Are You New Here?

2020 New Member Handbook

Meriden Senior Center
22 West Main Street
Meriden, CT 06451
203-237-0066

Our mission is to provide seniors in the Meriden community with a safe and welcoming space, where they can gain access to information and programs that enhance their quality of life.

Welcome to the Meriden Senior Center! This handbook is a guide to our Center's guidelines and policies for all participants. If you have any questions regarding anything in this manual, please do not hesitate to ask a staff person.

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I. Hours of Operation

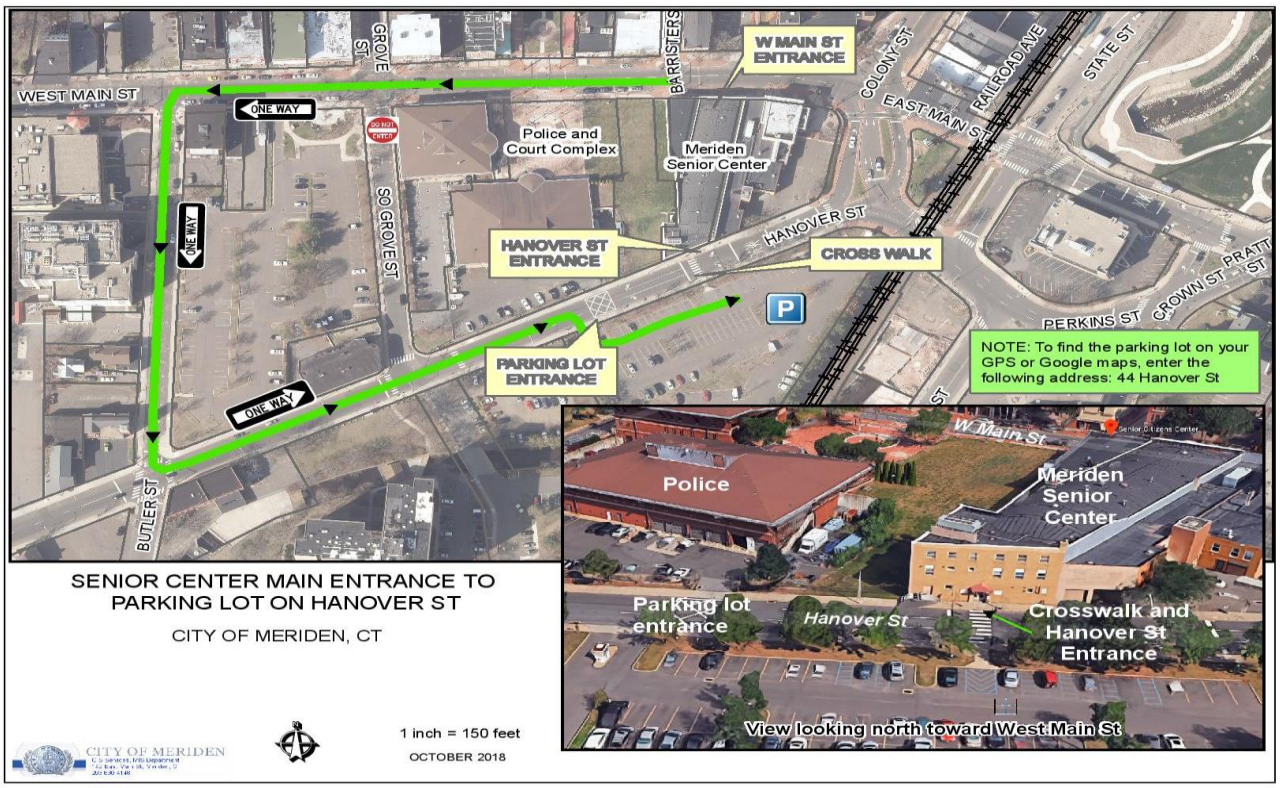
The Meriden Senior Center welcomes its members Monday through Friday, 8:30am till 4:00pm. The Main Office and Mini-bus Transportation Office begin taking calls at 8:00am. We are closed on all major holidays, including:

Martin Luther King Day
Presidents Day
Good Friday
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Columbus Day
Veterans Day
Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Day
New Year's Day

Participants are asked to leave the building no later than 3:50pm. Occasional evening and weekend programs may be scheduled.

