in groups, some regulatory controls must apply in order to preserve the rights and safety of everyone. The enforcement of necessary regulations relating to transportation rests with three different agencies: **the school, the transportation contractor, and the home**. The following code of desirable behavior has been developed for the purpose of promoting bus safety to its highest degree. Consistent compliance with this code of behavior will encourage safe and satisfactory operation of our transportation system.

The following rules and regulations are applicable to all pupils who are passengers on **Norwalk** school buses. These rules are in accordance with the existing laws or policies established after analysis of accident causes and are for the protection and safety of all concerned.

**PARENTS PLEASE BE AWARE THAT: Violation of these rules will be a basis for withdrawal of transportation privileges and/or suspension from school by the school principal.**

### **A. Schedules**

1. Pupils must arrive at the bus stop at least fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled bus arrival time. The bus may arrive as much as 15 minutes before or after the scheduled time and still be considered 'on time'.
2. Pupils must board, and disembark from, school buses at authorized stops only.
3. Buses are identified by the number stenciled on the bus. Driver and bus substitutions may occur but the same bus number is used for the school route they are covering.

### **B. Boarding and Disembarking**

1. Pupils must observe traffic rules.
2. Pupils should not stand in the roadway waiting for, or after disembarking from, the bus or vandalize, litter or trespass on surrounding property at the bus stop.
3. Pupils must not walk between parked or standing school buses or any other vehicles at any time.
4. Pupils will approach a bus only after it has stopped.
5. When necessary to cross the road - to disembark from, or board a bus - pupils should: look to see the red stop lights flashing on top of the bus; wait for a signal from the driver; look both ways to be sure that no traffic is approaching from either direction (without compliance

of the school bus traffic control); and cross at least ten feet in front of the bus.

6. Pupils should never crowd or push when entering or exiting the bus, but always be courteous.
7. Pupils must find a seat and be seated immediately after entering the bus, for the duration of the trip.
8. Pupil passengers must obey driver instructions at all times.
9. Pupils will not use the rear emergency exit unless an emergency condition exists.
10. Pupils will keep all their extremities and objects to themselves.

### **C. Riding**

1. The following are considered to be extremely distracting to the driver and dangerous to passengers. Passengers on school buses will not:
  - a. Engage in physical play, fighting, loud talking, laughter or other noise.
  - b. Change seats and move about after they have been seated.
  - c. Speak to drivers unless absolutely necessary.
  - d. Throw any objects in or outside the bus.
  - e. Play pranks with any volatile materials such as firecrackers or smoke bombs.
  - f. Open bus windows and allow anything to protrude outside the bus.
  - g. Discard refuse anywhere except a trash receptacle.
  - h. Possess or ignite any flame producing devices.
  - i. Use or possess any tobacco products.
  - j. Engage in eating or drinking while on the bus.
  - k. Obstruct bus aisles with large packages, objects or instruments which would interfere with an emergency evacuation. Musical instruments will be allowed on school buses only if they can be placed on the owner's lap or a bus seat without depriving an eligible rider of a seat.
  - l. Destroy property of the bus company. Damage caused by vandalism will be charged against those who cause the damage or their parent/guardian.
  - m. Carry any dangerous instruments such as knives, razors, or any item the driver decides could jeopardize safety on the bus.

- n. Possess or use a remotely activated paging device or cellular telephone on a school bus, in school or on school property.

If any student believes he/she has a reasonable basis for using a remotely activated paging device or cellular telephone in or on school property, then that student and his/her parent(s) are to contact the school principal.

- o. Engage in any lewd, profane or foul language or activity.

**Disciplinary action will be taken by the school administration for all offenders of these regulations.**

### **TIPS THAT CAN SAVE A CHILD'S LIFE**

- Teach your children to stay away from the sides and the rear of the bus.
- Teach them never to bend down in front of the bus to pick something up, and to make sure that they can see the bus driver's face at all times.
- Give your children the present of a book bag to carry papers and other belongings, so that they have no need to chase loose paper or other items under the bus or in the street.
- Check children's clothing and book bags for loose parts (with fasteners) or untied drawstrings that could get caught in doors or crevices.
- Remember that flashing yellow lights mean Caution: the bus is about to stop, and flashing red lights mean Stop: children are getting on or off the bus. When the red lights are flashing, traffic must stop in both directions.
- Join with other parents to monitor your bus stop. Help our drivers keep your children safe.

