

NEWTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL BUS APPLICATION PACKET



APPLY FOR YOUR 2005-2006 BUS PASS BEFORE JUNE 30, 2005

Dear Parents/Guardians,

June 17, 2005

The School Committee has voted to revise its bus fee policy for the 2005-2006 school year. The bus fee for elementary students who live over 1.0 mile from school has been eliminated; fees for middle and high school students will remain the same as during 2004-2005. Here is a summary of the new policy:

- Students in grades K-5 who live more than 1.0 mile from school are eligible for free transportation. These students do not need to fill out a bus fee application.
- Students in grades K-5 who live less than 1.0 mile from school may ride after filling out an application and purchasing an annual bus pass if bus stops and seating are available.
- Students in grades K-5 who wish to ride the bus only to an afterschool program may purchase a one-way pass at a cost of \$90. The afterschool program must be located in the vicinity of an existing bus stop.
- Students in grade 6 who live more than 2.0 miles from school may ride for free after filling out an application. Students in grade 6 who live less than 2.0 miles from school may ride after purchasing an annual bus pass.
- Students in grades 7-12 may ride after purchasing an annual bus pass.
- The bus fee will remain at \$180 per student per year with a family maximum of \$360.
- The bus fee may be paid in installments upon request.

The list of official bus stops for the 2005-2006 school year is included on the reverse side of the School Bus Transportation Application. If you have a child in grades 6-12, his/her address, school, and distance from school are indicated on the distance label on the outside of this packet. Please check the label to confirm your child's eligibility for busing which is based on the City of Newton's Geographic Information System's distance calculations.

Upon receipt of the application and payment of the bus fee, if applicable, your child will be registered for busing. All secondary school students must fill out a bus fee application, even if you are not subject to the fee. Bus passes will be mailed home in August prior to the first day of school.

The enclosed information will help you plan your child's transportation needs for the 2005-2006 school year:

- School Bus Transportation Application - this form must be submitted with the school bus fee **by June 30, 2005**
- Answers to frequently asked questions about transportation
- List of official bus stops
- Label with address, school and distance from school on back page of this packet

This document can be translated into any primary language of the parents upon written or verbal request to the ELL Department, (617) 559-6043

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING BUS FEES FOR 2005-2006

1. Who is entitled to bus transportation free of charge?

Under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 68, students in grades K-6 who live more than 2.0 miles walking distance to their neighborhood school are entitled to free transportation. For the school year 2005-2006, the School Committee has also approved free transportation for students in grades K-5 who live over 1.0 mile from school. Special education transportation services are separate from regular bus transportation and are not affected.

2. Who can choose to pay a user fee?

Under Newton Public Schools/School Committee policy, all students in grades 6-12, except 6th graders who live more than 2.0 miles from their school, must pay a user fee for transportation. Elementary students who live less than 1.0 mile from school and live in the vicinity of an existing bus stop may opt to ride the bus for the full \$180 fee. Elementary students who ride only to afterschool programs located in the vicinity of an existing bus stop may purchase a one-way pass at a cost of \$90.

3. How is the distance from school determined for all students?

It is measured by using the shortest walking route from the public way in front of a student's home to the nearest entranceway of the school. The City of Newton's Geographic Information System has calculated these distances.

4. How can I find out the distance from my home to school?

If you have students in grades 6-12, their address, school, and distance from school are indicated on the distance label on the outside of this packet. You can also query the Newton Public Schools' web site at <http://www.newton.mec.edu>. In addition, a list of addresses and distances is available in the Main Office at your child's school during office hours.

5. What if I do not agree with the measurement?

You must file an application with a check for the full amount and mark the box "Please confirm 2.0-mile walking distance." The distance will be re-measured allowing a .05 mile (264 ft.) leeway. Your check will be returned if the walking distance is more than 2.0 miles for grade 6.

6. Will the bus routes and schedules stay the same?

The bus routes will be similar to 2004-2005 with reasonable revisions based on the number of applications and space availability. Please see the attached list of bus stops. The bus routes may be viewed on the Newton Public Schools' web site at <http://www.newton.mec.edu> or in the Main Office at your child's school during office hours.

