

# **MIDDLETOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

## **TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK**



**2016 - 2017**

**Middletown Public Schools  
311 Hunting Hill Avenue, Middletown, CT 06457  
Patricia Charles, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
860-638-1401**

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This booklet has been developed to inform you about Middletown Public Schools' policies and regulations regarding student transportation.

Safety is our primary concern. Please take a few moments to review the regulations detailed in this booklet with your child. It takes everyone, staff, parents, and students, to create the conditions for a safe bus ride to and from school. Reviewing this material with your child demonstrates your interest and concern and allows you to play an important role in assuring the well-being of everyone riding the school bus.

A second, but nevertheless important objective is route efficiency. Our bus routes are designed to transport students to and from school safely and as quickly as possible within realistic fiscal constraints. Establishing specific bus stops is an integral part of that effort. Each bus stop is selected based on site safety (sight line, ability to safely pull in and pull out of pickup points, available turn-around if necessary, etc.), student population, and distance between stops.

If you feel that the bus stop established for your student is inconsistent with the policies and guidelines detailed in the following pages, please follow the procedure described under the title "Bus Stops".

When the Board of Education, DATTCO and the parents work together, we can assure that each student is transported safely and efficiently each day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia Charles". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "P".

Patricia Charles, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

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## **DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION**

The Board of Education provides transportation to and from school for all students in Pre-K and Kindergarten through twelfth grade who are deemed eligible for such service.

*Expect delays the first several weeks of school while the driver settles in to the new schedule. Pick up times are only estimated times and may vary as students are added or deleted from bus routes during the course of the school year.*

### **Bus Stops:**

Specific bus stops are selected based on site safety conditions (sight line, ability to safely pull in and out of pickup points, available turn-around if necessary, etc.), neighborhood student population and distance between stops.

**Each August, students are assigned bus stops based on their home address regardless of arrangements made the previous year.**

Routes are posted on-line and at each school prior to school opening. If you have any questions regarding your assigned bus stop, please call DATTCO Transportation at (860) 635-8234. A request for a change in a bus stop must be made and approved through the Transportation Department as well as the school office. Drivers are not authorized to make changes in bus stops.

### **Walking Guidelines:**

Middletown's Policy states walking distance for Kindergarten to grade 5 is one mile (1) and grades 6-12 is one and one-half miles (1 ½).

Connecticut State School Accommodation Guidelines permit a maximum walking distance to school or to a bus stop to be one (1) mile for Kindergarten to grade 3 and one and one-half miles (1 ½) for grades 4-8 and two miles (2) miles for grades 9-12.

In addition, every effort is made to limit travel time to no more than one hour.

### **Day Care:**

Children are assigned bus routes to accommodate childcare situations. However, these special requests must be made in writing (see sample forms) one (1) week prior to the effective date (three (3) weeks before school opening) and days for transportation must be consistent. The request will be reviewed and approved by the Transportation Department.

## **Pre-K and Kindergarten:**

Pre-K and Kindergarten students **are required** to have a parent/guardian or authorized designee\* **AT THE BUS STOP** at both pickup and drop off times. When there is no designee present, the child **will be returned** to school. **It is strongly suggested that an adult be present for all young children.**

A child of any age, who, when arriving at their stop, is uncomfortable getting off the bus, may remain on the bus and return to their school.

## **Dangerous Clothing:**

Safe transportation of your children is a joint effort. We ask for your assistance in reducing the potential for snagging incidents. Please eliminate accessories that are attached to the outside of your child's backpack (i.e.: key chains) and trim any long clothing or backpack strings and straps.

## **Items To & From Home:**

Items, which are not prohibited by school policy and can fit in a backpack or duffle bag, are allowed. Musical instruments, which can fit on a student's lap, are acceptable.