Children who are willing to observe the above rules and advice will find that there is efficient service on orderly buses. **Those who, through violation of the code, indicate an unwillingness to be considerate of the welfare of all, will be dealt with accordingly and may, as a result, have the privilege of bus transportation denied them.**

### **PRINCIPAL BRIEFING**

1. Bus passes are not issued to eligible riders enrolled at elementary schools.
2. The principals shall have the responsibility and authority for the enforcement of the rules and regulations specified in the "Rules and Regulations for Student Passengers on School Buses."
3. The principals shall organize and enforce procedures which they determine are needed to ensure safety on school grounds in the area where students enter or leave school buses.
4. Students who persist in disruptive or destructive behavior at the bus stop or riding the bus will be denied transportation since the bus stop and bus are considered extensions of the classroom.

5. The school will seek reimbursement for damages to school buses from the parents or legal guardians of those children who perform acts of vandalism.

## **DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE FOR SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION**

The bus driver is responsible for the safety of the passengers and must report incidents which endanger

the safety of students to the principal or the bus company supervisor.

The paragraphs on the following pages outline the procedure to be followed using a five-part form entitled, *"Driver's Report of Unsatisfactory Conduct on the School Bus."* After the driver has exhausted the ordinary means of discipline, such as speaking to the child, stopping the bus, and/or assigning seats, the driver shall fill out and sign this report (sample below). Parents/guardians are notified when students misbehave. The form must be signed by the driver, their supervisor, principal and parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will be notified of disciplinary action, if any.

If the problem occurs in the morning the driver shall hand in the report immediately to the principal, the school office, or the teacher on bus duty, keeping the bottom copy for the bus company records. The driver shall fill out the report as completely as possible taking advantage of the space marked *"other"* and

verifying that the driver has made previous attempts to curb the child's behavior.

If the problem occurs in the afternoon the driver should discuss the incident with the bus company supervisor and obtain assistance in thoroughly completing the report. The principal can contact the bus company supervisor for further information without necessarily having to arrange to speak to the driver.

The principal or assistant principal investigates the incident to determine the facts of the case and determines the disciplinary action to be taken. The principal or assistant principal completes and signs the form noting the action taken and the dates of suspension where applicable. The principal will retain one copy, send one copy to the bus company supervisor and send two copies to the parent (in addition to a phone call when necessary) who will sign one copy and return it to the school. When suspension is involved, a phone call should be made to the bus company supervisor immediately so that there is no delay in communication.

In general, the first offense should result in a student conference, the second offense warrants a parent/guardian conference, and the third offense, suspension from the bus for one to three days. If misbehavior continues, then longer periods of suspension may be required. It is no longer necessary to suspend students from school when being suspended from transportation. Principals can require an assigned seat as part of the discipline. Assigned seats for the entire bus are particularly useful in stubborn cases of vandalism, where each student is responsible for their own seat.

More serious offenses, such as fighting, possession of a knife, or lighting matches, may require the suspension of transportation privileges, prior to the third report. In extreme situations the driver may return to the school with the entire load of students. However, prior to that the driver must notify the bus supervisor by radio (or phone) and the supervisor must be sure that there is an administrator available at the school to deal with the problem.

**Students who are affecting the safety of the entire bus should be removed by the principal.**

In an emergency situation, where student(s) are endangering the safety of others, the driver should pull over, and radio the bus company supervisor. The supervisor will communicate with the Transportation Coordinator, principal, other Board of Education officials, and/or the police. The bus company has no legal authority to remove a student from the bus, or to drop off at any other stop than the assigned stop for the student. In an extreme situation the police will be called upon to remove the student(s) and take them into custody.