7. May a student use a bus route or stop other than the one closest to his/her home?

Requests will be considered on a space available basis.

8. May a student not eligible for busing ride home with a friend?

The policy allows periodic use of buses for guests as long as space is available.

9. How much will bus transportation cost?

The bus fee for the 2005-2006 school year is \$180 per student with a maximum family cap of \$360 payable by June 30, 2005. Families who move to Newton over 90 days into the 2005-2006 school year may purchase a prorated pass for \$90/student.

10. Are there any one-way pass options?

Elementary students who travel by bus only to an afterschool program located in the vicinity of an existing bus stop may purchase a one-way pass at a cost of \$90.

11. How do I apply for a bus pass?

For all students in grades 6-12, a School Bus Transportation Application must be completed in order to apply for a bus pass. You may apply for busing for more than one student on the enclosed form. Please mail the application, along with a check if applicable, to the Newton Public Schools Transportation Office no later than June 30, 2005. Fees are completely refundable only if the student moves before school begins in September.

12. Must I apply if my child is eligible for free transportation?

An application must be filed if your child is in grades 6-12 and plans to receive bus transportation. Students in grades K-5 who live at least 1.0 mile from school do not require bus passes.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING BUS FEES FOR 2005-2006 (CONTINUED)

13. Will bus passes be checked?

Students' passes will be checked on a regular (weekly) basis at the secondary schools. Bus drivers do not check for passes so that they may maintain full attention to safe driving and timely adherence to the bus routes.

14. Did students ride the buses without passes last year?

Yes, a few students were found to have ridden buses without passes. In all cases, parents were contacted and fees were paid or students were not permitted to ride.

15. What is the transportation policy regarding kindergarten early dismissal MWThF?

Kindergarten students will be dropped off at their assigned bus stops. If a parent or guardian is not at the bus stop to meet the kindergartner, the driver will radio the dispatcher and keep the child on the bus. After the last stop on the route, the driver will return to the bus stop and then to school if the parent is still not there. Repeated occurrences will result in the forfeiture of transportation privileges and fees.

16. Are private school students subject to the bus fee?

Yes. According to Massachusetts General Laws, students who attend private schools in Newton are eligible for bus transportation according to the same policy as public school students.

17. Can I pay by credit card?

No. For the 2005-2006 school year, all payments must be made by check payable to the City of Newton.

18. How can I receive assistance if the bus fee causes financial hardship?

You may fill out the waiver request located on the School Bus Transportation Application. The Transportation Office will contact you for additional information and notify you of your waiver status prior to the beginning of the school year. If families do not qualify for a financial waiver, they may use an installment payment as long as one third of the bus fee is paid by June 30, 2005.

19. Must I pay the bus fee in one payment?

No. Families may pay in installments. You must indicate this on the application form. Families must pay at least one third of the fee by June 30, 2005 in order to receive a pass. Families with outstanding balances from 2004-2005 must pay their past due balance before receiving a new bus pass for the 2005-2006 school year.

21. Do I pay for the bus pass at the Transportation Office?

No, mailing the application and payment is the most efficient way of getting your child's bus pass.

22. When will the bus passes be distributed?

Bus passes will be mailed home in August prior to the first day of school.

23. Must my child carry the bus pass every day?

Yes. All secondary students should have their passes with them every school day. Please note that each school has a current list of students who have passes. This list will confirm a student's eligibility to ride.

24. Has the bus fee increased in the 2005-2006 school year?

There will be no increase in the bus fee for the 2005-2006 school year.

25. Why must I pay by June 30, 2005?

In order to plan the bus routes and prepare passes for mailing in August, the Transportation Office must receive all busing requests by the end of the current school year. Passes may still be purchased after June 30, 2005 based on space availability. To ensure that your child has a pass for September 2005, we strongly recommend returning the application and payment by the June 30, 2005 deadline.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION APPLICATION 2005-2006

(PLEASE USE ONLY ONE APPLICATION FORM PER FAMILY.)

I wish to arrange bus transportation to and from school for my child/children in accordance with the 2005-2006 policies and fees established by the Newton Public Schools.

