

UXBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BUS TRANSPORTATION and PAY-TO-RIDE PROGRAM

1. Why do we have to pay a bus fee?

The reason bus fees are necessary is due to the overall rising costs affiliated with transportation. This is an effort to control costs for the future by identifying who actually plans to ride the bus and therefore utilizing the number of buses required more efficiently.

2. Who is eligible for school bus transportation?

In accordance with School Committee policy, students in Kindergarten through Grade 5 are eligible if they live more than one mile from the school they attend. Students in Grades 6 through 8 are eligible for transportation if they live more than 1.5 miles from the school they attend. All students in Grades 9-12 are eligible for transportation. All other students in these grades are considered walkers and are not eligible for busing.

3. Are School Choice students eligible for bus transportation?

No. The Uxbridge Public Schools are not responsible for the transportation of any school choice students. This includes students that may have a day care provider in town.

4. My child is an OLV student and an Uxbridge resident. Do I need to register and/or pay for bus transportation to the OLV facility?

Yes. All children that are eligible for busing are required to register, including OLV students. However, OLV students will need to pay for their busing based on the distance from their home to their neighborhood school (Taft, Whitin, McCloskey), not the distance from their home to the OLV facility.

5. How is the distance determined when calculating mileage from school?

Distance is measured from “portal to portal”, which means by using the shortest drivable route from the roadway in front of a student’s home to the entrance of the school building. Our bus company is currently using a transportation mapping software program called Versatrans. This program is Uxbridge’s official mileage indicator and will be used in all situations.

6. What do I do if I disagree with the mileage measurement?

The Versatrans software program will be used to calculate the mileage determination; however, appeals about the distance calculation for a specific address may be submitted in writing to the Business Office at transportation@uxbridge.k12.ma.us to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

7. Who is eligible for free (town paid) school bus transportation?

Students in grades K-6 who reside 2 or more miles from their school are eligible for free (town paid) transportation. (Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 68).

Free (town paid) transportation will also be provided to students qualifying under the federal guidelines for Free & Reduced Lunch and students with special needs who have “special transportation” by a “special vehicle” indicated in their individualized education plan.

8. What is the fee to ride on a school bus and to receive a bus pass?

All students who are eligible for transportation, but are not eligible for free transportation have the opportunity to purchase a bus pass to ride the school bus. The bus fee for the 2017-2018 school year is \$180 per student, with a family cap of \$360.

9. If I am eligible for free (town paid) school bus transportation, do I need to register and receive a bus pass?

YES! All students, whether free or paid, who will be taking the bus next school year must register for a bus pass in order to be eligible to ride the bus. Even if your child is eligible for free (town paid) bus transportation, an application must be submitted by June 16, 2017 to be guaranteed a seat on the bus.

10. What is the deadline for purchasing a bus pass?

Bus passes must be purchased and paid in full, (installments are not allowed) by 4:00 p.m. on June 16, 2017.

11. What if I miss the deadline to register for busing?

Bus pass registrations and payments submitted after 4:00 p.m. on June 16, 2017 will be put on a waiting list and a \$50 late fee will be assessed.

12. What is the cost if we decide during the school year that we would like to purchase a seat on a bus that services our neighborhood?

The cost will be \$230.00 and will not be prorated. You would only be eligible if there is room on the existing bus.

13. Does my child need a bus pass to get on the bus?

Yes. All students using school bus transportation will be required to carry a bus pass on a daily basis, beginning with the first day of school, even if the student is eligible for free busing. Not doing so may result in exclusion from the bus.

14. When does my child receive their bus pass?

Bus passes can be picked up at the individual schools starting August 21, 2017. Please be sure to check the hours of operation for your school building.

15. What if my child loses their bus pass?

In the event a student loses a bus pass, a duplicate pass may be requested by contacting the Business office at transportation@uxbridge.k12.ma.us. A replacement pass will cost \$5.00. A student who allows another student to use his/her bus pass is subject to having their bus pass privileges revoked.

16. What if my child forgets the bus pass? Will he/she be able to get on the bus?

A bus driver will not refuse transportation to the student if he/she forgets the bus pass. If the student does not have the bus pass, the driver will take the student's name and will notify the building Principal. If the student is not entitled to ride the bus, the parent will be notified and will be responsible for getting the child home at the end of the day.