II. Parking

Parking, including handicapped parking spaces, is available on a first-come, first-served basis. The main parking lot is located at 44 Hanover Street, behind and across the street from the Senior Center.



In the event that spaces are not available, members and visitors are encouraged to park in open, unmarked spots within the Church Street Parking Garage, located at 60 Church Street. Tickets from lower-level parking can be validated at the Front Desk in the Main Office.

III. Senior Center Closures

The Senior Center follows the Meriden Board of Education closure/delay policy. If Meriden schools are closed due to snow, the Senior Center will be open, but we will **not** offer any programs, transportation, or lunch. In this event, "Meriden Senior Center - No Activities" and "Meriden Senior Center - No Transportation" will be posted on WFSB Channel 3. Updates and information will also be available on the city website – www.meridenct.gov - during events that require prolonged closure of our center.

IV. Senior Center Membership

Those wishing to use Senior Center services must register as members. Meriden residents age 55+ can join the Senior Center and participate in activities on a drop-in basis. Current participants who move outside of Meriden may continue to participate in all activities, but will **not** be eligible for mini-bus transportation or social services. Non-residents will be charged an annual fee of $20.00 in January.

Applications for membership are available in the front office. There is currently no charge for Meriden residents to become a member at the Meriden Senior Center. Membership must be renewed and updated on a bi-annual basis during the month of January. On occasion, the Senior Center may have events where people under 55 years old are invited; this invitation will be included in program announcements.

Upon registration, new members will be issued a picture identification card for use at the Meriden Senior Center. Only participants with current registrations are allowed to partake in Senior Center activities. Participants must sign in at the front or back kiosk upon entering the Senior Center and before participating in any activities. This allows staff to track the number of seniors we serve and which classes they enjoy attending.

V. SchedulesPlus

In 2017, the Meriden Senior Center integrated SchedulesPlus software into its services. Member's main interaction with this software comes from signing in at the entrance kiosks when they visit the Senior Center. Staff, though, use the SchedulesPlus program to register members for programs, store contact information for members, create picture identification for members to use at sign-in, schedule Senior Transportation, and much more.

Upon registration to the Meriden Senior Center, staff in the front office will need the following information from residents looking to become members: a photo identification card, name, address, telephone number, date of birth, emergency contact information, and if the resident has any medical conditions that may affect their participation in Senior Center activities. This information is all stored in the SchedulesPlus software and maintained with strict privacy procedures.

SchedulesPlus also provides the Senior Center Administrator with vital statistics about attendance for activities, new member registrations, and more so that the Senior Center can continue to provide relevant, fun, and accessible programs, classes, and activities for its members.

VI. Eligibility and Participation

The Senior Center is accessible for people with disabilities. Our programs are designed for Meriden residents age 55+.

The Senior Center Administrator and Department of Health staff reserves the right to assess the ability of potential members to safely and appropriately use the Senior Center. This is to ensure the health and well-being of all attendees.

Members must be independent and oriented; Senior Center staff members are not allowed to provide hands-on assistance.

At the discretion of the Senior Center Administrator, a member may be required to have a home health aide, companion, escort, or family member accompany them for his/her participation in Center activities and/or utilization of mini-bus transportation services.

Members requiring an aide or companion must be accompanied by the aide/companion at all times while at the Center. In the event the aide or companion does not provide adequate assistance or leaves the member at the Center unassisted, Senior Center staff will immediately contact the emergency contact person on file. If the contact person is unavailable, the Meriden Police Department may be called.

Individuals with challenges that cannot be managed by their aide or companion will be excluded from participation. These challenges include, but are not limited to:

Wandering	Chronic unmanageable incontinence
Prescription drug monitoring	Chronic contagious disease
Drug or alcohol abuse	Abusive or harmful behavior
Regularly occurring seizures	Cognitive impairment
Poor personal hygiene	Behavioral health problems
Inability to feed oneself	Inability to toilet independently

Prior to exclusion for any of the prior reasons, the Senior Center Administrator shall meet with the individual and/or their family to express his/her concerns and possible solutions. A plan of action will be agreed to by all parties; failure to comply will result in exclusion from the Senior Center and cancellation of member privileges.

VII. Privacy Policy

The Meriden Senior Center has implemented procedures to protect your privacy in accordance with Connecticut State Statutes. All records are confidential and maintained accordingly.

