



BELMONT PUBLIC SCHOOLS TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

2023-2024 School Year



CONTEXT AND PURPOSES

Context

- The new Belmont Middle School (BMS) will open for the new school year in September 2023 for students in grades 7 and 8, resulting in changes to the transportation program for students in grades 5-8.
- The Belmont School Committee has voted to reduce the bus fee, beginning in the 2023-2024 school year.

The purposes of this presentation are:

- To provide an update on changes to the transportation program for the 2023-2024 school year for grades 5-8 resulting from the opening of the new Belmont Middle School.
- To provide an overview of the transportation program for all grades.
- To notify families of the newly reduced fee for all students.

PROGRAM POINTS

- Service Area
- Student Drop-Off: Grades 5-8
- Registration
- Bus Fee and Ridership
- Payment Options
- Fee Waivers and Refunds
- Bus Pass Protocol
- Bus Routes & Service Exceptions
- Lost and Found
- Conduct
- Additional Information

SERVICE AREA

- Per Massachusetts General Law, regular day bus transportation is provided for all students in grades K-6 residing over 2.0 miles from their assigned school at no charge.
 - Mileage is determined via Google Maps using the most commonly traveled route, the shortest distance from the home address to the school address.
- Busing is available for students in grades K-4 placed outside their home district if the address is greater than 2.0 miles from the assigned school.
- For all students (grades K-12), busing is available for some but not all areas where students reside less than 2.0 miles from school based on proximity and resources.
- Please review the 2023-2024 routes after July 15th to determine if busing is available in your neighborhood at <https://www.belmont.k12.ma.us/bps/bus-faq>
- Parents are responsible for students' transportation if a request is made and granted to attend an elementary school outside the assigned district based on home address.
- **Transportation is not provided for students in grades 7-12 residing in the Winn Brook neighborhood based on proximity to the Belmont Middle and High School, consistent with the program's previously established delivery area and our current level of service.**

STUDENT DROP-OFF: GRADES 5-8

- For the 2023-2024 school year, students in grades 5-8 will ride the same buses together with pick-up and drop-off at their respective schools, daily:
 - **Mornings**
 - Buses will arrive first at Chenery – now called Chenery Upper Elementary School (CUE).
 - Students in grades 5 & 6 will exit the bus and enter the CUE.
 - Students in grades 7 & 8 will remain on the bus for drop-off at BMS
 - **Afternoons**
 - Buses will arrive at the CUE and pick-up students in grades 5 & 6.
 - Buses will then arrive at BMS to pick-up students in grades 7 & 8.
- These changes are for the 2023-2024 school year. Additional changes to the program are likely needed for the 2024-2025 school year to accommodate grade 4 students attending the CUE.
- Transportation ***is not*** provided for students in grades 7-12 residing in the Winn Brook neighborhood based on proximity to the Belmont Middle and High School, consistent with the program’s previously established delivery area and our current level of service.
 - Buses to the Winn Brook area will *only* pick-up and drop-off students in grades 5 & 6, and will only transport students to and from the CUE.

REGISTRATION

- Annual online registration opens on **Monday, June 5th**. Students must complete registration **each year** as registrations expire at the end of each school year.
- A separate online registration must be completed for each student in the home who would like to ride the bus.
- Please white list all emails from the Belmont Public Schools to ensure receipt of all communications.
- Registration closes on **July 15th, annually**. Seating is **not** guaranteed after the close of registration. Students may be placed on a waitlist until seating becomes available.

IMPORTANT!



Exceptions to move students to neighboring buses **cannot** be made due to incomplete registration.



Due to high enrollment on buses in some areas, students must ride their assigned bus *only*.



Student passes will be checked. Any student riding the wrong bus will be removed and directed to the correct bus.

BUS FEE AND RIDERSHIP

The School Committee voted to decrease the transportation fee beginning in the 2023-2024 school year. The reduced fee of **\$450** provides the following:

- A seat on the bus for the full school year.
- Elimination of partial ridership options (AM only / PM only) based on the reduced fee and revised program.
- Students with a seat may ride in the AM, PM, or both based on schedules and needs throughout the year.
- Parents no longer need to contact the Business Office to change their child's ridership option at any time during the school year.
- Parents should notify the Business Office via email if students no longer require the bus. (busing@belmontschools.net) This ensures completion of the change as there maybe other students in need of a seat on their neighborhood bus.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Bus fees may be paid via the following methods:

MySchoolBucks online payment portal

- Log in to your account.
- Register for your child MySchoolBucks Transportation store.
- Register for each child in your household is completed separately. Choose the correct option for your registration:
 - \$450
 - I am applying for a waiver
 - Greater than 2.0 miles to school (\$0)
- Complete your payment for the school year for each child in your household.
- Link: <https://www.myschoolbucks.com>

Fee Waiver Payments

- Apply for your fee waiver via the Fee Waiver Application found on our website:
<https://www.belmont.k12.ma.us/bps/Home/Fees/Fee-Waiver-Information>
- Upon receipt of your determination letter, log into you MySchoolBucks account and click on the **Transportation** store.
- Make your payment via the **Fee Waiver Payment – Student Transportation 2023-2024** link.