17. If I am put on a waiting list due to missing the registration deadline, when will I know if my child has a seat on the bus?

Any student who is registered after June 16, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. will be placed on a waiting list. The only exceptions to this are those families who just moved to Uxbridge and registered for school after this deadline and those families who have relocated from one address to another within Uxbridge after the deadline. Students on the waiting list will be placed on buses as soon as routes have been established and you will be contacted by the central office in August.

18. How do I register and pay for my child for bus transportation and to receive a bus pass?

An online School Bus Transportation Registration form and payment process will be made available starting in May on the district website at www.uxbridgeschools.com. This application must be completed for **ALL** students eligible for transportation who will be riding the bus next school year - (this includes free eligible students as well). For students who need to pay a transportation fee, please note your registration will not be considered complete until payment is made in full. No cash will be accepted.

19. What if I cannot afford to pay, can my fee be waived?

Families with financial hardships may request a waiver based on the student's approval in the Free/Reduced Lunch Program. If the student is approved for free or reduced lunch, the student will be eligible for free transportation. If you are approved for Free/Reduced Lunch for the 2016-2017 school year, please indicate so on the bus registration form. The 2016-2017 Free/Reduced Lunch status will be accepted temporarily until the new 2017-2018 Free/Reduced applications have been processed. Once new applications have been processed, the updated status will govern if transportation will remain free for the student, or if the student will be required to pay the transportation fee. If a student who qualified for Free/Reduced Lunch in 2016-2017 no longer qualifies for 2017-2018, the student will be required to pay the transportation fee in full within 30 days of notification.

20. If my child only takes the bus to school in the morning, am I only required to pay half of the fee?

No, the transportation fee will not be pro-rated. The full transportation fee must be paid regardless of how often your child takes the bus. Whether your child only takes the bus in the morning, only takes the bus in the afternoon, or only takes the bus on Tuesdays, the full transportation fee must be paid.

21. If I have already registered and paid for my child to have a seat on the bus, and I change my mind prior to the start of school, can I receive a refund?

Yes. You will receive a partial refund in 60 days. See question 23.

22. If my child stops taking the bus or we move out of town, will I receive a refund for the unused portion of our bus fee?

No, the transportation fee is not refundable and will not be prorated for less than a full year of transportation.

23. Are there any circumstances in which I can get a refund if I sign my student up for the bus, but our situation changes and we no longer need transportation?

Refunds will only be issued on a case by case basis subject to the approval of the Business Manager for requests made one (1) week prior to the start of the school year. A processing fee of \$25 per student with a family cap of \$50 will be deducted from the refund. If a family moves within the town during the school year and eligibility for transportation changes, refunds or fee proration can be discussed on an individual basis.

24. Is my child able to take the bus to/from a daycare? How does the distance of my daycare from the school impact if my transportation is free or if I need to pay the bus fee?

Students will be able to take the bus to/from daycare provided the distance of the daycare from the Taft Early Learning Center and Whitin Elementary School is greater than one (1) mile and greater than 1.5 miles from the McCloskey Middle School. While the distance of the daycare qualifies if that location is eligible for bus transportation, the determination on if the student is eligible for free or paid transportation is based on the student's home residence. For example, if a student lives 1.5 miles from the Taft Early Learning Center, and the daycare is 2.5 miles from the Taft Early Learning Center, the student would be required to pay the bus fee because the home residence is not more than two miles from school. However, if the student lives 2.5 miles from the Taft Early Learning Center but the daycare is 1.5 miles from the Taft Early Learning, the student would be eligible for free transportation because the student's home residence is more than two miles from that school.

25. With the new pay-to-ride program, will bus transportation now be provided for my child from multiple pickup/drop off locations?

No. One address will have to be selected as the pickup/drop off address location. Students must be picked up and dropped off at the same bus stop location five days a week.

Whichever bus stop a student is picked up at in the morning, must be the same bus stop the student is dropped off at in the afternoon. A note requesting the student take the bus

to/from a different bus stop on any given day is not acceptable. If there is a family emergency or a medical situation, parents should notify the building Principal and other transportation arrangements should be made.