VIII. Arriving at the Senior Center

It is required that all Senior Center members visiting for any activity sign in at one of the sign-in kiosks at both Center entrances with their picture identification card. Members will then select the programs or activities they would like to attend that day on the “Check-In” page. If members are unsure of how they intend to participate for the day, they may simply select “General Attendance.” Senior Volunteers must sign in upon arrival and indicate how many hours they plan to volunteer for the day, as well as where those hours will occur.

IX. Copy, Fax Machines, Phone, and Public Use of Computers

a. Copies are available, with staff assistance, for $.10 a page.
b. Faxing is permitted by authorized staff **only** for the member at a cost of $.25/page.

c. Persons using the Senior Center's printers are to use computer paper only in the printers at a cost of $.10/page. Color printing is prohibited.
d. Pornographic images, whether obscene or not, may not be displayed on PCs or laptops in the Senior Center. Illegal use of the Senior Center's computers will be reported to enforcement authorities.
e. There is **no public phone** in the Senior Center.

X. Computer Lab Use

The Senior Center operates a computer lab for members to browse the web, conduct personal business, and otherwise enjoy at their leisure. Members wishing to use the computer lab will be issued a copy of the Senior Center's Computer Use Policy, which they will sign and date before receiving their computer login code. This code must be used every time the computer is accessed.

XI. Health and Safety

As a division of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Meriden Senior Center takes the health, safety, and well-being of our participants very seriously. Senior Center staff are not responsible for any member entering or leaving the Center with other members or alone. Staff is also not responsible for any belongings or items that a patron brings into our Center.

Safety, Health, and Well-Being

In the interest of maintaining the health, safety, and well-being of members, visitors, and staff, please remember the following:

a. **Weapons:** Weapons are not allowed inside the Meriden Senior Center, or anywhere on its campus. Any visitor or member found in the possession of a weapon will be asked to leave the Senior Center. Repeat incidences will be reported to the Meriden Police Department, and membership privileges may be revoked. Weapons includes, but is not limited to, any firearm or other object that could be used to inflict harm upon another person.
b. **Tobacco:** The Meriden Senior Center is a tobacco-free facility. No tobacco use is allowed inside or outside the front door of our building, or on our mini-buses. This includes use of cigarettes, E-cigarettes, chewing tobacco, snuff, cigars, cigarillos, or any other tobacco product. Smoking is permitted in a designated area on the Hanover Street side of the building. In order to maintain a litter-free campus, we ask that cigarette and cigar butts be properly disposed of in designated containers.
c. **Alcohol:** Alcoholic beverages are not permitted within the building or on the grounds. If a participant is found in possession of alcohol or under the influence of alcohol while

inside the Senior Center, the Meriden Police will be called and the individual will be banned from the Center.

d. **Hand Sanitizer:** Participants are encouraged to use the waterless hand sanitizers located throughout the facility. If you are ill or have a fever, seek medical attention and please remain at home.
e. **Pets:** Pets are not permitted inside the facility, except during approved programs or with prior written consent from the Senior Affairs Administrator. Service animals are only allowed with proper documentation.
f. **Food and Beverages:** The Meriden Senior Center is a licensed food service establishment. For the safety of all participants and staff, and to maintain compliance with Federal, State, and Local health codes, the following rules have been established:
    - **I.** Only staff members and registered food service volunteers are allowed in the kitchen area.
    - **II.** Participants are not allowed to remove food that is prepared **or** served in the Center from the building.
    - **III.** A staff member with QFO (Qualified Food Operator) certification oversees all food service operations and enforcement of regulations.
g. **Fire Drills:** Fire drills are conducted periodically. Everyone that is in the building when the fire alarm goes off <u>must</u> leave the building. Authorized personnel will deem when it is appropriate to re-enter the building after a fire drill. In the event of an emergency, members should exit to the Hanover Street parking lot or onto West Main Street, heading toward the courthouse.
h. **Emergency Contact Information:** All Senior Center participants must have current emergency contact information on file in the office. In the event that emergency contact information changes, it is up to the participant to notify the main office within 48 hours so that files may be updated.

