



Hamilton Township School District School Bus Transportation Handbook

Hamilton Township School District

Transportation Department

Telephone: 609-476-6318
Fax: 609-625-4847
Email Address: [Transportation @ HamiltonSchools.org](mailto:Transportation@HamiltonSchools.org)

Sheppard Bus Service

Telephone: 856-765-3812
Follow Prompts for Mays
Landing Dispatch

March, 2015
Revised May, 2016
Revised May, 2017



Hamilton Township School District

Transportation Handbook

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<u>Part I – Student Transportation Policies & Procedures</u>	2
1. Goal	2
2. General Information	2
3. Beginning of School Year Process	3
4. Bus Stop Locations	3
5. House Stops	4
6. Bus Routes	4
7. Davies After School Activity Buses	5
8. Pick Up/Drop Off Times	5
9. Late/No Show Buses	5
10. Requests For Alternate Bus Transportation	5
11. Seating Charts	6
12. Bus Audio/Video Recording Systems	6
13. Students Temporarily Using a Wheelchair or Crutches	7
14. Lost & Found	8
15. New Students & Change of Address	8
16. Non-Public Students	8
<u>Part II – Student Rules and Regulations for Bus Transportation</u>	9
1. Bus Boarding Responsibilities	9
2. On-Board Responsibilities	9
3. Bus Unloading Responsibilities	10
4. Student Conduct	11
5. School Bus Discipline Procedures	11
<u>Part III – Parent/Guardian Responsibilities and Guidelines</u>	13
<u>Part IV – Frequently Asked Questions</u>	15
<u>Exhibit “A” – Board Transportation Policies</u>	17
<u>Request for Transportation/Change in Transportation Form</u>	
<u>School Bus Safety Tips</u>	

PART I - STUDENT TRANSPORTATION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The Hamilton Township School District is committed to providing safe and efficient school bus transportation to its students. The district has a long tradition of providing this service safely to all students who are eligible under New Jersey State laws, rules, and regulations. This policy outlines the services the school district provides and explains the district's compliance with all applicable laws and rules pertaining to school bus transportation. The Hamilton Township School District does not operate its own buses but is a member of the Greater Egg Harbor Regional Transportation Consortium. The Consortium is responsible for determining the most efficient and economical way to transport our 3,300 Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8 student population to the three District Schools as well as various preschool locations, special education locations and qualified nonpublic, Choice, and Charter schools.

1. Goal

The district's goal is to provide safe and efficient transportation to the students of the district within the constraints of a limited and regulated budget. The Hamilton Township School District provides fair and equitable service to a student population that is dispersed throughout one of the largest and most geographically complex school districts in New Jersey. The Hamilton Township School District encompasses 115 square miles of suburban and rural areas with a student population of approximately 3,300.

2. General Information

- A. All Hamilton Township School District students that attend Shaner Elementary, Hess Elementary, Davies Middle, Full Day Preschool, Atlantic County Special Services, and Special Education Schools are eligible for school bus transportation to and from their respective schools. We do not permit any students in the district to walk to school, therefore, any student whose parent/guardian decides not to take advantage of the provided bus transportation will be responsible for transporting their student to and from school.

Availability of transportation for nonpublic, Choice, and Charter schools is determined by the number of students residing within the consortium area school districts on an annual basis.

- B. Whenever possible, bus stops will be located at corners or intersections. Stopping at corners or intersections is generally safer due to the expectations of traffic. When a bus stops mid-block it can confuse motorists, whereas traffic anticipates the bus will stop or yield at the intersection. Students, especially in primary grades, tend to forget about pedestrian safety when in the proximity of their homes. Also, specific house identification is much more difficult for substitute drivers, causing the bus to arrive late to school. The number of bus stops on the bus route impacts the length of time students are on the bus and the number of buses required to provide this service. Bus stops will be located to maximize bus route safety and efficiency.
- C. Students may only ride on the bus to which they are assigned and are not permitted to ride on any other bus that they have not been issued a bus pass for. In emergency situations, the school is permitted to issue a one day temporary bus pass. Please contact the school to inquire about that school's procedure for approving and issuing temporary bus passes. It is important that this policy be followed to ensure the schools and bus company know which children are on each of the buses in the event of an emergency. This policy also minimizes the possibility of students boarding the wrong bus and going to the wrong location. (see Board Policy #8603)

3. **Beginning of School Year Process**

- A. A Request for Transportation form must be completed for any student who will not be picked up and/or dropped off at home (see #10 – Requests for Alternate Bus Transportation). These forms must be received in the Transportation Office no later than June 30 preceding the beginning of the school year in order to guarantee correct Transportation beginning on the first day of school. **A new form must be submitted for each new school year if the student is to be picked up or dropped off at an alternate location from home.** When determining bus assignments for the next school year, all students are automatically reset to pick up and drop off at their home assigned stop unless a new Request for Transportation form has been received.
- B. Bus passes will be mailed to student's homes during the summer and will include the student's bus route number, bus stop location, and estimated pick up time.
- C. The beginning of the school year is a time of major adjustment for students, school administrators, and bus drivers. In order to maintain organization, once the bus passes have been mailed there will be a period when additions or changes can be made. The cutoff for additions and changes will be approximately 2 weeks before school starts and no further additions or changes to the bus routes will be made until approximately 1 week after the beginning of the school year. This includes new registrations and additions and/or changes to alternate pick up or drop off locations.