The address, school, and distance to school for your secondary school child/children (grades 6-12) are indicated on the distance label on the outside of this packet. Students in grades K-5 who live more than 1.0 mile from school and students in grade 6 who live more than 2.0 miles from school do not have to pay a fee; otherwise, the fee is \$180 per student with a family cap of \$360. Elementary students who live over 1.0 mile from school DO NOT need to fill out an application. All eligible secondary students must fill out the application below.

Parent/Guardian Name _____ Tel.# _____

Address _____ email _____

| Child Name(s) Last | First | Grade | School | Bus Stop (please enter stop from list on reverse side) | Fee | Check if gr.6>2.0 mi (no fee) |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|--------|---|----------|-------------------------------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | \$ _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | \$ _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | \$ _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | \$ _____ | _____ |

Elementary afterschool program (must be located at or near an official bus stop) **Total** \$ _____

_____ **Check#** _____

(Afterschool program must be listed in order to qualify for \$90 fee.)

Please make the check payable to the City of Newton and write "Bus Fee" along with your child's name and school on the left hand corner of the check. **Please mail the application and check to the Transportation Office, Newton Public Schools, 100 Walnut Street, Newtonville, MA 02460 by June 30, 2005.** Thank you. Abuse of the bus pass system or violation of the school system's rules of behavior will result in disciplinary action including suspension of transportation privileges and forfeiture of fees.

Please confirm 2.0-mile walking distance (grade 6 only).

Waiver Request: All waiver applicants will be contacted by the School Transportation Office for additional information. Each application will be considered confidentially on an individual basis.

Installment Payment: Upon request, families may elect to pay the fee in installments. Families must pay at least one third of the fee by June 30, 2005 in order to receive a pass. Families will be billed for the balance of the fee. All prior year balances must be paid in full in order to receive a new bus pass for the 2005-2006 school year.

- I wish to apply for a waiver for all or part of the transportation fee due to financial hardship.
- I wish to apply for the installment option and have enclosed \$60 as the first payment.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

For Transportation Office Use Only

Waiver approved _____ denied _____ Date Received _____

*Please mail your application for the most efficient processing of your payment or waiver request.
Questions may be directed to the Newton Public Schools Transportation Office at (617) 559-9052.*

Newton Public Schools

2005-2006 Official Bus Stops

Angier

#151/153 Concord
Beacon & Varick
Canterbury Opp Ridgeway
Chestnut & Amherst
Cornell Opp Neal
Moulton & Grove
St Marys St & Pine Grove
Washington & Belmore

Bowen

#9 Hammond Pond
Acacia & Beacon
Allerton & Cushing
Beacon & Gatehouse
Beacon & Malia
Centre & Aberdeen
Floral & Boylston
Florence & Louise
Florence & Tanglewood
Middlesex & Dunster
Miller & Cloverdale
Suffolk Opp Kingsbury
Woodman & Old England
Hammond & Middlesex
Centre & Walnut (SW)

Burr

2300 Commonwealth Ave
Commonwealth & Melrose (N)
Commonwealth & Melrose (S)
Islington Rd & Islington Circle
Oak Ave @ W. Newton Playground

Cabot

Berkshire & Berkshire Circle
Elmwood Park & Highland
Lakeview & Grove Hill Ave
Lowell & Claflin Playground
Otis & Kimball Ter.
Upland & Oakwood

Countryside

Avalon Apts @ Needham St
Chestnut & Elliot (SW)
Chestnut opp Summer
Goddard & Christina
Oak & Williams
Oldfield & Hagen
Opp #20 Pettee
Roland & Charlemont
Sharpe & Wheeler
Winchester & Winchester Park
Wheeler & Shuman Circle

Franklin

Parsons & Watertown
Lexington Opp Whitlowe
Taft & Keyes

Mason-Rice

Bowdoin & Forest
Erie & Hartford
Floral & Hyde
Gibbs & Sumner
Homer & Cummings
Manchester & Ipswich
Montvale & Bishopsgate