FEE WAIVERS AND REFUNDS

- Fee waivers are granted based on household size and income. Detailed information including the waiver thresholds and Fee Waiver Form are available on our website:

<https://www.belmont.k12.ma.us/bps/Home/Fees/Fee-Waiver-Information>

- Determination letters will be sent to parents/guardians once waiver requests and supporting documentation are reviewed. Please **do not** make payments through MySchoolBucks until your determination letter containing the amount due is received.
- Refunds will *only* be granted if students move out of the district. Parents should notify the Business Office via email (busing@belmontschools.net) to cancel their registration and request a prorated refund.

BUS PASS PROTOCOL

The following protocols are in place as a measure of fairness and safety for all students:

- Bus passes must be carried at all times for students in grades 5-12.
 - Students in grades K-4 are not issued bus passes
- Bus passes will be checked by drivers during the **AM** route for students in grades 5-8 to ensure buses remain capacity-compliant.
- Students may **only** ride their assigned bus. Any students found riding the incorrect bus will not be allowed to ride until their bus assignment is verified with the Business Office.
- As a reminder, no student may ride the bus at any time if they are not registered with an issued bus pass.
- In the event of a lost bus pass, please notify the Business Office for a replacement via email (busing@belmontschools.net). Students who lose their pass and do not request a replacement are not permitted to ride the bus until a replacement pass is issued and received by the student.

BUS ROUTES AND SERVICE EXCEPTIONS

BUS ROUTES

- Bus routes are listed on our website:
<https://www.belmont.k12.ma.us/bps/bus-faq>
- Start times are listed on each route. Students and parents must estimate arrival time at their chosen stop based on the route's start time and the stop's placement on the route.
- Students may board and exit the bus via any stop on their assigned route.
- Students may only ride their assigned bus.
- All students in grades K-2 must be met by a known designated adult for PM drop-off at their chosen stop.
- Any student remaining on the bus at the end of the afternoon route will be returned to their school.

SERVICE EXCEPTIONS

Delays due to inclement weather

- In the event of a delayed start time due to inclement weather, buses will execute routes based on the delay.

Changes to academic schedules

- Bus service remains the same during changes to academic schedules such as MCAS testing, midterms, and finals.

LOST AND FOUND

The following protocols are in place for all items left on buses during the day:

AM Route – the drivers will hold all items left behind on the AM routes until the afternoon routes are executed. This allows students to retrieve their belongings on the PM ride.

PM Route – the drivers will hold all items left behind on the PM routes until the next day. This allows students to retrieve their items in the morning or afternoon based on their ridership schedule.

Friday PM Route – the drivers will hold all items left on the bus Friday afternoon until Monday morning allowing students to retrieve items on the morning route.

Parents may contact the Main Office of their child's school to verify the return of any lost items. Drivers may return high-value items (cell phones, technology) to the office rather than hold them on the bus throughout the day.

CONDUCT

- Students are expected to conduct themselves in the same manner they do in the classroom. Be courteous at all times to the driver, fellow students, and others.
- Inappropriate language is not acceptable on the bus at any time.
- Students **may not** stand on the bus at any time.
- Do not throw items on the bus or out of the windows.
- Pay attention to the driver's instructions. Do not distract the driver by yelling or acting out during the ride.
- Treat bus equipment with care. Damaged equipment will be paid for by the offender.
- Smoking, lit matches, vaping, and chewing tobacco are not allowed.
- No food, drink, or gum may be opened or consumed on the bus.

Students who act inappropriately or violate any of the above protocols are subject to temporary or permanent loss of ridership privileges based on the nature of the offense.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you would like more information about the Belmont Public Schools transportation program, you may visit our website at: <https://www.belmont.k12.ma.us/bps/bus-faq>

Useful Links

- **My School Bucks:** www.myschoolbucks.com
- **Fee Waivers:** www.belmont.k12.ma.us – [Fee Waiver Information](#)
- **Bus Routes:** [Bus Routes 2023-2024](#)
- **Contact:** [Busing Information](#)