In difficult cases of discipline, where there are conflicting reports, a meeting between the student, parent/guardian, principal, bus driver, bus company supervisor, Transportation Coordinator, and perhaps, social worker, may be necessary. Such a meeting is most successful where there is a spirit of cooperation and a true desire to resolve the conflict.

There will be a video recording/monitoring system on each bus for assistance in determining passengers responsible for school bus discipline infractions. Parents/guardians, accompanied by school administrators, will be requested to review videotapes and discuss consequences of such student behavior.

**BUS PASS PROCEDURE FOR SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION**

**Regular bus passes** will be issued by schools to all eligible secondary school students.

The bus driver is responsible for checking bus passes on a regular daily basis. No student should be denied a ride due to not having a bus pass.

If a student fails to produce the bus pass upon the request of the bus driver, regardless of the reason, then the bus driver will complete the disciplinary referral form entitled, "Driver's Report of Unsatisfactory Conduct on the School Bus" and submit said form upon arrival at school to the principal, school office, or teacher-on-duty. The principal will investigate the situation and then determine the disciplinary action to be taken among which may be suspension from transportation.

Refusal by the student to produce the bus pass will be treated by the principal as a serious offense. Forgotten, lost or stolen bus passes are to be treated as disciplinary infractions.

Principals may issue a one-day emergency bus pass for returning home in the afternoon. There is a \$1.00 charge each time for the replacement of a regular bus pass.

In an emergency situation the principal (or school staff-on-duty) has the right to make exceptions for students to ride the bus without passes. The principal (or school staff-on-duty) will do so by instructing the bus driver.

The principal is responsible for maintaining a current bus-rider eligibility list and for the effective execution of this administrative regulation pertaining to the requirement of bus passes and for the potential overloading of buses and authorized passengers.

A temporary courtesy bus pass will be issued by the transportation department to parents who apply and are eligible as determined by the lottery system criteria as noted below and seats exist after all eligible riders have been accommodated. Application to the Transportation Department at Central Office is to be made annually by the Third Friday after schools open. Temporary courtesy passes may be revoked during the school year by last assigned, via lottery, or if it is determined that not enough seats are available for eligible riders due to change in stop or route or new enrollees. The lottery will be held on the first school day of October. Courtesy pass recipients have the responsibility of going to the nearest officially designated stop. No new stops will be created to accommodate a courtesy pass rider.

Courtesy Lottery Criteria:

- Child care in eligible location
- Participant in a community after school program
- Distance:    K – 5 within .5 to .99 miles from school  
                  6 – 8 within 1.0 to 1.499 miles from school  
                  9 – 12 within 1.5 to 1.99 miles from school
- High School students – work location near an eligible stop

**TRANSPORTATION - INELIGIBLE STUDENTS**

Students who walk to school are entitled to a safe walk. It is suggested that parents/guardians of children who are walking to school for the first time should walk the route with the youngsters. This will enable parents/guardians to point out the potential hazards.

Students should be aware of the importance of crossing roads at designated crosswalks and intersections and preferably where school crossing guards are posted or at traffic signals. Sidewalks/walkways are to be used by walkers as opposed to walking in the road. If there is not a sidewalk/walkway, children should walk facing traffic and in single file when in groups. When possible, children should walk in groups for

safety. Parents/guardians are encouraged to check with neighbors to see if their children will be walking to school. When the walk is considered to be extraordinarily hazardous by authority of the Norwalk Public Schools Safety Committee, the hazard is further neutralized by the use of crossing guards, signs, lights, or crosswalks. When leaving school, students should go directly home unless they have told their parents/guardians about other arrangements. They should not use shortcuts across private property. If approached by a stranger, students are encouraged to, above all, get away from the stranger as quickly as possible, get a vehicle license number (if applicable), remember what the person was wearing and what they looked like.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER - SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

### **Storm Emergency Procedures**

When the weather is severe and traveling conditions appear to be hazardous, pupils and parents/guardians are urged to listen to news broadcasts to determine whether the schools will be open, be delayed or remain closed. Radio broadcasts will begin between 6:00 and 6:30 a.m. over the following radio stations:

WICC - 600 AM	WSTC - 1400 AM	WFAS - 103.9 FM
WLAD - 800 AM	WKHL - 96.7 FM	WEBE - 107.9 FM
WFAS - 1230 AM	WDAQ - 98.3 FM	
WNLK - 1350 AM	WEZN - 99.9 FM	

Television Stations: Channel 3 WFSB, Channel 6 WVIT, WTNH (Channel 8) & CABLEVISION News 12  
Closings and delays will also be announced on the Norwalk Schools information line: 854-4123 or displayed on the official NPS website @ [www.norwalkpublicschools.org](http://www.norwalkpublicschools.org).