**Items NOT allowed on the bus include special projects, which cannot fit into a backpack, as well as athletic equipment such as bats, balls, sticks, skis, glass containers, etc....*Bulky or non-permissible items are the responsibility of the parent/guardian to bring to and from school.***

## **No Live Animals, Whether Tame Or Wild, Are Permitted.**

## **Lost and Found:**

Articles left on the school bus will be kept for one week. Students may retrieve lost items from the bus driver. Items not claimed within the week will be placed with the school or local bus office lost and found items.

**DATTCO will not be held liable for the security of any items left on the buses.**

## **BAD WEATHER PROCEDURES**

### **Delayed Openings and Cancellations:**

In the event of bad weather, which prohibits safe transportation, school sessions may be delayed or cancelled. For Information regarding school delays or cancellations, please see the Board of Education website ([www.middletownschools.org](http://www.middletownschools.org)) for a complete listing of radio stations, or by watching the major television networks – Channel 3, 30, 8 & Fox CT.

**Please DO NOT CALL the school or bus company for this information as lines must be left open for emergencies.**

## **Early Dismissals:**

Middletown Public Schools Emergency Cards are to be completed by parents/guardians and returned to the classroom teacher. It is imperative that the school not be called for information regarding closings. All children should have an emergency backup plan should they arrive home to an empty house.

## **DATTCO SAFETY GOALS**

- As a driver, **I will NOT** tolerate any behavior that distracts me or stops me from driving safely.
- As a driver, **I will NOT** tolerate any behavior that prevents all passengers from receiving safe transportation.

## **CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES**

### **School Bus Stops:**

The ride to and from school should be an enjoyable, safe experience for all. By following a few simple rules, children can show consideration for others and assure their safety. The basic rules are as follows:

Be at your bus stop approximately **ten (10) minutes** before and **ten (10) minutes** after the bus is due to arrive. Students must wait at the bus stop. **Buses will not be responsible to pick up students who remain in their vehicles and/or homes.**

When waiting for the bus, stay out of the road. Stand well away from the bus when it arrives until it has stopped and the door is opened. The driver will indicate with a nod when it is safe to board the bus.

Go directly to your seat when entering the bus and remain there. Students may not stand, change seats, distract the driver, or throw anything. (See also Bus Safety Rules on the next page.)

When the bus arrives home get off promptly. Wait to cross the road until the driver nods indicating it is safe to do so.

Bus drivers are forbidden to let a student off at any stop other than his/her scheduled stop without written permission from the school office and/or Transportation Department

Obey the driver's orders. Parents should remind their children that bus transportation is a **PRIVILEGE** and **WILL BE DENIED** to individuals who disobey these rules.

## **Student Behavior:**

Student discipline is an especially challenging responsibility for drivers and administrators.

Misbehavior creates a hazard for everyone jeopardizing the safety and well-being of all students. Behavior on the bus is expected to be the same as within the classroom. All drivers are committed to the DATTCO Safety Goals (previously stated).

### **BUS SAFETY RULES**

- Follow the driver's instructions
- Do not eat, drink or smoke on the bus
- Keep all harmful materials (drugs, tobacco, alcohol, weapons) off the bus. This includes E-Cigarettes.
- Keep all parts of your body and all objects to yourself and inside the bus
- Keep the noise level down and remain seated, facing forward
- Keep the aisle clear and do not litter, write, or damage the bus
- Stay in your seat
- Keep hands to yourself
- Speak quietly to neighbor

### **CONSEQUENCES**

1. Verbal warning
2. Assigned seat
3. Written referral
4. Bus suspension

Steps may be skipped depending on the severity or repetition of rules violated.

Serious offenses may warrant immediate return to school.

**Bus transportation is a privilege,** which may be denied to students who exhibit violent, destructive, or repetitive distracting behavior. Disciplinary reports will be sent to administrators for investigation and appropriate action. We ask that you support their recommendation.

## Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians/Designees:

Supervision at the bus stop is a parental responsibility. Students come under school jurisdiction when they board the bus.