26. If I share physical custody of my child, and the other parent also resides in town, will my child be able to ride to both households?

No. Only one location may be used for busing, and that location must be the same every day both morning and afternoon. The purpose of this is to prevent holding two seats on two different buses for the child and also to provide a consistent scenario for safety.

27. My child has a 504 Plan, do I need to register and pay for school bus transportation?

Students who have a 504 plan must register for transportation and are subject to the fee under the same provisions as all other students, unless they have specialized transportation indicated in their 504 plan (i.e. wheelchair van). If specialized transportation is indicated in the 504 plan, the student does not need to register or pay for transportation as arrangements will be set up by the school office.

28. My child has special needs, do I need to register and pay for school bus transportation?

Students with special needs must register for transportation and are subject to the fee under the same provisions as other students, unless they have “specialized transportation” by a “special vehicle” indicated in their Individualized Education Plan (I.E.P). If “specialized transportation” by a “special vehicle” is indicated in the I.E.P., the student does not need to register or pay for transportation as arrangements will be set up by the Special Education Office.

29. If I am paying for my child’s transportation, will my child be picked up at my door?

No. Students are not entitled to street-by-street or door-to-door pickup or drop-off regardless of transportation being free or paid. Bus routes and bus stops are established under the direction of the Superintendent in cooperation with the bus company with many factors in mind, including, but not limited to, bus capacity, bus route length, population density, student grade level, reasonable walking distance to a bus stop, road conditions, etc. Authorized bus stops are located at convenient intervals in places where students may get on and off the bus safely, and are made as safe, fair, and consistent as possible for all.

30. If I live 1.99 miles from school and my neighbor lives 2.0 miles from school and we both have children in grade 3 who wait at the same bus stop, do I have to pay the fee when my neighbor doesn’t, even though the children ride the same bus?

Yes. Only students in Kindergarten through Grade 6 who reside 2 or more miles from the school are eligible for free transportation. Your neighbor’s child would be eligible for free transportation, but your child would not be based on your mileage from the school. However, all children riding the bus would need to register and be given a bus pass.

31. Can my child be picked up at a bus stop outside the two-mile limit so that they can take the bus without paying a fee?

No. The fee is based solely on the location of their residence.

32. Can my child ride home on a different bus?

No. Students may only ride their assigned buses. If there is an emergency or a medical situation, parents should contact their Principal.

33. If my child is not eligible for bus transportation or if I choose not to purchase and register for a bus pass, is the school assuming that my child should walk?

If a student is not eligible for transportation, or if a parent chooses not to purchase and register for a bus pass, it is the parent's responsibility to decide on how to get the child to and from school. The school department is not telling parents that any students have to walk to school. If a parent chooses to have a child walk to school because that situation is what works best for that family that is the decision of the parent. Please remember, it is ultimately the responsibility of the parent to make sure his/her child gets to school safely. The school's responsibility begins once the student arrives on school grounds or embarks on the school bus.

34. Will my child(ren) bus stop, bus driver, or bus number change?

There is a possibility that the bus stop, bus driver, and/or bus number may change. Each year this information is reviewed and changes are made accordingly.

35. Who is responsible for making sure sidewalks are available for my child to walk to school?

Unfortunately, there is no guarantee of sidewalks being available. Not all roads in town have sidewalks, and even when roads do have sidewalks, they are not always accessible. If there is a concern about a sidewalk that is on school-owned property, the concern can be brought to the attention of the Facilities Manager. If there is a concern about a sidewalk that is not on school-owned property, the concern can be brought to the Uxbridge Department of Public Works.

36. Can a student's conduct on the bus result in suspension from the school bus?

Yes. The school bus is an extension of the school itself and the rules regarding behavior are the same as in school. It shall be understood that the right of the pupil to use transportation to and from school is a qualified right dependent on good behavior. Refunds will not be made if a student is suspended from using the bus service.

37. Will the district be hiring more crossing guards?

We will continue to assess the needs for additional crossing guards on a case-by-case basis. The final determination to add additional crossing guards will be made by the Superintendent and the School Committee based on student safety.