4. **Bus Stop Locations**

The number of bus stops on the bus route affects the length of time students are on the bus and the number of buses required to provide this service. The bus routes in Hamilton Township will have few house stops with the goal being to centralize stops for students, with bus stops being located at corners or intersections whenever possible. New Jersey guidelines state that a student may walk no more than two miles to or from a school bus stop. The intent for the bus stop walk range in Hamilton Township, however, is no more than .25 miles for Shaner and Hess students and no more than .50 miles for Davies students. However, in certain out of the ordinary instances it may be necessary to increase the distance from the home to the bus stop. In these instances these guidelines will not apply and students may have to walk longer distances to bus stops. Bus stops are located to maximize bus route safety and efficiency.

- A. Generally, buses will not travel down unpaved streets, dead end streets, or cul-de-sacs unless the vehicle is picking up students with disabilities. Backing up a school bus to turn around can be a safety threat to children and property. A full sized bus needs 115 feet to safely turn around and the average cul-de-sac is only 90 feet.
- B. Because of the large rural areas of Hamilton Township, a lack of sidewalks, street lights, or weather conditions cannot be a part of the criteria used in establishing bus stop locations. Also, it is not possible to provide bus stops that are in sight of all student's homes unless house stops were to be made for all students. Most families that live even one house from the corner cannot see the corner bus stop without coming out of the house. If this is a concern, the parent/guardian will need to make arrangements to be out at the bus stop.
- C. School bus stops may change from year to year and, possibly, during the year in extreme cases. The number of students at a specific stop and the walking distance to a stop may vary due to student promotion to a different school, as well as families moving in and out of the area.
- D. Every effort will be made to have Hess and Shaner bus stops be at the same location to assist parents who have students attending both schools.

5. **House Stops**

- A. **A house stop will not be made only because the bus goes past the student's house.** Each time that a bus makes a stop it adds additional time to the route and makes it more difficult for the bus to maintain its time schedule. We receive hundreds of requests each year for house stops and if all were granted the ride time would be unreasonably long. Likewise, a house stop will not be made because there is only one student at the stop as the bus may not be passing the house along the designated route or other students may be assigned to that stop but do not ride the bus frequently.
- B. Roads that have been deemed hazardous may have multiple house stops. Students living on the following roads shall be assigned house stops:
- Black Horse Pike
 - Cologne Avenue
 - Drosera Street
 - Harding Highway
 - Holly Street (between Cologne Ave & Route 50)
 - Jackson Road
 - Malaga Road
 - Millville Avenue
 - New Jersey Route 50
 - Ocean Heights Avenue
 - Somers Point – Mays Landing Road
 - Weymouth Road
- C. All students assigned to a special education bus or a preschool bus (small buses) will be picked up and dropped off at their house.

6. **Bus Routes**

- A. Bus routes are designed in a manner that is safe, efficient, economical and advantageous to the system as a whole. From time to time it may be necessary to adjust the bus routes to accommodate new students moving into the area or to rebalance area buses that have become overcrowded.
- B. The order of pick up and drop off of students is designed to be the most efficient and within the shortest possible time. Students who are first on in the morning will not necessarily be the first off in the afternoon if it is a less efficient way to run the route. In general, the farther a student lives from school, the longer their bus ride will be. The length of the bus ride is determined by both the distance from school and the number of stops made. Many of our routes have upward of 20 stops.
- C. New stops that will require that the bus change its routing will not be established.

7. **Davies After School Activity Buses**

- A. Davies activity buses do not run the same routes as the regular to/from school buses. Activity buses transport the student to the general area of his/her home, following main roads only. The guideline for distance from drop off point to home is 1 mile, however, in most situations the bus will stop closer to the home, or in the neighborhood. Students are not allowed to cross highways or any hazardous roads on Activity bus routes.

8. **Pickup/Drop Off Times**

- A. The pickup time that you receive on your bus pass is an approximate time. During the first two weeks of school, bus pickup times may fluctuate due to school dismissal procedures, route adjustments, and the bus drivers becoming familiar with the routes.
- B. During the school year your actual bus pickup time may be delayed for any number of reasons such as traffic delays, weather or road conditions, or a substitute driver that may not be familiar with the bus route. It is also possible that, on rare occasions, the bus may arrive at the bus stop early if there are many students not riding the bus that day or road detours that require the driver to change the sequence of stops.
- C. **Students must be at the bus stop when the bus arrives for pickup. When a bus gets to a stop, that bus must slow and activate its yellow warning lights and then come to a full stop. The Hamilton Township School District follows the 10 minute rule that requires students to be at the stop 10 minutes before the scheduled pickup time.**
- D. The Hamilton Township School District does not provide drop off times at the bus stop after school on the bus passes. Many factors can affect the drop off times beginning with delays in releasing the buses at the school. Your best source for estimated normal drop off times is your bus driver.

