Guide for the Perplexed:

Secrets of the Short Hills Campus Car Pool System Explained

Once upon a time, children walked to school (uphill both ways, through the snow). However, school was far away and traffic was heavy, so school systems began sending buses. Long yellow lines of buses would snake past the school entrance each morning to discharge their happy loads, and line up each afternoon to receive them back again. But alas, the bus became an endangered species, and fewer returned each September along their traditional migration patterns. A new breed was emerging, and gradually cars of every shape and size began to replace the buses in the line each day. Eventually, there were so few buses competing for space in the front that they were herded to the back entrance of the school to protect them from the incursion of a growing number of private vehicles. These days only a few brave yellow buses remain, hiding quietly in the back each day in a sanctuary that remains protected from these newer creatures. And in the front, where once 25 or more of these great beasts roamed freely, none remain, replaced by the 175 cars that gather daily in grumbling formation, creating the serpentine tangle we have come to know as The Car Pool Line.

Each fall, as a new generation of schoolchildren learns how to find homerooms, the gym, and the back athletic field, their parents and other caregivers are struggling to understand the mystical code of the car pool line. This guide, offered by fellow carpooling parents, is designed to answer your questions about the car pool line so that everyone can get in and get out as smoothly, efficiently, and—most importantly—as safely as possible. Pick-up and drop-off procedures have been developed in consultation with the Millburn Fire and Police Departments, which monitor our compliance to ensure safety, minimize congestion, and allow for access by emergency vehicles. Your grace, good humor, and patience in complying with these procedures are sincerely appreciated.

Morning Drop-Off

Children coming to school by car should be driven to the drop-off area surrounding the front entrance on Country Day Drive. Drop-off begins each day at 7:50 a.m. Children who are not part of the Early Care Program* are not allowed to be dropped off until the 7:50 a.m. bell rings. *The drop-off area consists of the entire sidewalk in front of the school, from the bridge to the edge of the gym.* It can accommodate eight or more cars at once if drivers at the front of the

line pull all the way up to the bridge, and drivers behind them discharge passengers all along the available sidewalk. Mr. Corvino and/or Mrs. Gibson will be there during drop-off to greet the children. *Please do not insist upon dropping your child off directly in front of the entrance.* Also, note that the driveway circle in front of the entrance is one way; enter the circle over the right hand bridge, exit over the bridge closest to the school building. This will put the passenger side of your car next to the sidewalk. *Children must exit vehicles from the passenger side only.*

Once you have discharged your passengers, please wait until the vehicles in front of you have finished unloading and begun to move before you exit the drop-off area. In the interest of safety, *please* do not pass in the car pool line. In addition, please be aware of pedestrian traffic on the bridge and crossing the driveway from the parking lot.

Children should be in school by 8:10 a.m. each morning; after 8:15 a.m., children may no longer be dropped off in front, but must be escorted to the front office and signed in. Please note that during school hours, *there is no parking allowed in the drop-off area for any reason—including signing in a late child*— by order of the Millburn Fire Department. You must park in the lot, and walk your child to the office.

---

*For information about Early Care and After Care, please check the Pingry web site www.pingry.org or call the Lower School Office.

Afternoon Pick-Up

Dismissal

School is dismissed each afternoon at 3:10 p.m. Pick-up begins at approximately 3:15 p.m. Students are required to remain in the designated drop-off/pick-up area surrounding the front entrance during pick-up. Faculty members are on hand each afternoon to oversee pick-up and help children get into their vehicles. Children may be picked up at any time between 3:15 p.m. and 3:35 p.m., using the procedures outlined below.

The Pick-up Area

There are five pick-up spots (numbered 1-5) along the sidewalk at the front entrance of the school. As you approach the pick-up area, a teacher will be on hand to announce your car pool name and assign you a number (again, 1-5). As the cars ahead of you pull out, you can pull up to the designated pick-up spot, where your child(ren) will meet you.