We urge all parents/guardians to be alert to the possibility that weather conditions can affect school sessions; these weather conditions include snow, sleet, high wind storm such as hurricanes, heavy rain which can cause flooding, and electrical storms which can cause power failure.

When these conditions exist, or are predicted, there is a strong possibility that school officials will close schools or change school hours. When these decisions are made, they are always made with concern for the safety and comfort of pupils. ***These decisions are always announced over radio/tv stations with as much advance notice as possible. Therefore, we ask parents/guardians to be aware of the weather and weather reports.*** When severe weather exists or is predicted, parents/guardians should make a habit of listening to local radio/tv stations for announcements on the following:

### **Delayed Openings**

Announcements on delayed openings will be made beginning at 5:30 a.m. Delayed openings are usually necessary in order to give the city time to provide for traffic safety or to give our bus transportation system time to prepare buses for safe operation. Delayed openings will mean that your child will start school either one or two hours later than usual.

### **Early Dismissals**

Occasionally weather conditions will be such that after school opens on a given day, it becomes necessary to have an early closing. In this situation, we again utilize the radio stations to make announcements. We cannot call every parent/guardian to give individual information; therefore, it is essential that you listen to your radio/tv or call the Norwalk Schools information line or check the NPS official website.

Please arrange some plan for your child to follow in case of an early dismissal. Your child should know

where to go in case of an emergency, i.e., a relative, a friend, or a neighbor. It would be most helpful if you would let the school know where your child should go if dismissed early in an emergency.

We try to keep emergency school closings at a minimum because of our inability to communicate effectively during such a short span of time. However, there are times when this decision cannot and, in the interest of overall safety, should not be avoided.

### **DISCRIMINATION/SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

**The Norwalk Board of Education** ("the Board") is an equal opportunity employer. Furthermore, it is the policy of the Board to educate all children within the Norwalk Public Schools in an atmosphere that is free of discrimination/sexual harassment. As part of the Board's commitment to these policies, the Board has established the Human Relations Office for the Norwalk Public Schools, located at the Board's offices at 125 East Avenue, Norwalk, Connecticut. The Human Relations Office is supervised by the **Director of Human Relations, Bruce V. Morris**, who can be reached by telephone at 854-4013.

### **HERE IS HOW A DISCRIMINATION/SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINT IS PROCESSED**

1. If you think you have been treated unfairly or otherwise discriminated against/sexually harassed due to your race, color, religious creed, age, gender, marital status, national origin, ancestry, present or past history of mental disorder, mental retardation or physical disability, and/or Section 504 (U.S. Rehabilitation Act, 1973), you should contact the Human Relations Office ("HRO") with your complaint. In order to ensure its expeditious processing, your complaint must be filed within thirty (30) business days of the event or condition upon which the complaint is based.
2. The HRO will conduct a thorough investigation of timely filed complaints. This investigation will generally commence with a confidential interview of the complainant by the Assistant to the Superintendent for Human Relations. If the Assistant to the Superintendent for Human Relations, after meeting with the complainant, believes that further investigation of the complaint is warranted, the HRO will interview the person or persons against whom the complaint has been made. Additionally, the HRO will meet with any person whom the HRO believes has information regarding the event or condition upon which the complaint is based.
3. The HRO will complete its investigation within fifteen (15) business days of the initial interview with the complainant, although the HRO will have the option of extending the investigation period an additional ten (10) business days should the circumstances of the investigation necessitate such extension.
4. Within ten (10) business days of the conclusion of the HRO's investigation, the HRO will issue a written record of its findings and determination and will meet with the complainant to discuss such findings and determination.
5. If the HRO determines that there is insufficient evidence to support the complaint, it will close the case. The HRO may also close the case if the complainant cannot be located or otherwise fails or refuses to meet with the HRO following the filing of the complaint; if the complainant withdraws the complaint, if the nature of the complaint is outside the scope of the HRO's authority; or if the complainant and the person or persons against whom the complaint was made agree to a settlement.
6. If the HRO finds and determines that there is probable cause to believe that discrimination/sexual harassment has occurred, the Assistant to the Superintendent for Human Relations is required to try and reach an agreement between the parties that eliminates the discrimination/sexual harassment.
7. If the complaint cannot be resolved by agreement, the HRO's findings and determination will be referred to the Superintendent of Schools for resolution. If the Superintendent of Schools is, in turn, unable to effect a settlement of the complaint between the parties, the complaint will be referred to the Board of Education for the appropriate action.

