

***These are some of the most common general questions relative to pupil transportation in Ohio.***

- **Q1 What are the state laws for transporting children in my district?**  
A1 Laws for pupil transportation in Ohio may be located in both Ohio Administrative Code and Ohio Revised Code. Because this question is very broad, it might be helpful to know what your specific concern relates to so we can direct you to a specific section or resource.
- **Q2 What does it mean if my district intends to go to ‘state minimum’ transportation?**  
A2 State minimum transportation means a district intends to only transport those students in grades K-8 who reside more than 2.0 miles from school. With state minimum transportation, high school transportation does not have to be provided; however, a shuttle from the high school to a member vocational school is required. In addition, districts would still have an obligation to transport those students with special needs as identified in those students’ IEPs.
- **Q3 If our district reduces service to “state minimum” levels, are we still obligated to provide transportation service to a vocational school site?**  
A3 Districts are obligated by Ohio law to provide a shuttle from the public high school to the site of the vocational school, regardless of what transportation service levels are provided for other students in the district.
- **Q4 If my children are not eligible for school bus transportation, may I pay the district to transport them to and from school?**  
A4 No. Ohio law does not permit school districts to charge pupils for transportation service to and from school.
- **Q5 Is a violation of the *Ohio Pupil Transportation Operation and Safety Rules* also a violation of Ohio law? If yes, what is the penalty?**  
A5 Yes. The penalty for violation of the *Ohio Pupil Transportation Operation and Safety Rules* is a Minor Misdemeanor but may be escalated to a Misdemeanor of the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree. Any law enforcement agency in Ohio has the power to enforce the operation and safety rules.
- **Q6 What is the maximum time a student may ride the school bus in Ohio?**  
A6 There is no identified target number that districts are obligated to meet. It is up to each school district to manage the length of time students ride the bus. Ride times vary by traffic; locality and numerous other criteria—each school district’s ride times can be different.
- **Q7 I do not like the length of time my child rides the bus. How can I be paid to transport my child to school instead?**  
A7 If a school district offers transportation service, but the service is not to the liking of a parent or legal guardian, the law does not permit the district to offer a choice of payment-in-lieu of transportation. Payment-in-lieu of transportation is only offered to a parent for an instance where the district’s Board of Education declares transportation to be impractical.

## **BUS STOPS**

*Typically, questions relating to bus stops, placement, a student's assignment to a particular bus stop must be directed to the transportation department at a school district.*

- **Q1 I cannot see my child's bus stop from the house. Are there state laws that set the standards for bus stop location?**

A1 No law requires a parent to see the bus stop from home. Students in Ohio may be assigned to a bus stop up to one-half mile from their home and we encourage parents to accompany their child to the bus stop whenever possible. This teaches the child safe habits of walking to and from the bus stop and may give the parent peace of mind. Bus stop locations are determined by each district's board of education.

- **Q2 Are sidewalks required for my child to get to his/her bus stop?**

A2 Many students walk alongside of roadways to reach their bus stop and in some instances no sidewalks exist. While we understand this may be of concern in some situations, the Department of Education does not promulgate bus stop placement. Issues relating to where a child's bus stop is located and safety concerns along the way to the bus stop must be addressed with the district in which you reside.

- **Q3 I make my child wait inside of my house until the bus is at the stop. I have heard this is not allowed - is this true?**

A3 Ohio law requires children to be waiting at the bus stop prior to its arrival. Bus drivers count the students at the bus stop before they load and as they get on the bus to ensure all children are safely on board. If students are not waiting at the bus stop the bus driver cannot count them and cannot be certain the students are all safely on board. Waiting at the bus stop before the bus arrives further ensures that no one chases after the bus - this is a very dangerous thing to do. Many districts also instruct their buses to not stop at locations where no students are waiting.

## **NONPUBLIC & COMMUNITY SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION**

*Ohio law requires districts to transport eligible nonpublic and community school students to and from school. Regulations are very specific.*

- **Q1 I transport my child to a nonpublic/community school each day and just learned a program exists for reimbursement. How can I be reimbursed for transporting my child?**

A1 As a parent, you should contact your public school district and request transportation. If it is not practical for them to do so, they will work with you to initiate a process to establish payment-in-lieu of transportation. It is possible a student is not eligible for transportation service; in these instances, the district has no legal obligation to transport or make payment-in-lieu of transportation. Additionally, parents are not afforded the option of being paid for transporting their own child in cases where the service is provided by the district but is not the service parents prefer.

- **Q2 When am I reimbursed for transporting my child if I have been offered and agreed to accept payment-in-lieu of transportation?**

A2 Typically, the district's treasurer will issue a check to parents at the end of the fiscal year. In most school districts, the fiscal year ends on June 30. To obtain a more specific answer, it is best to work directly with your district's treasurer or business manager.

- **Q3 Why is the payment-in-lieu of transportation amount so low?**

A3 The amount is based upon a number obtained through a mathematical formula that identifies a number of elements reported by districts to the Department of Education. The amount paid to parents may be no less than the amount identified by the Department of Education and no more than the amount determined by the department as the average cost of pupil transportation for the previous school year. Payment may be prorated if the time period involved is less than the entire school year.

- **Q4 Who do I contact for assistance with conducting a supervised eligibility timing for a nonpublic or community school?**

A4 These questions must be directed to your regional area coordinator's office. Your area coordinator can assist in setting up a supervised timing, or in explaining the process. To determine which area coordinator's office to contact, please call 877.644.6338 or visit [www.ode.state.oh.us](http://www.ode.state.oh.us)

- **Q5 How do you determine if a nonpublic or community school has been approved by the State Board of Education (SBOE)?**

A5 A nonpublic or community school must have an IRN number in order to be approved by the SBOE. This information may be obtained by going into OEDS and searching for the school. If you are able to locate the school in OEDS, and it has an assigned IRN number, it has been approved by the SBOE.

- **Q6 Is my district required to transport to a nonpublic or community school on days when the public school is not in session?**

A6 Yes. The Ohio Attorney General has opined on this issue (OAG 83-096) and districts are required to provide service on days when they are not in session. This does not obligate the district to run a full set of routes. Times may differ, and routes may be consolidated in the interest of efficiency. Communication with nonpublic and community school parents is important on days when routes may be run differently, and when times may vary.