9. **Late/No Show Buses**

- A. The Hamilton Township School District Transportation Office is not in direct contact with the school buses. Should you have a question about a bus that is running late or did not arrive at your stop, please contact Sheppard Bus Service at **856-765-3812, extension 406 or 405.**

10. **Requests for Alternate Bus Transportation** (see Board Policy #8602)

- A. Students are permitted one pickup bus stop and one drop off bus stop. These stop locations may be different, but must remain the same every day of the week for at least three (3) consecutive months during the current school year. Requests for occasional, inconsistent days (i.e. every Tuesday and Thursday) or every other week will be denied. Should a student require to be picked up or dropped off at a location other than their assigned stop, the transportation office must have on file a Request for Transportation Form that includes the address of the alternate location, if the location is for pick up only, drop off only, or both; and the form must be signed by a custodial parent or guardian.

- B. Transportation to a babysitter will be considered as long as the location is on an established route and stop. No new stop can be created for babysitting. Transportation will be provided to any licensed child care center located within Hamilton Township. School bus transportation will not be provided for a student to or from a business location other than licensed child care centers.
- C. When both parents have joint custody by court order, a special circumstance letter outlining the pickup and drop off locations (must be the same five days per week; no alternate days or weeks) along with a copy of the court order, must be submitted to the transportation office for review. Requests that do not include a copy of the court order or do not have a fixed five day per week schedule, cannot be accommodated.
- D. "As Needed" bus passes will not be issued.
- E. Students may only ride on the bus to which they are assigned and are not permitted to ride on any other bus that they have not been issued a bus pass for. In emergency situations, the school is permitted to issue a temporary bus pass for one day. Please contact the school to inquire about that school's procedure for approving and issuing temporary bus passes.
- F. Should a situation occur that requires a change to the existing transportation requirements of a student, a new Request for Transportation Form will have to be submitted to the transportation office. It typically takes 3 school days from the time the Request for Transportation Form is received in the transportation office for the change to become effective. The student will receive a revised bus pass from their school the day before the change becomes effective.

11. **Seating Charts**

- A. All bus routes have specific seating charts for each student that are developed by the school and/or the bus driver. The seating charts are developed to maintain order on the bus and identify student seat locations to the police should an incident occur. The driver is required to enforce these seating charts at all times and any changes must be instituted by the school and/or the bus driver. The Hamilton Township School District requires that older students be assigned seats in the rear of the bus going forward and the youngest students be assigned seats in the front of the bus. Whenever possible, the first row of seats is reserved for those students that require additional attention from the driver.

12. **Bus Audio/Video Recording Systems**

- A. All buses are equipped with video cameras and audio recording devices. This equipment monitors passenger and driver areas of the bus with the objective being to assist the driver and school administrators in managing the order, safety, and security of students, staff, and property.

- B. Audio/video recordings will be viewed only by Transportation Department personnel, a principal of the school, bus company management, school Resource Officer or other appropriate law enforcement agencies. Any audio/video recordings that reveal unlawful actions may be brought to the attention of law enforcement agencies. Should a parent or guardian dispute or challenge a bus discipline report, and their child was recorded, it will be at the discretion of a school principal to request and review the recording. The recording will be used by the principal to assist in determining whether or not the incident actually occurred and if so, the severity of the incident. Neither the student nor the parent/guardian of the student that has been recorded will be permitted to view the recording, in accordance with data privacy laws, unless the student is the only subject on the recording or the principal has obtained written permission from the parents/guardians of all other students on the recording in question. Upon written request, the school district will provide a written summary of the recorded incident(s) to a student pictured on a recording or to the student's parents/guardians.

13. Students Temporarily Using A Wheelchair or Crutches

- A. Students that must temporarily use crutches or a wheelchair may be exposed to a hazardous situation when attempting to enter or exit a regular school bus. Particularly at risk are students who have leg casts or splints extending over the knee, which prevent articulation of the limb. Also at risk are students who cannot put significant body weight on walking casts or splints and students lacking sufficient upper body strength to hoist themselves up the steep steps of a school bus. Accordingly, the Hamilton Township School District cannot permit students with these disabilities to ride on their regular school bus.
- B. The parent/guardian of a student who is temporarily physically disabled in this manner should contact the Transportation Department as soon as possible to arrange alternate bus transportation. The disabled student will be assigned to a small bus or one that is equipped with a wheelchair lift as appropriate until the student is cleared to return to their regular bus. This alternate transportation will pick up and drop off the student at their physical address. It can take up to 3 school days for the alternate arrangements to be effective.
- C. The bus aide will provide as much assistance as is reasonably necessary to the student on crutches to enter and exit the bus. However, for the safety of the aide and the student, the aide will not physically carry the student on or off the bus. If the student requires more assistance than the aide can provide, the parents will be responsible to provide a wheelchair for the student who will then be loaded/unloaded using a wheelchair lift, or the parents may provide transportation for the student themselves.
- D. There are a limited number of vans and wheelchair lift equipped buses available to service students that are temporarily using crutches or a wheelchair. We will do our best to accommodate each student's needs, however, if the bus to which the student is to be assigned does not have vacant seats or all wheelchair spots are in use, the parent/guardian will be responsible to arrange transportation for their student to and from school.

