

## **TRANSPORTATION FEE INFORMATION**

### **1. Who is eligible for town paid (free) school bus transportation in Plymouth?**

Students in Grades K-6 who reside 2 miles or over from their assigned school are eligible for town-paid (free) bus transportation. This determination is mandated by the State of Massachusetts (Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71 Section 68). All other students in Grades K-12 will have the option to participate in the fee-based transportation program. All students who are eligible for and plan to ride town paid transportation still need to register for transportation annually.

### **2. How is the two mile distance measured?**

The two mile distance is measured from the student's address to the school's address utilizing Google Maps, using the shortest means by public roadway. The Transportation Department has already entered your distance to school in your Aspen Account. When you log into Aspen and click the Transportation tab, you will see your student's "Distance to School"

### **3. What is the fee-based transportation program?**

All students who are NOT eligible for town-paid busing will have the option to purchase a bus pass through the "Fee-Based Transportation Program." (Those NOT eligible include K-6 students living less than two miles from their assigned school and all students grades 7-12, regardless of distance.) Passes for the school year are \$XXXX per student with a \$XXXX family cap. Bus fees must be paid before July 1st to be scheduled to ride during the upcoming school year. If the fee is not received by July 1st, your child will be placed on a waiting list and stops will be assigned if space is available on the bus.

### **4. Is there a provision for a fee waiver?**

If you meet Federal low-income requirements for Free and Reduced Lunch, you can apply for a waiver of the fee; your transportation application must be completed and submitted, along with required income documentation. Incomplete information will NOT be processed. If you already applied for free and reduced lunch for this school year, then it applies for next school year's Transportation. Please go to Aspen and fill out the Transportation information and in the payment section choose "Waiver". If you need to fill out the form, you can fill out the low-income verification form under "Free and Reduced Lunch Information".

### **5. How do I apply for the fee-based transportation program?**

Each spring, you will receive email notification that it is time to register for the transportation program for the next school year. Students wishing to obtain a bus pass must complete the application and return it with payment no later than July 1st. ALL STUDENTS who want to participate in the transportation program must complete an application whether or not they reside in a "fee" or "no fee zone". Payments

can be submitted online from your checking account or credit card or via a paper check/money order. There is a convenience fee for paying online.

**6. What are the payment terms?**

The payment deadline is July 1st to be guaranteed transportation. Payment is due in full by check or on-line payment as indicated above. Please note that any check returned due to insufficient funds or closed bank accounts will have a bank fee charged as a penalty to the check writer. Payment plans and/or partial payments will not be accepted.

**7. What happens if I send in my application/payment after the June 30th deadline?**

Applications or payments received after the July 1st deadline will result in the student being placed on a waiting list for transportation. Bus routes and staffing will be planned based on applications and payments received on or before July 1st. Applications received after July 1st will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis. New residents can pay for transportation upon enrollment to a new school.

**8. Does my child need a bus pass?**

Yes. All bus students are required to carry their bus pass on a daily basis beginning the first day of school. The bus pass should then be attached to the student's backpack. This will keep the pass handy and allow the student to display it without delay. Students who are unable to present a pass will not be allowed to board the bus. Bus passes will be available for pick up two weeks prior to school beginning.

**10. What if my child loses the bus pass?**

Please send a check or money order into the main office of your child's school for a replacement bus pass. There is a \$5.00 fee for the replacement pass.

**11. Where will my child be picked up or dropped off?**

Children will walk to a common bus stop. Students are not entitled to street-by-street or door-to-door pickup or delivery. All stops will be at corners, whenever possible, to make them fair and consistent for all. In the case of new residents, you may be in an area that might require issuing a new bus stop. Until the area is reviewed, and if a new stop needs to be added, students should go to the closest bus stop until a new one is established by the Transportation Office. Any child standing at unauthorized locations may not be picked up. Regarding Kindergarten: Students attending the kindergarten program will board the bus at the group stop with other neighborhood elementary students (provided there is one in your neighborhood). In the afternoon, kindergarten students will be dropped off at the same group bus stop. It is school policy to return children to their school should an adult not be present to meet kindergarten through second grade students.

**12. Can my child ride home on another bus?**

No. Students may only ride their assigned buses and get on/off at their assigned bus stop. If there is a family emergency or medical situation, parents should notify the school principal and other transportation arrangements may be made. Daycare Transportation: Requests for transportation to a stop other than the student's home address must be approved by the Principal and follow a regular schedule.

**13. What if my child only needs bus transportation one way or only two or three days per week?**

The cost for all students is the same. The amount of time you use the bus does not matter; bus fees are the same.

**14. What if I only want to enroll for a partial year?**

Routes and staffing will be configured based upon students enrolled as of July 1st. There is no provision for payment of a partial year. Should you choose to submit an application and payment after July 1st, transportation will be provided only if space is available, if routing does not require reconfiguring, and the fee is paid in full. In the case of new residents, a prorated fee will be assessed.

**15. Can student conduct result in suspension from the school bus?**

Students are expected to behave in a manner which will provide for optimum safety of the individual student as well as the safety of other students aboard the bus. When a student is reported for violating a safety rule in and around a school bus, school officials will review the situation with the student. Parents will be notified of the behavior. Depending on the severity of the offense and the frequency of violations, the student may receive a warning, a brief suspension from the bus or suspension for the balance of the school year. If a student is participating in the "Fee Based Transportation Program" and is suspended from the bus, the fee WILL NOT BE REFUNDED.