

IPSWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Office of the Superintendent

TRANSPORTATION FEES
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why will there be a bus fee?

At their March 17, 2011, meeting the Ipswich School Committee voted to assess a fee for school bus transportation commencing with the 2011-2012 school year. Implementing a transportation fee provides a source of revenue that offsets a portion of the district's annual transportation cost. Revenue raised allows funds currently budgeted for transportation to be spent for other educational purposes.

Who will be charged a fee?

M.G.L. Ch. 71, Sec. 68, states that a school district cannot charge a transportation fee to students in grades kindergarten through six who reside two or more miles away from the school they are entitled to attend or to students who qualify for the Federal Child Nutrition Program (Free and Reduced Lunch). All other students may be charged a fee.

How is distance measured?

- Initially by <https://www.google.com/maps/> to determine distance between home and school. The shortest walking route will be used.
- Disputed distance will be measured from the student's driveway at the street (public way) ending where students are dropped off at school. According to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), when measuring distance, it is allowable for the district to disregard one way streets since a person walking is not obligated to follow the one way restriction.
- Further review, if necessary, can be made by the DESE.

How much is the fee?

\$250 for the first student rider in a family

\$250 for the second student rider in a family

\$500 maximum – family cap

A \$25 discount will be provided to those students who register early, by June 26, 2018.

A \$25 late fee will be assessed on registrations received after August 12, 2018.

Information about registration is found elsewhere in these FAQs.

Will there be any other associated costs?

\$25 charge for returned checks

\$25 charge for late registration (after August 12, 2018)

\$10 charge for lost card replacement

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What forms of payment are acceptable?

Accepted forms of payment at the schools are cash, check or money order.

Online registration is available by going to the Ipswich Public Schools website, clicking on **Make an Online Payment** under **Quick Links**. Choose **City Hall Systems**. An additional fee is charged by the bank for online purchases made with a credit card (see the website for details) and a small transaction fee is assessed for online purchases from your checking account. Additionally, you may pay with a credit card via your **My School Bucks** online payment account, accessed from the school website, but the fee assessed may be higher than through the City Hall Systems online payment system. See the link for details.

Will there be refunds available?

Pro-rated refunds will only be provided to students moving out of the district. There will not be any other refunds available.

Who needs to register?

All students who ride the bus **must** be issued a school bus pass and **must** register in order to be issued a pass.

What types of passes are available?

Only FULL DAY/FULL YEAR passes are available.

Does the pass allow my student to ride any bus?

No. Students will only be allowed to ride the school bus to which they are assigned to be transported from “home to school” and “school to home.” Essentially, the transportation fee buys the student a seat on a designated route. In order to fill the buses to capacity, varying schedules cannot be accommodated. Seats must first be provided to students who travel from the same location to and from school everyday. After the registration process is completed, consideration will be made for those students who would need to be accommodated on two different routes if there is space available. For example, students who travel from home to school and then school to a sitter each afternoon. If two stickers are given, one must be for five days each week in the a.m., and the other must be five days each week in the p.m. No partial week changes in route are allowed. Students will not be allowed to travel home on a friend’s school bus.

What is the timeline for registering?

- Mail-in Registration for fee exempt participants will take place through June 26, 2018. Registration forms will be provided to students the district has determined to be eligible. Parents are asked to return these forms indicating whether or not their student will be using school bus transportation next year.
- Early Registration will be ongoing May 15 through June 26, 2018, at the discounted rate of \$225 per child, with a family cap of \$450.

- Late Registration occurs after August 12th, 2018, at the rate of \$275 per child, which includes a late fee of \$25.
- Week of August 13, bus routes will be determined and students will be assigned their bus.
- Week of August 27, bus routes will be published in the local paper and on our website (www.ipsk12.net).
- First week of school, students should ride into school based upon the published bus routes. A bus pass will be provided to each qualifying student at his or her school during the first week of the 2018-2019 school year.

Can I register late?

Seats will be assigned on a first come/first served basis. If there are seats available after August 12, 2018, the district will do its best to accommodate late registrations. There is an additional charge of \$25 for late registrations.

Will there be a wait list?

Should registrations exceed available seating, there will be a wait list. All registration forms will be dated and time stamped upon arrival to indicate time of registration.

Can I use the bus to transport my children to day care?

The transportation policy indicates that bus passes are issued for transportation for home to school and school to home. In some instances, when the schedule remains constant for every school day, exceptions have been allowed. Partial week schedules are not allowed.

If your child's day care is on your home bus route:

- With the bus company's approval and a written parental permission request filed at your child's school, the bus will pick up and/or drop off your child at a different stop from home for day care reasons.
- This arrangement must be the same every day of the week for all school days.

If your child's day care is on a route other than your home bus route:

- With the bus company's approval and dependent upon space being available on the route, the bus will pick up and/or drop off your child at a different stop from home for day care reasons.
- This service **will not commence until after the bus company and the school district has determined that space is available on the day care route.** It may take over two weeks until routes are established and space availability is determined.
- This arrangement must be the same every day of the week for all school days.

- There is written parental permission on file at your child's school office. Availability will be determined on a first come, first served basis.
- This practice allows for the child to ride on two different routes as long as it is the same route each morning and the same route each afternoon. For example, a child may ride Route 5 from home to school each morning Monday through Friday, and Route 3 from school to day care each afternoon Monday through Friday.

DUE TO AVAILABILITY ON THE BUS ROUTES, THE DISTRICT DOES NOT GUARANTEE THAT DAY CARE TRANSPORTATION REQUESTS WILL BE APPROVED.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you still have questions, you may call or email Janet Higgins, Superintendent's Office, 978-356-2935 ext. 1119, jhiggins@ipsk12.net.