Memorial-Spaulding

#45 Sevlad
#50 Dudley
Broadlawn Pk & Broadlawn Ave
Byron & Lagrange (N)
Country Club & Greenwood (E)
Country Club & Meadowbrook (S)
Deborah & Cynthia (N)
Dedham & Carlson
Dudley & Stonewood
Farina (S) & Dudley

Memorial-Spaulding (continued)

Fox Lane & Arnold
Fredette & Saw Mill Brook
Greenwood & Hartman (N)
Greenwood & Littlefield
Nardell & Donna
Rolling Lane & High Rock
Oak Hill Community Center
Van Roosen & K Roadway
Wiswall & McCarthy

Peirce

Forest & Mt. Vernon
Fuller & Exeter

Underwood

#7 Charlesbank
Charlesbank Opp Orchard
Jefferson & Maple

Williams

#50 Clearwater
Moulton & Grove
Pine Grove Opp Hallron
Washington & Stanton
Leslie & Bertrand
Grove & Blueberry Circle

Zervas

Bemuth & Lincoln
Bowdoin & Erie
Margaret & Frances
Plymouth & Woodward

Bigelow

#7 Charlesbank
Bullough & Berkshire
Charlesbank Opp Orchard
Commonwealth & Manet (N)
Hawthorne Playground
Jasset & Faxon
Jefferson & Maple
Pearl & Jewett

Brown

Ashton & Kenwood
Avalon Apts @ Needham St.
Beacon & Owaisa
Beacon & Varick
Chestnut & Amherst
Chestnut & Oak
Commonwealth & Morton (N)
Commonwealth & Windermere (N)
Cornell & Grove (N)
Cragmore @ Aqueduct (#73)
Elliot Opp Oak
Forest & Walnut
Fuller & Day
Gibbs & Sumner
Goddard & Christina
Holly & Beacon
Kingman & Fisher
Lake & Laurel
Moffat & Montclair
Montvale & Bishopsgate
Moulton & Grove
Myrtle & Grove
Pine Ridge & Woodward
Washington & Belmore
Windermere & Commonwealth (S)
Woodland & Hancock (NE)

Day

Ash & Commonwealth
Commonwealth & Oldham
Commonwealth & Prince
Fuller & Exeter
Highland & Fountain (N)
River & Lexington
River Opp Williams
Wolcott & Wolcott Park
Wykeham & Prince

Oak Hill

#9 Hammond Pond
Acacia & Beacon
Allen Opp Pine Ridge
Bryon (N) & Lagrange
Carver & Endicott
Centre & Clark
Dickerman @ Aqueduct (#148)
Ferncoft & Paulson
Florence & Louise
Florence & Tanglewood
Glen & Warren
Langley & Langley Path
Margaret & Frances
Nardell & Donna
Oak Hill & Old Farm
Spiers & Saw Mill Brook
Vine & Botsford
Warren & Beacon (E)
Woodman & Old Orchard

North High

Ash & Commonwealth
Auburn & Melrose
Charlesbank Opp Orchard
Commonwealth & Manet (N)
Commonwealth & Oldham
Cornell & Grove (N)
Derby & Tolman
Lexington & River
Pearl & Jewett
Ward & West Blvd
Waverly & Durant
Waverly & Whittemore
Wolcott & Wolcott Park

South High

Acacia & Beacon
Allen Opp Pine Ridge
Avalon Apts @ Needham St
Beacon & Carlton
Beacon & Varick
Bryon (N) & Lagrange
Chestnut & Amherst
Chestnut & Oak
Commonwealth & Morton (N)
Cragmore @ Aqueduct (#73)
Dickerman @ Aqueduct (#148)
Elliot & Frances
Elliot Opp Oak
Ferncroft & Paulson
Florence & Louise
Florence & Tanglewood
Forest & Walnut
Fuller & Day
Gibbs & Sumner
Glen & Beacon
Goddard & Christina
Grove & Cornell
Kenwood & Ashton
Lake & Laurel
Langley & Langley Path
Moffat & Montclair
Opp #263 Nahanton
Pine Ridge & Woodward
Saw Mill Brook & Spiers
Windermere & Commonwealth (S)
Woodland & Hancock (NE)