XII. <u>Emergencies</u>

In the event of an emergency, staff will call 911 and notify the member's emergency contact on file. Under no circumstances will a staff member transport anyone requiring medical assistance to a hospital or doctor's office for emergency situations.

a. The Senior Center has 2 AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators) on site. Staff are certified in American Heart Association HeartSaver basic first aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) every 2 years.
b. Senior Center participants should not provide any medical assistance to those with a medical emergency or that have fallen. Members must alert staff immediately if someone is having a medical emergency or has fallen.
c. Members who are fully conscious may refuse medical assistance only after emergency personnel have arrived and their medical condition has been evaluated. If emergency personnel recommends further treatment and the member refuses to cooperate, a waiver must be signed. Members who refuse the recommended medical attention

must immediately vacate the premises and will not be transported by the Senior Center mini-buses or any staff member. The member cannot stay at the Center for the remainder of the day; the emergency contact person or designee will be responsible for transporting the participant and ensuring their well-being.

XIII. Personal Conduct

The City of Meriden enforces a zero tolerance policy of harassment and violence in all public buildings. Participants or the general public who do not adhere to this policy will be asked to leave the premises immediately. If the violator refuses to leave the premises, the Meriden Police will be called. All incidents of harassment of staff will be reported to the Personnel Department. Persons creating a serious disruption may be asked to leave the Senior Center or have their membership suspended at the discretion of the Senior Affairs Administrator in consultation with the Director of the Health and Human Services Department. If the person does not leave voluntarily, staff will contact the Meriden Police Department.

For the health, safety, and well-being of all participants and staff, the Senior Center Administrator may exclude or suspend the membership of any person who does not follow the personal conduct policies. Actions leading to exclusion include, but are not limited to:

a. intentionally damaging equipment or damaging property of the Senior Center, including writing on walls, doors, etc.,
b. repeatedly and intentionally disobeying rules and regulations as outlined in this handbook,
c. intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury to another person (except in self-defense),
d. using obscene or profane language, gestures, bullying, or verbally abusing and/or harassing other members or staff.
e. carrying a dangerous object, firearm, knife, etc.,
f. intoxication,
g. possession or use of illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages,
h. sexual harassment of a verbal, written, or physical nature,
i. and hollering loudly at other visitors, members, or staff, excessively loud cell phone conversations, games, and/or music which disrupt programs or create a nuisance for other members.

XIV. Disruptive Participants

Disruptive participants are those whose behavior, personal conduct, or physical condition interferes with the smooth functioning of the center or the well-being of its members. Profiled below are several categories of disruptive participants. Disruptive participants should be reported to the Senior Center Administrator. All incidents of disruptive behavior should be thoroughly documented by the staff person(s) involved. Disruptive participants

will be denied admittance and/or asked to leave when identified and/or possibly have their membership suspended or revoked. Below are several categories of disruptive participants:

a. **Improper conduct:** This refers to persons acting out disruptive behavior, verbal or physical aggression, Insulting members or staff, sexual harassment, stalking, profanity, drinking or obvious intoxication, or possessing alcoholic beverages or unauthorized substances in the center.
b. **Appropriate Clothing:** Members must wear clean clothing that covers private areas of their body. Vulgar or profane t-shirts and/or articles of clothing are not permitted.
c. **Deteriorated personal hygiene:** Deteriorated personal hygiene indicates a person whose body or clothing is dirty and/or has an offensive odor or other prevailing conditions resulting from personal sanitation problems (e.g., body lice, untreated open wounds, contagious diseases, incontinence, etc.). Deteriorated personal hygiene may also include excessive use of cologne or perfume to disguise other challenges.
d. **Security risks:** Persons who steal from other participants or the Center in general, or present a clear and present danger to Center participants, staff, or volunteers are deemed security risks.
e. **Combative Participants:** If a participant refuses to leave the Senior Center for any of the above-mentioned criteria, staff will not attempt to physically remove the participant. Staff will instead call 911 for police assistance.

In the event a participant becomes disruptive, the Senior Center Administrator should assess the situation and determine a course of action consistent with the behavior. This may include a referral to the appropriate organization or agency, assigning a staff person to assist the client in altering his/her behavior, contacting the participant's family or caregiver, etc.