To aid in moving the car pool line along as efficiently as possible, please do the following:

- Make a large (8”x 10” or bigger) sign with your name on it, and hold it out the window to show the teacher. This will help her/him identify families quickly and give children more time to walk to the assigned pick-up spot.
- Unlock all doors, open trunks or hatchbacks if necessary, and make sure seats are cleared and ready to accommodate passengers before approaching the pick-up spot.

- If your child has not come to the pick-up spot when called, please do not continue to wait, nor exit your vehicle to look for him/her. Simply drive around the inner circle again, and have the announcing teacher call your name once more. This takes only a short time, and keeps the car pool line moving.
- If a child is having difficulty fastening a seat belt, or getting settled in the car, please slowly exit the drop-off area, cross the bridge, and pull over to the side of the driveway to help him or her. This will allow other cars to exit the pick-up area safely.

The Car Pool Line

Lining up for dismissal before 2:55 p.m. is discouraged. Many areas in the front of the school, including a small basketball court adjacent to the parking lot, foursquare and punch ball areas by the gym entrance, and the lawn to the left of the bridge, are used by the older grades during recesses. In addition, the front circle is blocked off daily until just before dismissal.

In order to accommodate as many cars as possible on the property, and reduce congestion on neighborhood streets, drivers are asked to line up in a queue that wraps through the parking lot, then extends up the driveway onto Country Day Drive and around to the left onto Briarwood Road. *Entering Briarwood Road from White Oak Ridge Road is not recommended during the peak portion of afternoon dismissal (3:00-3:20 p.m.).* This route requires you to make a U-turn on Briarwood in order to join the car pool line. If you are coming from Parsonage Hill Road, turn instead onto Long Hill Road, then make a right onto Briarwood; if you are coming from White Oak Ridge Road, turn right onto Long Hill Road, then make a left onto Briarwood. You will then be driving westbound in the same direction as the car pool line, and no U-turns will be necessary.

Good Neighbor Tips

Many private homes adjoin The Pingry School property, and Pingry tries hard to be a good neighbor. Car pool drivers can help in this endeavor through the following:

- Do not block driveways at any time while in the carpool line
- Avoid mid-block U-turns and turning in neighbors' driveways
- Turn off car engines if dismissal has not yet begun
- Do not block the intersection of Country Day Drive and Briarwood Road
- Do not line up on the east-bound side of Briarwood in an attempt a left turn onto Country Day Drive to join the car pool line

Safety is the Primary Concern

Life gets complicated. Schedules get crazy. It is tempting at times to seek shortcuts. Please keep in mind that the main reason for an organized dismissal procedure is to ensure our children's safety. Vehicles must enter and exit in an organized way, and pedestrian traffic along the narrow bridges and across the school's driveway must be kept to a minimum. *When parents drive around the car pool line, or park along the driveway and walk up to meet a child, they are creating a hazard for themselves and others.* We recognize that special circumstances are, upon occasion, unavoidable. In such a situation, we urge parents to use good judgment,

and carefully consider not only their own convenience, but the safety, well being, and comfort of those around them.

Early Pick-ups
Picking up a child before regular dismissal requires permission from Mr. Corvino or Mrs. Gibson in advance. Please park in the lot (*not along the driveway*), and walk to the school entrance. Check in at the front office to sign out your child; your child will be brought to the office to meet you. You can then exit before regular car pool dismissal begins. Again, walking in to pick up your child after the car pool line has begun creates a hazard.

Final Thoughts

The Back Entrance
Please remember that the back circle is solely for buses and preregistered large car pool vehicles. No other pick-ups should be made at the back entrance. Passenger cars in the back circle create a serious hazard for children getting on and off the school buses.

A Timesaving Tip
Avoid the rush. Cars arriving by 8:00 a.m. in the morning spend less time in drop-off than cars arriving at 8:10 a.m. In the afternoon, drivers who get into the car pool line at 3:00 p.m. will spend approximately 25 minutes picking up their children, while drivers who come at 3:30 p.m. will spend about 5 minutes (often less) accomplishing the same task.

We look forward with you to a safe, productive, and fun year. If you have questions about car pool, please call feel free to call one of the PSPA Lower School Representatives.