14. **Lost & Found**

- A. Neither the bus company nor Hamilton Township Schools maintain a lost and found for items left on a bus. Bus drivers have been directed to keep any found items with them in the front of the bus. If a student feels that they have left something on the bus, they should immediately ask their bus driver if it was found. After a reasonable time and the driver has attempted to find the owner of the lost item, but no one has claimed the item, it will be disposed of. It is the responsibility of the student or the parents to contact the driver regarding lost items.

15. **New Students & Change of Address**

- A. All new students and changes of address are processed through the Registration Office located at Shaner School. Once all required documentation is submitted to the Registration Office, the registrar will forward the necessary information to Transportation.
- B. The Transportation Department cannot enter or edit information recorded in the District Student Data system, nor can we act as intermediary between parents and the Registration Office regarding address changes.

16. **Non-Public Students**

- A. Students attending non-public schools, including Choice and Charter schools, are entitled to either school bus transportation or aid in lieu of transportation payments. Parents/Guardians of non-public school students must submit a New Jersey B6T Application for School Transportation form to the student's school of attendance no later than March 10 prior to the next school year. Depending on the number of Hamilton Township residents that will be attending the non-public school and the cost of transportation to that school, it will be determined if school bus transportation will be offered.
- B. For students who will not be offered transportation, a payment in an amount determined by the State will be made in lieu of receiving transportation. One half of the payment will be made at the end of the calendar year with the other half being made at the end of the school year. In order to receive each payment, the parent/guardian must submit a Request for Payment of Transportation Aid voucher by December 15 and May 15 of the current school year.
- C. Both the B6T Application for School Transportation and the Request for Payment of Transportation Aid voucher should be available at all schools. These forms are also available online at <http://www.nj.gov/education/finance/transportation/procedures/>

PART II – STUDENT RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR BUS TRANSPORTATION

The following transportation rules apply to all students riding buses provided by the Hamilton Township School District. Additionally, all other policies adopted by the Board of Education regarding student behavior on school property will be enforced on Hamilton Township School District school buses. The driver is in full charge of the school bus and the students; however, when present, a teacher, pupil personnel worker or other administrative staff member is then in charge of the students. **Riding a bus to and from school in the Hamilton Township School District is a PRIVILEGE not a right.** All students must observe good conduct, courtesy, cooperation, and respect for the authority of the bus driver.

1. Bus Boarding Responsibilities

- A. Students should be at their assigned bus stop ten minutes before the regularly scheduled bus arrival time every morning.
- B. Students should wait for the school bus in an orderly fashion, out of the way of traffic. Students waiting in vehicles must be out of the vehicle when the bus approaches.
- C. Students should wait at their designated bus stop until the bus has completely stopped before moving toward or boarding the bus.
- D. Any student who must cross the road to board the bus must do so after the bus' arrival at the stop with its red warning lights flashing and stop arm extended, keeping a look out at all times for oncoming traffic.
- E. Students should board the bus in a quiet and orderly fashion. Students should always use the bus handrail and steps in a safe manner.

2. On-Board Responsibilities

- A. Students are to walk to their assigned seats, be seated as quickly as possible, and secure their seatbelt **tightly**.
- B. Students are to sit in their bus seats, facing forward with feet out of the aisle and hands, arms, and head inside the bus. Students must remain in their seats at all times when the bus is in motion. Changing seats at any time during the bus ride is prohibited.
- C. Students may talk in a normal manner; but loud, profane, or obscene language is not permitted. The volume and tone of voices used on the bus should be the same as is used in the classroom.
- D. Students should keep the bus clean and must not damage it. Any malicious or willful damage to a school bus will result in the immediate withdrawal of transportation services for the student(s) involved. In addition, the parent(s) and student(s) are responsible for the cost of repairs caused by their student. Continuation of bus riding privileges will only be considered after consultation with the parent and school administration, and assurance that proper financial restitution will be made.
- E. Students must not extend any part of their bodies through the bus windows, or be permitted to throw objects out of bus windows. Students are not to yell or gesture at individuals outside the bus or in other vehicles. This includes drivers or passengers of the vehicles.

