

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

Elementary Bus Passing Procedures June 25, 2015

What is a bus pass?

- ***Permanent bus pass*** is a change to a busing schedule that remains consistent for the course of the year. Typically these changes are for students going to after school care at a childcare facility, Community Education, or could include a dance class that occurs all year every Monday.
- ***Daily bus pass*** is a one day change that allows a student to transfer to any other bus servicing the specific school and allows the student to ride said bus to any bus stop along the bus route.

(See "Elementary Bus Passes" policy EAAAA and procedures at <http://www.abschools.org/school-committee/policies>)

Permanent Bus Passes

- Will be issued to elementary students only for the purpose of attending a location on a pre-existing bus route.
- Bus routes will not be altered to accommodate for non-essential bus stop locations.
- Non-essential bus stop locations are bus stops other than the residential address(s) on file for the student.

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Permanent Bus Passes

In order for a permanent bus pass to be issued the following applies:

- Permanent bus passes will be accepted provided a parent or guardian has submitted the appropriate form.
- Permanent bus pass forms must be submitted before August 1 to take effect at the beginning of the school year, or December 1 to take effect in January.
- Forms can be accessed online and emailed to the district Transportation Office at permbuspass@abschools.org or dropped off at the school or Transportation Office.
- Changes to a permanent bus pass should be treated as a one-day bus pass.
- A responsible party from the location must be outside waiting to receive the students. If an individual (s) is not present at the stop upon arrival the students will not be allowed to exit the bus and will be returned to the school at the end of the route.
- The first time a location fails to meet students at the bus, a written warning will be given by the ABRSD. If the location fails to meet students a second time, that location will be removed from the bus route.

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One-Day Bus Passes

Will be issued to students to provide transportation to:

- The student residence(s) on file
- A licensed childcare provider
- To a pre-scheduled bus stop location on the bus route

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One-Day Bus Passes

One-day bus passes will be issued when:

- The bus pass form is filled out completely including the contact information of an adult who is prepared to take responsibility for the student(s).
- The form is submitted by 2:00 p.m. the day before the one day bus pass is to take place.
- There is sufficient seating on the bus.
- One-day bus passes will not be granted as a substitution to permanent bus passes to private businesses

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Factors Associated With the Recommended Changes for Bus Passing

Adjustment of Age Eligibility

- Currently, students can access bus passing in first grade.
- Restrict the age of students eligible to daily bus pass to 2nd grade and higher.
- All elementary principals strongly support the change

Deadline for Bus Pass Submission

- Currently no time limit on when pass requests can be submitted & can be right up until just before dismissal.
- Requiring a bus pass form to the school office the day prior increases the time to ensure passes are distributed, rosters adjusted and drivers notified.

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Recommended Changes for Bus Passing

Alteration of Bus Routes

- Currently routes are often adjusted at parental request at any point through the year
- These adjustments can lead to alterations inconsistency in route timing that can both increase & decrease ride times impacting all students.
- Limiting changes to routes for Permanent Bus Passes twice a year, as well the decision to no longer modify routes for daily-passes will allow for greater route consistency.

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Recommended Changes for Bus Passing

[Liability Release Form](#)

- School Committee requested that the administration explore legal opinion.
- This opinion identified a number of concerns with the bus pass system from a liability standpoint:
 - Dropping off students at other locations on a day-to-day basis increases risk for human error;
 - If a student exists bus at the wrong stop & student gets hurt or lost this would be a serious problem for the district;
- Legal opinion also suggested a release form given that transportation through a bus pass is beyond what a student is entitled.

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Recommended Changes for Bus Passing

Expectations for Non-Residential Stops

- Under the current policy there are no expectations for students to be met by a responsible party when dropped off at non-residential stops.
- Introducing this expectation we believe will greatly assist in monitoring students when getting off of a bus in a different setting.

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Summary

- There are a number of procedural changes that the administration intends to put into place next year.
- These changes represent efforts on the part of the administration to improve a system that currently has many problems in our belief around our ability to safely manage the system.

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Questions and Comments



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Superintendent's Office
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978-264-4700 www.abschools.org

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Glenn A. Brand, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

June 24, 2015

Dear AB Elementary Families,

I am writing to update you regarding the ongoing discussions around elementary bus passing in the district.

