

## **BHS South Brookline Optional School Bus Service Frequently Asked Questions**

Last Updated: 5/5/23

### **Who is eligible for service?**

The School Committee Transportation Policy states that students who reside more than 1.5 miles away from their enrolled school will be eligible for bus service. Registration for this service will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

### **How can I see if my residence meets the 1.5-mile distance requirement?**

You can calculate the walking distance between your residence and your school via Google Maps. The starting point address will be your home, and the destination address is 115 Greenough Street (main building of Brookline High School.)

### **What is the maximum distance the bus stop can be from my property?**

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education states that distance should not exceed one mile between the bus stop and the student's property. Most PSB bus stops are less than .34 miles from a student's home property line.

### **What is the fee for this service? Is it roundtrip?**

\$400 per student. The fee covers a seat on a school bus to and from school at a prescribed time.

### **Who approved the \$400 fee?**

The School Committee approved the fee, and the Annual Town Meeting approved the budget request for the 2020 -21 school year. It is expected to be approved for the 2023-24 school year at the same price.

### **Is there Financial Assistance for this program?**

Yes, please go to <https://www.brookline.k12.ma.us/FinancialAssistance>

### **What are the times my child can take the bus?**

The pickup and drop off times will be determined after registration closes and we know how many students will be riding the bus. Bus stops are expected to cover those living in a .34 mile radius or less. There are two arrival times and dismissal times for this program.

Early AM Arrival - 7:00 – 7:05 AM (before Z Block)

AM arrival – 7:45-8 AM

Regular Departure – 3PM

Late PM Departure – 4 PM

### **Is there an option to purchase AM or PM only service at a reduced price?**

Yes, provided that your child has a “ride share partner” that is going to purchase/register for the other half of the round trip service. Both the AM and PM seat must be registered for the ride share to be approved. There will be a field in the online registration process for you to name the “ride share partner.” As long as both parties register and are approved, we can accommodate consistent one-way ride shares.

### **How many buses will there be for south Brookline?**

The plan for the fourth year of this optional program is to continue utilizing two dedicated buses, with each bus making two runs for the arrival and departure times described above.

### **Why do the buses make two trips?**

This is the most efficient way to operate the bus service under the terms of the bus contract. In short, we have a set price to get the bus on the road, and that price is the same if we operate the bus for 90 minutes or up to four hours. So, having the seat filled two times by paying users helped make the cost of the program, initially, acceptable to the School Committee and Annual Town Meeting for approval.

### **Will there be a later bus, one that runs after 5 PM, to south Brookline?**

The 4:10 PM bus will be the last bus run from BHS South Brookline.

### **When does registration for 23-24 open and close?**

Registration will open 5/15 and close 5/26

### **When will I find out if I get my requested arrival and departure preferences?**

Should PSB receive more requests than there are seats available for a particular time slot, we will have a lottery to determine placement. We expect to be able to give notice

about bus trip preferences the week of TBD. Specific routes and bus stop times are expected to be determined by Aug 21, 2023

**If a lottery is held, will we be notified?**

If a lottery is needed, it will be held following the closure of the registration period. We will notify families after the lottery is held of the results.

**Will I be able to register my child for the bus after the registration period is closed?**

Yes, though placement is not guaranteed and first preference of ride time is less likely based on the first year of the service. In prior years, the regular AM arrival time was the most popular preference and did fill up with the initial registration.

**Will my child be able to change the arrival or departure runs as needed?**

Generally, students are not allowed to change their arrival or departure runs. While we may be able to offer flexibility in the regular departure or late departure bus, we ask that students ride at their assigned time until further notice.

**What if the (lottery) assignment time, or both times, do not work for our student and family, may I get a refund?**

Yes, families are given an opportunity to withdraw from the program before service begins. Withdrawal deadline will be determined before the start of the 23/24 school year

**What if my child does not get a seat on either bus, will a third bus be added? Will there be a waitlist? Or will I get a refund?**

Yes, if we are unable to assign your child to a bus, PSB will refund your payment. There is no plan to add a third bus at this time. We will keep a waitlist for any folks registered that did not get placed on the bus. If your child is not riding the bus, PSB will refund the payment.

**Will the former AM Courtesy bus operate for 2021-22 school year?**

No, the AM courtesy bus will not be available.

**Why is there no longer an AM Courtesy bus for 2021-22 school year?** As the student population continues to grow, PSB cannot guarantee this service will continue in future years. Nor can we guarantee a seat for everyone that could show up for a seat. As part of the discussion at Town Meeting, the courtesy bus service will be replaced with a more equitably available and roundtrip service.

### **Will the MBTA (51) Bus operate for BHS departure next school year?**

The MBTA determines if they will provide this service or not. Space is limited on this bus as well and complaints about consistency regarding departure time and evening showing up have been raised. You may call the MBTA customer support line at 617-222-3200.

### **What if I do not sign my child up for the bus?**

The bus fee is optional. Parents are responsible for getting their students to and from school. Neighborhood carpools, walking, drop off, MBTA and the AM courtesy bus are how BHS students from South Brookline have traveled to BHS in the past.

### **How will students be identified to ride the bus?**

Students will be given a color-coded bus pass to show the driver when entering the bus. Bus drivers will also have a list of stops and students assigned at each stop.

### **What makes you believe people want this service and are willing to pay \$400 per student for it?**

BHS Survey Data – <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-HLJFGSDR8/>

Elementary Survey Data - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-FSVSQSDR8/>

Transportation Board and Public Transportation Advisory Council [letters of support](#) for creating this program are linked on the PSB Transportation page.

### **Who do I contact if I have trouble registering online with MySchoolBucks?** You can call the parent support line at 855.832.5226.

You can email the [parentsupport@myschoolbucks.com](mailto:parentsupport@myschoolbucks.com)

### **Can my child bring an instrument or athletic equipment on the bus?**

Yes, provided case or bag fits in the child's lap and does not take up a seat reserved for another student. Note: The early AM bus was not full in prior years and some flexibility to ride on that bus may be an option to bring that instrument or equipment to school. Please contact Evan Schwatz, Transportation Coordinator, to request availability.'

### **Where and when can my child pick up the bus pass?**

BHS Front Office, Bus Passes will be made available before the first day of school.

**What if my child loses her/his bus pass? Who do I contact about issues with the bus service or bus driver?**

Contact Evan Schwartz, Transportation Coordinator, to get a replacement pass, at 617-730-2452.

**Who should I, or my child report problems with student behavior on the bus?** Please report any behavioral problems to the Dean's Office at BHS.

**Will more information be added to this Q&A?**

Yes, please check and see if the date at the top has changed since 5/18/21

**Are METCO or Materials Fees students eligible for this service?**

Any student that is enrolled in Brookline Public Schools through METCO or Materials Fees is not eligible for this service.

**Am I able to pay by check?**

Checks can be made payable to the Public Schools of Brookline, Please include your child's name along with South Brookline Bus in the memo. They can be dropped off to Evan Schwartz, 333 Washington St, 5th Floor, Brookline MA, 02445

**What is the bus schedule on exam days?**

The bus will run on a normal schedule on exam days.

**Will GPS tracking be available?**

The PSB transportation coordinator will have access to GPS tracking of the buses.

**What happens if we again have no school next year for extended periods?**

Unfortunately those are circumstances that are unforeseen. If we do experience another closure ,we will be better prepared for it.