- A. Parents/Guardians/Designees should keep at hand for ready reference the school schedule showing when the bus is due at their pick-up area.
- B. Parents/Guardians/Designees should make sure that children reach the school pick-up area promptly according to schedule.
- C. Parents/Guardians/Designees are encouraged to accompany younger children to the pick-up area.
- D. Parents/Guardians/Designees should instruct children:
  - (1) To walk facing traffic, if they must walk in the street.
  - (2) To look both ways before crossing the street, even when the bus is stopped and waiting.
  - (3) To wait off the street, whenever possible.
- E. Parents/Guardians/Designees should at all times set a good example by observing traffic rules and regulations.
- F. It is required that when a student is dropped off at his/her home, parents/guardians/designees of students in grades Pre-K and Kindergarten be present and visible at the time of student drop-off. If a parent/guardian/designee is not visible, the driver **will** keep the student on the bus and return to the school, unless prior arrangements have been made. The parent/guardian/designee will then be notified and requested to come to the school to transport the child. Once students are dropped off at a common drop-off area, it is the parent's/guardian's/designee's responsibility to ensure the child's safety.
- G. If a student misses a bus, the parent/guardian/designee must provide transportation.
- H. If a student misbehaves waiting for a bus or while on a bus, an administrator/designee may suspend bus privileges, and the parent/guardian will be responsible for providing transportation during the period of bus privilege suspension.
- I. Parental/Guardian requests for a student to ride a different bus on any given day must be made in advance in writing to the school office and Transportation Department.
- J. Parent/Guardian neglect will result in a DCF (Department of Children and Family) referral.
- K. Parents/Guardians/Designees are **not permitted** to board the bus unless granted in writing for a specific purpose by the Superintendent of Schools.

## **Responsibility of School Administration:**

The school principal shall be responsible for establishing a positive disciplinary climate which educates students about acceptable bus behavior. School Administrators and the Transportation Department shall be responsible for enforcement of the Conduct & Discipline Guidelines and Bus Safety Rules.

## **Weapons & Dangerous Instruments:**

Possession and/or use of any type of weapon or dangerous instrument by a student will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the school system. It shall be the policy of the Board to expel a student for one full calendar year if the Board finds that the student possessed, carried or used a weapon in violation of this policy. The Board may modify the period of such mandatory expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

## **Due Process:**

Procedures for determination of removal, suspension and expulsion shall be fair and objective and shall meet legal requirements.

## **Disciplinary Action:**

Action is taken to correct a discipline problem which may include consequences ranging from loss of school bus privilege and/or suspension.

## **School Board Transportation Policies**

- [#3541                    Transportation - Policy](#)
- [#3541                    Transportation - Transportation Handbook - Regulation](#)
- [#3541.3                Routes and Service - Policy](#)
- [#3541.3                Procedures Regarding Busing Issues - Regulation](#)
- [#3541.33              Special Transportation for Exceptional Children- Regulation](#)
- [#3541.341             Non Public School Students - Policy](#)
- [#3541.4                Transportation Equipment - Policy](#)
- [#3541.44              Privately Owned Vehicles - Policy](#)
- [#3541.44              Privately Owned Vehicles - Form](#)
- [#3541.5                Transportation Complaints, Reporting of Accidents/  
Procedures for Emergencies; Safety - Policy](#)
- [#3541.5                Transportation Complaints, Reporting of Accidents/  
Procedures for Emergencies; Safety - Regulation](#)
- [#5131.1                Bus Conduct - Policy](#)
- [#5131.1                Transportation - Transportation Handbook - Regulation](#)

[www.middletownschools.org](http://www.middletownschools.org)

Dear Parent/Guardian:

In August, students are assigned to bus routes based on their home address regardless of arrangements made the previous year. Assignment to **one (1)** additional bus route for arrival or departure to accommodate child care arrangements will be approved only after a Student Dismissal Authorization Form has been completed and submitted for review by the school office and Transportation Department. To ensure the safety and comfort of all students, we ask that you observe the following guidelines regarding bus changes:

Bus change requests require review and approval by **School Administrators AND the Transportation Department.** These requests are considered when written notification has been sent from the parent/guardian to the school office at least one (1) week in advance of the requested change date. (*Note: three (3) weeks before school opening*)

Day care arrangements from the previous year are not automatically transferred to the next year. The Student Dismissal Authorization Form must be filled out annually.