As you are likely aware, the district has had in place a policy allowing elementary aged children to "bus-pass" to bus stops and locations other than their home residential stop. These alternative bus stops have included daycare providers, local businesses and organizations providing a wide-variety of clubs and activities. While bus stops to locations other than a child's home stop exceed the primary obligation of the district in the transportation of our students, it is recognized that allowing this opportunity is a great benefit to many of our families for both enrichment as well as after school care. However, over time, with a rise in requests and students using this system, the ramifications of the overall management of this system have become of growing concern.

Earlier this year the administration raised concerns which were shared with the School Committee regarding this policy and procedures. Central to these concerns were student safety, district liability, the continual growing expectations from community members over adding more and more non-essential bus stops among other issues. The Policy Sub Committee agreed to examine this issue and provided for the School Committee a revised policy at their last meeting. This proposed revision would effectively restrict the issuance of bus passes for only students attending licensed daycare providers and/or residential stops that include signed permission for students to attend ahead of time.

There has been considerable feedback and public comments shared with both the School Committee and myself regarding these proposed changes. While I firmly believe that changes need to be made to this existing system, I share the concerns that making any change at this point for next school year would be very challenging for many families. In response to the feedback we have received, I am writing to provide you with a statement from the Policy Sub Committee which will be shared at the School Committee meeting tomorrow evening:

"After much deliberation and discussion, input from families, local businesses, the Administration and our attorneys, the policy subcommittee members present at their meeting on 6/24/15, agreed to recommend adoption of the proposed Elementary Bus Passes Policy, File: EEAAA found in the packet. While subcommittee members felt strongly this should be effective for this 2015-2016 school year, recognizing the concerns of all of the affected parties, they are recommending the adoption of this revised policy effective for the 2016-2017 school year.

If the School Committee votes to approve this recommendation, the current policy will remain in effect for the 2015-2016 school year.

The policy subcommittee supports the proposed procedures as outlined by the Superintendent and Director of Transportation to be effective immediately."

The actual current and proposed policy revisions are attached to this email, as well as a sample bus pass.

Regardless of any policy change, the administration has also taken steps to revise our procedures that will take effect in the 2015-16 school year. Central to these changes is an effort to focus on our ability to enhance student safety and you will find attached to this email a copy of these revised procedures.

Our Mission is to prepare all students to attain their full potential as life-long learners, critical thinkers, and productive citizens of our diverse community and global society.

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I understand that this proposal will, if approved, bring about a change to the current practices that many of our families have come to rely upon and benefit from over the years. Please know that both the proposed policy and procedural changes have been taken very seriously and include at their core include a commitment to the ability of our district to safely, effectively and efficiently transport our students.

Yours in education,
Glenn A. Brand, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

**ELEMENTARY BUS PASSES
DRAFT for Second Read 6/25/15**

(Recommended by ABRSC Policy Subcommittee, effective 2016-2017 school year)

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee authorizes the issuance of two types of bus passes to elementary students. In order to protect all students who are transported to/from schools, requests for changes in dismissal arrangements will not be taken over the phone, except in an emergency as determined by the school Principal.

1. **Permanent bus passes** may be issued to elementary students only for the purpose of attending a licensed childcare provider on a regular consistent weekly schedule under the conditions stated in the following procedures.
2. **One-day bus passes** may be issued to elementary students in Grade 2 or above to provide transportation to a licensed childcare provider, or to a pre-scheduled bus stop location on the bus route servicing the elementary school, under the conditions stated in the following procedures.

ELEMENTARY BUS PASSES

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee authorizes the issuance of two types of bus passes to elementary students. In order to protect all students who are transported to/from schools, requests for changes in dismissal arrangements will not be taken over the phone, except in an emergency as determined by the school Principal.

1. Permanent bus passes may be issued to elementary students under the conditions stated in the following procedures.
2. One-day bus passes may be issued to elementary students, with the exception of kindergarten students, under the conditions stated in the following procedures.