- F. Students are not to eat, drink, or chew gum on the bus.
- G. Students suspended from their school bus may not ride any other school bus to or from school while they are on bus suspension.
- H. Students are not to sit in the driver's seat or tamper with any controls or bus equipment.
- I. The emergency door or emergency window handles should never be touched or tampered with unless a student is directed to do so by the bus driver.
- J. Students may only transport their school books or other school equipment on the bus. Backpacks and other materials must be held by the student and may at no time block or be stored in the aisle. Items may be transported if they fit on the student's lap, but do not interfere with other students in the same seat or do not come above the student's chin. Musical instruments and other items that can fit under the seat, without blocking the aisle, that do not negatively impact any safety aspect of pupil transportation, or cause a disruption of the driver's schedule, may be transported.
- K. Backpacks are to remain closed while students are being transported. Pencils and all school supplies should remain in backpacks at all times. Students may read a book during the bus ride but doing homework is prohibited.
- L. Students are not to take pictures or video with regular, cell phone, or tablet cameras when on the bus.
- M. Cell phone use is permitted while on the school bus, however, a headset must be used at all times. No type of audio should come from the cell phone that can be heard by other students.
- N. Items that may **not** be transported on a school bus:
 - 1) glass containers or other such breakable containers;
 - 2) pets or animals regardless of whether or not they are related to school projects;
 - 3) firearms, knives, or any other sharp instruments that could cause damage to the interior of the bus or be considered a weapon;
 - 4) alcoholic beverages or any controlled dangerous substances;
 - 5) any combustible/non-combustible materials or instrument capable of causing flames, fire or an allergic reaction;
 - 6) skateboards/scooters;
 - 7) science fair projects;
 - 8) balloons; and
 - 9) any other item, the possession of which violates the Hamilton Township School District rules.

3. **Bus Unloading Responsibilities:**

- A. All students must wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before unbuckling their seat belt and getting out of their seat.
- B. Students should check to make sure that they have all of their belongings.

- C. Students must exit the bus in an orderly fashion without any pushing or shoving.
- D. Students must get off the bus only at their regularly assigned bus stop unless a note signed by the student's parent/guardian is given to the bus driver.
- E. Students should use the handrail near the step to avoid mishaps and accidental tripping when leaving the bus.
- F. All students are to immediately move away from the bus after exiting.
- G. Any student who must cross the road after leaving the bus must do so in front of the bus (approximately 10 feet) without undue delay before the bus leaves the stop and while the red lights are flashing. Traffic should be checked carefully before crossing the street.

4. **Student Conduct**

- A. **Student transportation to and from school is a privilege and not a right.** Students may be denied transportation if they violate the rules set forth by the school and the transportation department. Inappropriate behavior on the school bus is considered serious, unsafe misconduct. Infractions are handled at the school level.
- B. A student's bus riding privileges may be suspended for a period of time or for the remainder of the school year. Parents are notified if there is a bus infraction and of the disciplinary action taken. The school bus ride is an extension of the school day, and consequences of student misbehavior will result in school disciplinary measures being taken that might include suspension from school.
- C. The Hamilton Township School District reserves the right to videotape students on school buses. This might include both audio and video recording. The use of videotapes helps to monitor student behavior and evaluate bus drivers.
- D. It is the intent of all involved with pupil transportation to ensure that every student has a safe ride to and from school every day throughout the school year.

5. **School Bus Discipline Procedures**

- A. In order to be provided with bus transportation to and from school, students must:
 - 1. Arrive at the assigned bus stop ten (10) minutes prior to the arrival of the bus.
 - 2. Be seated in their assigned seat with their seatbelt buckled tightly, and facing forward when the bus is in route.
 - 3. Keep all parts of their body inside the bus, out of the aisle, and to themselves.
 - 4. Never throw objects in the bus or out the windows.
 - 5. Speak quietly and avoid excessive noise which distracts the driver's attention.

6. Refrain from using inappropriate language, including profanity, and avoid speaking in a way that teases, hurts, harasses or is intended to bully others.
 7. Do not eat, drink, or chew gum while on the bus
- B. The actions listed below can lead to suspension and a recommendation to the Superintendent for expulsion:
1. Gross Misconduct
 2. Weapons
 3. Drugs (CDS)
 4. Assault on a Student
 5. Assault on a School Bus Driver or Attendant
 6. Threat to a School Bus Driver or Attendant
 7. Arson/Fire/Fireworks/Explosives
- C. The consequences for other bus misconduct infractions will follow the Pupil Discipline Policy and Regulation #5600 (copy attached as Exhibit "A" Additional consequences may be added at the discretion of the principal or principal's designee depending on the circumstances of the incident. Students in danger of receiving a bus suspension of five or more days, on the next referral, may be required to participate in a satisfactory conference with the parent/guardian, a school administrator and any other necessary personnel.

PART III – PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES AND GUIDELINES

In order for students to have a safe and pleasant bus ride to and from school, parents and guardians (hereafter referred to as “parents”) must work in conjunction with the Hamilton Township School District and the school bus contractor. The following responsibilities and guidelines are noted in order for parents to understand their role in the transportation of their student.