**NO REPRISALS MAY BE MADE AGAINST A PERSON WHO BRINGS A COMPLAINT. THIS COMPLAINT PROCEDURE IS NOT INTENDED TO BE THE EXCLUSIVE REMEDY FOR ANY PARTY WHO MAY HAVE RIGHTS UNDER THE TERMS OF A CONTRACT OR UNDER FEDERAL OR STATE LAW.**

SCHOOL HOURS - 2008/09

	<u>OPENING</u>		<u>CLOSING</u>	
<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>1 HOUR DELAYED</u> <u>NORMAL</u>	<u>2 HOUR DELAYED</u> <u>PLAN</u>	<u>NORMAL</u>	<u>SHORT DAY</u>

Brien McMahon	7:30	8:30	9:30	2:15	12:35
Norwalk High	7:30	8:30	9:30	2:15	12:35

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Nathan Hale	8:15	9:15	10:15	2:50	1:50
Ponus Ridge	8:15	9:15	10:15	2:50	1:50
Roton	8:15	9:15	10:15	2:50	1:50
West Rocks	8:15	9:15	10:15	2:50	1:50

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Briggs High	8:10	9:10	10:10	1:25	12:25
Westhill	7:25	8:25	10:25	2:05	11:45
Wright Tech	7:40	8:40	9:40	2:00	12:14

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Early Elementary Schools

Fox Run	8:45	9:45	10:45	2:50	1:50
Jefferson	8:45	9:45	10:45	2:50	1:50
Marvin	8:45	9:45	10:45	2:50	1:50
Naramake	8:45	9:45	10:45	2:50	1:50

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Late Elementary Schools

Brookside	9:20	10:20	11:20	3:25	2:25
Columbus	9:20	10:20	11:20	3:25	2:25
Cranbury	9:20	10:20	11:20	3:25	2:25
Kendall	9:20	10:20	11:20	3:25	2:25
Rowayton	9:20	10:20	11:20	3:25	2:25
Silvermine	9:20	10:20	11:20	3:25	2:25
Tracey	9:20	10:20	11:20	3:25	2:25
Wolfpit	9:20	10:20	11:20	3:25	2:25

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All Saints

Catholic School	7:50	8:50	9:50	2:10	12:10
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Note: School schedules will be announced over local radio stations during storm warnings. Listen to your radio in the morning before school when weather is inclement or call the Norwalk Public Schools Information Line at 854-4123.

Storm Emergency Procedures:

When the weather is unusually severe and traveling conditions appear to be hazardous, pupils and parents are urged to listen to news broadcasts to determine whether the schools will open or remain closed. Radio broadcasts will begin between 5:30 and 6:00 a.m. over the following radio stations:

WICC - 600 AM	WKHL - 96.7 FM	<u>Television Stations</u> WTNH (Channel 8) CABLEVISION News 12 Channel 3 WFSB Channel 6 WVIT
WLAD - 800 AM	WDAQ - 98.3 FM	
WFAS - 1230 AM	WEZN - 99.9 FM	
WNLK - 1350 AM	WFAS - 103.9 FM	
WSTC - 1400 AM	WEBE - 107.9 FM	