Approved: 1/13/14

ELEMENTARY BUS PASSES – Procedures
(for current policy)

A. Permanent bus passes will be issued to elementary students only for the purpose of attending a location on a pre-existing bus route. Bus routes will not be altered to accommodate for non-essential bus stop locations. Non-essential bus stop locations are bus stops other than the residential address(s) on file for the student.

In order for a permanent bus pass to be issued the following applies:

1. Permanent bus passes will be accepted provided a parent or guardian has submitted the appropriate form.
2. Permanent bus pass forms must be submitted to the school office before August 1 to take effect at the beginning of the school year, or December 1 to take effect in January. Copies of the permanent bus pass form can be accessed from the elementary school websites as well as from the Transportation Office.
3. Permanent bus pass requests can be mailed to the district Transportation Office at permbuspass@abschools.org or can be dropped off in the office as well.
4. The district form must be used in all schools and is available at the elementary school offices or on the school website.
5. Any changes to a permanent bus pass should be treated as a one-day bus pass, per procedures below.
6. A responsible party from the location must be outside waiting to receive the students. If an individual (s) is not present at the stop upon arrival the students will not be allowed to exit the bus and will be returned to the school at the end of the route.
7. The first time a location fails to meet students at the bus, a written warning will be given by the ABRSD. If the location fails to meet students a second time, that location will be removed from the bus route.

B. One-day bus passes will be issued to students to provide transportation to the student residence(s) on file, a licensed childcare provider, or to a pre-scheduled bus stop location on the bus route servicing the child's elementary school. In order for a one-day bus pass to be issued the following must be in place:

1. The bus pass form is filled out completely and correctly, including the contact information of an adult who is prepared to take responsibility for the student(s).
2. The bus pass form is submitted by 2:00 p.m. the day before the one day bus pass is to take place.
3. The person listed on the bus pass to receive students is responsible for those students once they exit the bus.
4. There is sufficient seating on the bus.
5. One-day bus passes will not be granted as a substitution to permanent bus passes to private businesses

C. For All Bus Passing:

Please note the following:

1. Parents or guardians must sign a release of liability waiver at the beginning of the school year to participate in bus passing.
2. Bus routes will not be altered to accommodate for bus passing.
3. Any stop other than the student's home stop requires a bus pass.
4. The elementary school office, in consultation with the Transportation Office, reserves the right to deny the issuance of a daily bus passes or cancel a permanent bus pass.

5. It is understood that the bus stop timing of ABRSD bus routes fluctuates daily based on unexpected traffic delays, weather, or other scenarios outside the control of the bus driver and the transportation office.
6. Information relative to bus numbers, bus routes, and bus stops, may be obtained from the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District website under the Facilities and Transportation Department.
7. Students are responsible for their personal behavior on the bus. If they are written up for disciplinary reasons by the bus driver, the first write up will serve as a warning. If there is a second incident resulting in a write up, that student will have their permanent bus pass revoked and transportation for that student will revert back to the student's residence on file.

Questions about these procedures may be addressed to the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Transportation Department at 978-264-3328. The Transportation staff will be happy to speak with you.

Sample

Teacher: _____

Room #: _____

ELEMENTARY BUS PASS

MCCARTHY-TOWNE SCHOOL

TODAY'S DATE: ____/____/____

This form must be delivered to the school office at the beginning of the school day the change is effective, otherwise the student will be dismissed according to his/her usual dismissal procedure. Bus changes cannot be taken over the phone except in an emergency, determined by the school principal. **Check ONE box and fill out ALL other information.**

PERMANENT CHANGE FOR EVERY _____
(LIST DAYS OF WEEK FOR SCHEDULE CHANGE)

ONE DAY CHANGE FOR _____ /____/____
(DAY OF WEEK) (DATE)

(STUDENT'S NAME) **HAS PERMISSION TO RIDE BUS #** _____ **TO**

(BUS STOP LOCATION) **THE STUDENT WILL BE IN THE CARE OF**

(DAYCARE PROVIDER/GUARDIAN) **WHO CAN BE REACHED AT** _____
(PHONE #)

(SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN REQUESTING BUS PASS) (PHONE NUMBER WHERE YOU CAN BE REACHED DURING THE DAY)

(SIGNATURE OF SCHOOL OFFICIAL) /____/____
(DATE)