1. **Parents are reminded that student transportation to and from school is a privilege and not a right.**
Students may be denied transportation if they violate the rules set forth by the school and the transportation department. If the student violates district school policy and is suspended from riding the bus, the parent will be responsible for transporting their child to and from school. Inappropriate behavior on the school bus is considered serious and unsafe misconduct.
1. Parents are urged to use the school bus system to transport their student(s) to and from school whenever possible. The schools were not designed to anticipate a large number of personal vehicles accessing the school for drop off and pick up and the increased traffic creates a potential safety issue.
2. Parents are urged to assist their children in developing a respect for and a sense of safety concerning all of the related operations of the school bus. Parents are requested to review all of the "Student Rules and Regulations for Bus Transportation" section with their student(s).
3. Parents are urged to play a major role in monitoring their child's behavior during the walk to and from the bus stop and at the bus stop. Parents are responsible for their children during this time.
4. Parents are reminded that the school district is responsible for students from the time that they enter the bus to be transported to school until they are dropped off at their bus stop after school. **Parents are responsible for getting the students to the bus stop, discipline of their student at the bus stop while waiting, and from the bus stop to home.**
5. Parents should see to it that their child arrives at the bus stop at least ten minutes before the regularly scheduled arrival time. Students and parents should know their bus number. Bus drivers will not wait for tardy students, including students that are waiting inside their house or running to the bus (a safety issue), since any wait will adversely affect the established time schedules for other students.
6. Parents and students should select a safe walking route to and from the bus stop. Deviation from the route should be avoided. After leaving the bus, students should walk directly home using a safe and direct route. Students should not talk to strangers at the bus stop or along the way to and from the bus stop.
7. Students should be instructed to respect private property while walking to and from the bus stop. Crossing through private property and yards should be discouraged. Destruction of property or horseplay should also be avoided. Student safety at the bus stop is a top priority.
8. Parents of younger students are encouraged to accompany their child to and from the bus stop until the student is comfortable with the route and the stop location. This is an excellent opportunity to emphasize sound traffic safety practices. Older brothers, sisters, neighbors, etc., can help with this effort.

9. **All preschool, kindergarten, first grade and second grade students must be met by a parent, or other responsible adult 12 years or older, at the bus stop for drop off. It is recommended that you provide a list to the bus driver of individuals authorized to meet your student at the bus stop. See Board Policy 8605 – Requirements to Meet Students at Bus Stop.**
10. **Should no one be at the bus stop to meet the preschool, kindergarten, first grade or second grade student, the bus driver is required to return the student to school and the parent will be responsible for any aftercare charges.**
11. Parents are reminded that students must ride their assigned bus. Vacations, temporary work assignment changes, social events, riding to a friend's home, or other foreseen events will not be approved for a change in bus assignment. Under emergency situations the school administration may approve a different bus assignment for one day.
12. Students must board their bus and be discharged from their bus at the assigned stop. Permission to use a different bus stop may be granted on a one day basis provided that the request does not involve a bus assignment/route change. Bus drivers must be notified of any change in writing by the parent/guardian.
13. Issues and concerns regarding your child's school bus driver should not be addressed directly to the bus driver. Attempting to resolve a bus issue at a bus stop or in the school parking lot with a school bus driver may hold up traffic and the school bus from completing its assigned route. Parents should contact the Transportation Department (609-476-6318 or Transportation@HamiltonSchools.org) with any driver concerns or issues.
14. Issues and concerns regarding disciplinary issues on your child's bus should be reported to the child's school administrators.
15. It is against New Jersey state law for any person other than students, bus, or school personnel to board a school bus at any time. Bus drivers and school personnel have been instructed to immediately contact the police should any unauthorized person board, attempt to board, or threaten to board a school bus.

PART IV – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ***Who do I call for busing questions, concerns, or changes?***

The Hamilton Township School District Transportation Office is not in direct contact with the school buses. Should you have a question about a bus that is running late or did not arrive at your stop, please contact Sheppard Bus Service at **856-765-3812, extension 406 or 405**.

For specific concerns about student behavior on the bus, please contact the school that your child attends.

For all other questions or concerns contact the Hamilton Township School District Transportation Office via email at Transportation@HamiltonSchools.org or by phone at 609-476-6318. All emails and telephone messages will be answered as quickly as possible.

- ***What if I need to have my student take a different bus?***

Students may only ride on the bus to which they are assigned and are not permitted to ride on any other bus that they have not been issued a bus pass for. In emergency situations, the school is permitted to issue a one day temporary bus pass. Please contact the school to inquire about that school's procedure for approving and issuing temporary bus passes.

- ***Why can I only have one pickup and one drop off location?***

Transporting 3,000 students per day is a complicated process and, for the safety of the students, the school administrators and bus drivers must know exactly which bus each student is riding. We receive a tremendous number of requests for multiple pick up and drop off locations and it would be impossible for us to track all of the associated bus changes if those requests were granted. In addition, allowing multiple pick up and drop off locations would require the district to reserve a seat on each bus, leaving seats vacant on the bus that the student is not riding that day. Our goal is to make the most efficient use of the bus fleet. We also feel this is the safest and in the best interest for young children so they have consistency and know where to go each day.

