



PEABODY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“Every Student Every Day”

Josh Vadala
Superintendent of Schools

Christopher Lord
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PEABODY SCHOOL DISTRICT COVID-19 TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

ATTN. PEABODY RESIDENTS - This information is being provided to parents of students who want to ride District's buses for the 2020-2021 School Year. Given the challenges many districts are facing in regards to reopening schools and ensuring the safety of students and staff, this document will provide you with information on the District's Transportation Plan which hopefully will answer some of the questions you may have.

- 1. REGISTER FOR BUSES NOW** - The bus registration window for the 2020-2021 school year is now open and students who want to ride District buses must register in order to reserve a seat. Due to restrictions related to COVID-19 (see below) there will only be round-trip passes available this year regardless if you pay a fee or ride for free. Copies of the bus transportation letter and applications can be found on this link: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1n5CKg3syJEQ5Vvic08MeJOc7UWtXtTNs>
- 2. PAY FOR BUS FEES NOW** – Since the District Reopening Plan doesn't include students attending school every day during the 2020-21 school year the Student Transportation Fee has been reduced (see link below)). This fee is nonrefundable and covers the 1st half of the year up until January 1, 2021 at which time additional information will be provided. After applications are reviewed bus passes will be mailed to student's home and bus routes will be updated on the website. Copies of the bus transportation letter and applications can be found on this link: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1n5CKg3syJEQ5Vvic08MeJOc7UWtXtTNs>
- 3. WHO QUALIFIES FOR TRANSPORTATION** - The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires School Districts to provide transportation to and from school for those students in grade K-6 who live more than 2-miles from the school. School Districts are not required to provide transportation for students in grades 7-12. The legal reference may be found here: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/transportation/guide.html>
- 4. HOW IS MILEAGE DETERMINED** - Student's home to school mileage is determined using mapping software and is measured from the bottom of the driveway of the house where the student resides to the main entrance of the school the child is attending over public roadways. Fee-based transportation is available for students living within the "Walk Zone" (i.e. within 2 miles from school). The legal requirements can be found here: <https://malegislature.gov/laws/generallaws/parti/titlexii/chapter71/section68>
- 5. WHO IS EXEMPT FROM TRANSPORTATION FEES** - In Massachusetts public school transportation is provided at no cost to students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) and students who are classified as English Second Language (ESL). The pertinent regulation can be found here: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr28.html?section=05>
- 6. WHAT ABOUT FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS** - Transportation fees may be waived in cases of financial hardship. Applicants will be required to provide copies of recent paystubs and/or prior year personal income tax records. The District Financial Hardship form can be found here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1n5CKg3syJEQ5Vvic08MeJOc7UWtXtTNs>



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7. **SEATING LIMITATIONS** - Due to COVID-19 there will be limited space available and not all students who wish to ride the bus may be able to. As an example a typical 71-seat bus normally carries 50+ students (with back-packs) but for 2020-21 the bus will be operating at half-capacity as it is limited to carry a maximum of 23 students. Only one student will be allowed in each seat but siblings will be allowed to sit together. The State’s Transportation Guidance is posted here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/dese-fall-reopening-guidance/download>
8. **DON’T RIDE BUSES IF SICK** - Students riding District buses will be required to carry their bus pass and show it every day. No student should attempt to board the bus if they are sick or have recently experienced sore throat, coughing and/or headaches. Bus drivers will allow every child with valid IDs to board the bus so parents must not allow a sick child to ride. Here is a link to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance on Screening of K-12 Students: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>
9. **SCHOOL BUS SAFETY TIPS** - Due to health and safety requirements students must wear masks at all times. *No Mask = No Ride = No Exceptions*. While lining up to load the bus students and parents/guardians must follow social distancing. There will be mandated seating on the bus in order to maintain social distancing. Buses will be loaded from the back of the bus toward the front with no exceptions. As weather permits bus windows will remain open. Here is a sample of a sign providing reminders about school bus safety: <https://peabody.k12.ma.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/School-Bus-Safety-Tips-2020-2021.pdf>
10. **SAFETY OF BUS DRIVERS** – Each of the bus drivers will put in extra effort to clean the bus repeatedly throughout the day. Cleaning will involve wiping down all seats, seat backs and windows along with commonly touched areas such as the handrail by the entry door. For their own safety Drivers will wear masks or shields, use dispensable gloves as appropriate and wash their hands as often as possible. For the safety of your student’s bus driver (as well as the other children) please ensure your child wears a mask. Here is a link to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance on Student Face Coverings: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/cloth-face-cover.html>
11. **ANTIBACTERIAL GEL** – On each bus a pump bottle of gel will be provided that students will be encouraged to make use of. The type of gel and the and location of the dispenser must be in authorized by the Dept. of Transportation (DOT) and Registry of Motor Vehicle (RMV) who regulate school bus operations in Massachusetts. Here is a link to the DOT/RMV website: <https://blog.mass.gov/transportation/rmv/>

The Peabody School District is committed to take every step necessary to safeguard all students and staff. If you have any questions or need any additional information feel free to contact us:

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