XV. Complaint Process

The Meriden Senior Center has an open door policy. Participants with concerns about programming, policies, or who are involved in a dispute at the Senior Center are encouraged to first discuss the issue in private with the Administrator or a staff member who will bring it to the attention of the Administrator. The Senior Center Administrator, Director of Public Health and Human Services, and Director of Personnel handle all personnel matters.

All staff members welcome participants' input. In addition, locked comment boxes are located outside the Front Office and near the lower level event board, where members are encouraged to submit their comments.

XVI. Visitors and Solicitations

Soliciting, selling, or collecting money or items within the Senior Center are not permitted, except when part of a fundraising project or event sponsored or approved by the Senior Center.

Posters advertising events hosted by outside organizations are allowed to be displayed only with the pre-approval of the Recreation Coordinator on the "Community Bulletin Board." We will not make copies of posters and/or flyers for outside events.

Informal visits by candidates for public office and distribution of political literature is allowed by scheduling in advance with the Senior Center Administrator. Candidates may speak informally to individuals. Petitions of a legislative nature may be circulated only after notifying the Senior Center Administrator of the petition.

XVII. Recreation – 203-630-4703

The Meriden Senior Center offers a variety of activities that greatly improve the health and well-being of our members. Most events take place at the Senior Center, although some may occur off-site. Members are encouraged to register for programs in the main office. Most activities and programs are free or have a small fee.

Signup Day for trips and programs is the first workday of each month. Members looking to register for programs will write their name on the Sign Up Day List, beginning at 8:30am on Sign Up Day. . The Recreation Coordinator will go through the list of names, in order, and register members for their desired programs as space allows. Walk-in signup registration starts at 10:00am, phone signups start at 11:00 am. Members may register for one additional participant only.

Our Recreation Coordinator organizes numerous activities, trips, social events, volunteering, exercise classes and clubs, including:

a. **Travel Trips:**

   Mini-bus trips, day trips, coach bus trips, overnight trips, and cruises are offered throughout the year, usually for a fee. Trip prices are posted on all flyers and inside the monthly newsletter.

   Day trips, coach bus trips, and overnight trips must be paid in full at least thirty (30) days prior to the event. Deadlines for payments will be posted on trip flyers and in the newsletter. We can only accept payment by cash or check at this time. Checks can be made payable to: **Meriden Senior Center.**

   The Meriden Senior Center mini-bus trips have limited seating. Members are usually welcome to drive themselves to mini-bus trip destinations and join the group upon

arrival. Please let the Main Office know if you plan to attend, but will drive yourself to an activity.

Extended day trips and overnight trips through travel groups are available for signup **as soon as the trip is advertised.** Please check the main floor event board, lower level event board, and front office for trip flyers. The Recreation Coordinator will not always be available to escort trips, and members interested in attending should plan accordingly. Trips will be cancelled due to inclement weather at the discretion of the travel group or travel leader. Deadlines for payments will be posted on trip flyers and in the newsletter.

b. **Senior Volunteers:**
Members are welcome to volunteer at the Center. Volunteers can assist with crafts, decorating, bingo, hosting the greeting desk, assisting with the lunch service, leading clubs and so much more. We provide training, support, and lots of appreciation. We ask that members who are interested in volunteering schedule time with the Recreation Coordinator to complete the volunteer application. Volunteers and volunteer club leaders serve at the discretion of the Senior Affairs Administrator.

c. **Student Volunteers:**
We only accept Meriden Board of Education students needing volunteer hours for school. All student volunteers must present a note from their school before starting their volunteer hours. Students are asked to commit to a set schedule. Students are required to sign in and out at the front office with the Recreation Coordinator.

For the safety of our members, we do not accept court mandated volunteers.

XVIII. Social Services – 203-630-4273 or 203-630-4708

Social Services provides assistance to increase the quality of life for Meriden residents by ensuring that their basic needs are met. Our Social Services Worker is a CHOICES (**C**onnecticut **H**ealth insurance, **O**utreach, **I**nformation and referrals, **C**ounseling, **E**ligibility **S**creenings) certified counselor and is able to provide information to persons age 60 or older and clients with disabilities regarding health insurance assistance, counseling, and eligibility screening.