All Student Dismissal Authorization Forms must be received three (3) weeks before school opening to ensure processing for the first day of school. Any forms/changes received after the first day of school will have a one (1) week waiting period. (Special consideration will be given to existing stops). Please arrange for a back-up day care provider if you do not meet this cut-off date.

Forms will be available from the school office and on-line through the Transportation Department.

Bus changes for routine childcare must **be reasonable and the days consistent** so as not to be confusing to the child, teacher or driver.

Please fill out the Student Dismissal Authorization Form and return it to the school office. Please call the school if you have additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Mark Langton.  
Transportation Manager

**MIDDLETOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
STUDENT DISMISSAL AUTHORIZATION FORM**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Classroom Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grade

Please select from the following options for your child's normal dismissal routine:

- PARENT PICKUP** - The following people are authorized to pick up my child:  M  Tu  W  Th  F

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

Each parent or authorized adult must be verified each day. Photo ID may be requested.  
Each person must also be included on your child's Emergency Card.

- WALKER** - My child has permission to walk home unsupervised.  M  Tu  W  Th  F

- KIDS KORNER** - My child attends the Kids Korner after school program.  
I will be responsible for picking him/her up directly from this program.  M  Tu  W  Th  F

- AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM** - My child attends the following After School Program: \_\_\_\_\_  
I will be responsible for picking him/her up directly from this program.  M  Tu  W  Th  F

- BUSSER** - Bus # \_\_\_\_\_ - My child regularly takes the bus and will be met by a responsible adult or be allowed to walk home from the bus stop.  M  Tu  W  Th  F

- OTHER** - Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  M  Tu  W  Th  F

On Early Dismissal Mondays (1:15), my child will be dismissed as a: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

[Click here to download the Student Dismissal Authorization form \(pdf format\)](#)

# MIDDLETOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Directory of Schools

Bielefield Elementary School  
70 Maynard Street  
Jeff Fournier, Principal  
Phone: (860) 347-4124

Spencer Elementary School  
207 Westfield Street  
Suzanne Zahner, Principal  
Phone: (860) 344-0711

Farm Hill Elementary School  
390 Ridge Road  
Richard Henderson, Principal  
Phone: (860) 346-1225

Wesley Elementary School  
10 Wesleyan Hills Road  
Thomas Cannata, Principal  
Phone: (860) 344-0381

Lawrence Elementary School  
Kaplan Drive  
James Gaudreau, Principal  
Phone: (860) 632-2158

Keigwin School  
99 Spruce Street  
Silvia Mayo Molina, Ed.D, Principal  
Phone: (860) 632-2433

Macdonough Elementary School  
66 Spring Street  
Steve Woznicki, Principal  
Phone: (860) 347-8553

Woodrow Wilson Middle School  
1 Wilderman's Way  
Cheryl Gonzalez, Principal  
Phone: (860) 347-8594

Moody Elementary School  
300 Country Club Road  
Yolande Eldridge, Principal  
Phone: (860) 347-2561

Middletown High School  
200 LaRosa Lane  
Colleen Weiner, Principal  
Phone: (860) 704-4500

Snow Elementary School  
299 Wadsworth Street  
Jennifer Cannata, Principal  
Phone: (860) 347-2579

Transition to Life Center (TLC)  
670 Newfield Street  
Kathleen Wickham  
Transition Plan Coordinator  
Phone: (860) 854-6044