- ***Why has my child's bus stop been moved from the location where it has been for several years?***

School bus stops may change from year to year and, possibly, during the year in extreme cases. The number of students at a specific stop and the walking distance to a stop may vary due to student promotion to a different school, as well as families moving in and out of the area.

- ***Should I call someone if my student doesn't need to be picked up today?***

If your student rides a big bus, no phone call is necessary as each bus will be going by each assigned stop along that route.

If your student rides a small bus (i.e. Preschool or Special Education), the individual stops that these buses make are spread out over significant distances throughout the township. It is very helpful to the driver if

they are aware that they do not have to make a particular stop that day, so we ask that you notify Sheppard Bus Service at **856-765-3812, extension 406 or 405.**

- ***What should I do if we move?***

If you move to a new residence within Hamilton Township you must notify the registrar at Shaner School (609-476-6147) before any transportation changes can be made. The registrar will have you complete a Change in Transportation Form and will forward it to the Transportation Office. The effective date of the change will be three (3) school days after the completed Change in Transportation Form is received in the Transportation office, so it is recommended that this be taken care of before your move. (No changes can be made between the day that the bus passes are mailed and the second week of school.

- ***What should I do if we change babysitters or day care centers?***

Complete a Change in Transportation Form (this form is available at www.HamiltonSchools.org or at the Board of Education Office) and forward it to the Transportation Office. The effective date of the change will be three (3) school days after the completed Change in Transportation Form is received in the Transportation office, so it is recommended that this be taken care of before you actually make the change. (No changes can be made between the day that the bus passes are mailed and the second week of school.

- ***How do I find out what bus my child rides?***

In August the district will send out bus passes that will include the bus number, bus stop location, and estimated pick up time. If the bus pass is not received by the fifth day prior to the first day of school, please contact the Transportation Office.

- ***What should I do if my child misses the bus?***

If the child was missed because of an error by the driver, please call Sheppard Bus Service right away to have a bus swing back and pick up your student. If the student missed the bus because they were not out to the stop on-time, then a parent or guardian must transport. All students are required to be out 10 minutes early to the bus stop.

- ***How far will my child have to walk to a bus stop?***

The bus routes in Hamilton Township will have few house stops with the goal being to centralize stops for students with bus stops being located at corners or intersections whenever possible. New Jersey guidelines state that a student may walk no more than two miles to or from a school bus stop. The intent for the bus stop walk range is no more than .25 miles for Shaner and Hess students and no more than .50 miles for Davies students. However, in certain out of the ordinary instances it may be necessary to increase the distance from the home to the bus stop and these guidelines will not apply and students may walk longer distances to bus stops. Bus stops are located to maximize bus route safety and efficiency.

EXHIBIT "A"

5600 PUPIL DISCIPLINE/CODE OF CONDUCT

The Board of Education adopts this Student Discipline/Code of Conduct Policy to establish standards, policies, and procedures for positive student development and student behavioral expectations on school grounds and, as appropriate, for conduct away from school grounds. Every student enrolled in this district shall observe promulgated rules and regulations and the discipline imposed for infraction of those rules.

The Superintendent of Schools will establish a process for the annual review and update of the district's Student Discipline/Code of Conduct Policy and Regulation that may involve a committee of parents, students, and community members that represent, where possible, the composition of the district's schools and community. The Superintendent will report to the Board the process used for the annual review of this Policy and Regulation and will recommend to the Board updates, if any, to the Student Discipline/Code of Conduct Policy and Regulation.

The Student Discipline/Code of Conduct Policy and Regulation shall be disseminated annually to all school staff, students, and parents. The Board of Education shall provide to all employees annual training on the Student Discipline/Code of Conduct Policy and Regulation, which shall include training on the prevention, intervention, and remediation of student conduct that violates the district's Policy and Regulation. Information on the Student Discipline/Code of Conduct Policy and Regulation shall be incorporated into the orientation for new employees.

The Board provides for the district's Student Discipline/Code of Conduct's equitable application. Student discipline and the Code of Student Conduct will be applied without regard to race; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; nationality; sex; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; marital, domestic-partnership, or civil union; mental, physical or sensory disability; or by any other distinguishing characteristic, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:5.-1 et seq.

For students with disabilities, subject to Individualized Education Programs in accordance with 20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act and accommodation plans under 29 U.S.C. §§ 794 and 705(20), the Code of Student Conduct shall be implemented in accordance with the components of the applicable plans.

The Student Discipline/Code of Conduct is established for the purposes outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(b).

Policy and Regulation 5600 include a description of student responsibilities that include expectations for academic achievement, behavior, and attendance, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8 and 13.1; a description of behaviors that will result in suspension or expulsion, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2; and a description of student rights pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(c)3.i through vii.

The Board of Education approves the use of comprehensive behavioral supports that promote positive student development and the students' abilities to fulfill the behavioral expectations established by the Board. These behavioral supports include, but are not limited to, positive reinforcement for good conduct and academic success including the programs that honor and reward student conduct and academic achievement; supportive intervention and referral services including those services outlined in Policy 2417; remediation of problem behaviors that take into account the behavior's nature, the students' developmental ages and the students' histories of problem behaviors and performance; and for students with disabilities, the behavior interventions and supports shall be determined and provided pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14.

Policy and Regulation 5600 include a description of school responses to violations of behavioral expectations established by the Board that, at a minimum, are graded according to the severity of the offenses, and consider the developmental ages of the student offenders and their histories of inappropriate behaviors pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(c)5.

Students are required to be in compliance with Policy and Regulation 5200 – Attendance pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6 and Policy and Regulation 5512 – Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.7.

The Building Principal shall maintain a current list of community-based health and social service provider agencies available to support a student and the student's family, as appropriate, and a list of legal resources available to serve the community.

The Building Principal or designee shall have the authority to assign discipline to students. School authorities also have the right to impose a consequence on a student for conduct away from school grounds that is consistent with the district's

Code of Student Conduct pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.5. This authority shall be exercised only when it is reasonably necessary for the student's physical or emotional safety, security, and well-being or for reasons relating to the safety, security, and well-being of other students, staff, or school grounds, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:25-2 and 18A:37-2. This authority shall be exercised only when the conduct that is the subject of the proposed consequence materially and substantially interferes with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school. Consequences pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.5 shall be handled in accordance with Policy

and Regulation 5600, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1, and as appropriate, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2, 6A:16-7.3, or 6A:16-7.4. School authorities shall respond to harassment, intimidation, or bullying that occurs off school grounds, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14 and 15.3 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.3, 7.1, and 7.7.

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student who commits one or more acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. The factors for determining consequences and remedial measures and examples of consequences and remedial measures are listed in Policy 5512 – Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying. Consequences for a student who commits an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be varied and graded according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student and the student’s history of problem behaviors and performance, and shall be consistent with this Policy and the school district’s Student Discipline/Code of Conduct Policy pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1. Remedial measures for one or more acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be designed to correct the problem behavior; prevent another occurrence of the problem; protect and provide support for the victim of the act; and take corrective action for documented systemic problems related to harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

Consequences and remedial measures to address acts or incidents of dating violence at school shall be consistent with the school district’s Student Discipline/Code of Conduct Policy. The factors for determining consequences and remedial measures and examples of consequences and remedial measures are included in Policy and Regulation 5519 – Dating Violence at School and shall be used to address the act or incident as well as serve as remediation, intervention, education, and prevention for all individuals involved. The responses shall be tiered with consideration given to the seriousness and the number of previous occurrences of acts or incidents in which both the victim and aggressor have been involved. Consequences for acts or incidents of dating violence at school may range from admonishment to suspension or expulsion. Retaliation towards the victim of any act or incident of dating violence shall be considered when administering consequences to the aggressor based on the severity of the act or incident. Remedial measures/interventions for acts or incidents of dating violence at school may include, but are not limited to: parent conferences, student counseling (all students involved in the act or incident), peer support groups, corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experiences, supportive student interventions (Intervention and Referral Services - I&RS), behavioral management plans, and/or alternative placements.

Any student to be disciplined shall be provided the due process procedures for students and their families as set-forth in Policy and Regulation 5600 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2 through 7.4.

In accordance with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.8, when a student transfers to a public school district from another public school district, all information in the student’s record related to disciplinary actions taken against the student by the school district and any information the school district has obtained pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-60, Disclosure of Juvenile Information,

Penalties for Disclosure, shall be provided to the receiving public school district, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:36-19(a) and N.J.A.C. 6A:32-7.5.

The Superintendent may be required to submit a report annually to the New Jersey Department of Education on student conduct, including all student suspensions and expulsions, and the implementation of the Student Discipline/Code of Conduct Policy in accordance with the format prescribed by the Commissioner of Education. The Superintendent shall report to the Commissioner of Education each incident of violence, including harassment, intimidation, and bullying, vandalism, and alcohol and other drug offenses, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-4.3, in the school district utilizing the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.3.

N.J.S.A. 18A:6-1; 18A:36-25.1; 18A:25-2; 18A:36-19a;18A:37-1 et seq.; 18A:37-13.1 et seq.
N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1 et seq.; 6A:14-1.1 et seq.

Adopted: 17 October 2000
Revised: 1 July 2003
Revised: 19 December 2006
Revised: 12 July 2012
Revised: December, 2014

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY TIPS

Stay away from the bus until it comes to a **complete stop** and the driver signals you to enter.

Stay away from the bus until the driver gives his/her signal that it's ok to approach.

Keep a safe distance between you and the bus. Also, remember that the bus driver can see you best when you are back away from the bus.

Have a safe place to wait for your bus, **away from traffic and the street.**

Be aware of the street traffic around you. Drivers are required to follow certain rules of the road concerning school buses, however, not all do.

When being dropped off, exit the bus and **walk ten giant steps away** from the bus.

Use the handrail to enter and exit the bus.

Protect yourself and watch out!

Stay out of the Danger Zone!!!