Services offered to clients include:

a. Referrals to social services agencies for food assistance, energy/fuel assistance, protective services for the elderly, legal aid along with many other agencies and programs;
b. Health insurance assistance;

c. Medicare enrollment and counseling;
d. Medicare Savings Program application assistance;
e. SAGA/TFA application assistance;
f. SNAP application assistance;
g. Renter's Rebate assistance during the eligibility period (April—October);
h. Assurance/Safelink Application assistance;
i. Assistance finding providers;
j. Assistance with housing applications;
k. Assistance with obtaining eye glasses for uninsured clients.

XIX. Elderly Nutrition Program – 203-630-4704

The Elderly Nutrition Program is a federally funded meal program funded in part by donations. Meals are served Monday through Friday at 11:30am except for when the Senior Center is closed. Seniors are welcome to sign up for a meal by noon the day before by calling the kitchen. Extra meals cannot be ordered.

If seniors do not sign up for a meal, but wish to eat lunch, their name will be added to a waitlist, and they will only receive a lunch if one becomes available. If a member needs to cancel his or her lunch order, please call the kitchen as soon as possible so a meal can be provided to someone on the waitlist.

A Form 5 must be filled out when a member comes in for their first lunch, and must be updated yearly after that. The price of lunch for any senior under 60 is $6.00 and for seniors 60+ the suggested donation for each meal is $3.00.

XX. Senior Transportation/Mini-Bus Services – 203-237-3338

The Mini-Bus Transportation Program serves Meriden residents 55 and older. The program also provides medical transportation for people under age 55 who meet the eligibility of the enrollment form. Applications and Medical Release Forms are available in the Transportation office inside the Meriden Senior Center.

The transportation program is curb-to-curb. This means that passengers must be able to enter and exit their home on their own or with the assistance of an escort provided by the passenger. Our drivers cannot assist individuals in or out of their homes. Drivers will assist passengers in wheelchairs onto the lift and into the bus. Drivers will secure wheelchairs. Vehicles are not available for emergency medical transportation.

a. Hours of Operation

Mini-Bus Transportation office hours are from 8:00am to 4:30pm. Mini-buses run from 8:30am-4:30pm, Monday - Friday. Any change to the transportation schedule must have prior approval from the Senior Center Administrator. We occasionally offer evening and

weekend transportation for trips or events. If evening and weekend transportation will be offered it will be listed in the monthly newsletter.

b. Mini-Bus Eligibility

Mini-Bus Transportation may be used by any Meriden resident who is aged 55 or older or who is an adult with a disability in accordance with the American's with Disabilities Act of 1990. Residents 55 and older wishing to use the service must complete an enrollment form prior to riding. Once approved, passengers will be registered with the service for one year. Participants must update contact information in the transportation office annually, or when their contact information changes. If staff determines that Mini-Bus Service is not appropriate, the member will be referred to alternative transportation services. Adult citizens under 55 and disabled must complete the Mini-Bus enrollment form,, have medical paper work signed by a doctor, and return or mail all documents to the Mini-Bus Office at the Senior Center.

There is no fee for this service, which is supported by funding from the City of Meriden, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, and the Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut. Donations toward the cost of this service are gratefully accepted. Donations can be given to the driver or the Transportation Coordinator. Tipping of drivers is not allowed.

c. Priority of Destinations

i. Destinations within the City of Meriden, in order of priority, include:
   1. medical appointments,
   2. to and from the Senior Center for nutrition or other programs,
   3. grocery shopping (scheduled days only),
   4. to and from Public Service Agencies,
   5. banking, pharmacy,
   6. and other shopping (scheduled days only).

d. Passenger Expectations

In order to provide safe, efficient service, passengers are required to abide by the rules and guidelines of Senior Transportation. Failure to do so may result in a loss of service. Drivers will not make exceptions to these rules.

For your safety, all passengers must be seated at all times while the mini-bus is in motion, and the use of seat belts is required for all passengers. Passengers are to remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.

Arguing or abusive language will not be tolerated. No consumption of alcoholic beverages is allowed, and transportation will not be provided for an intoxicated

person. Eating, drinking, or using any type of tobacco products (including e-cigarettes) is not permitted on the mini-bus by passengers or drivers at any time. Cell phone use must be kept to a minimum; no loud cell phone conversations, games, or music are allowed while using mini-bus transportation.

Passengers may not request that drivers make changes in bus routes or stops that have been established by the dispatcher. No unauthorized stops are allowed.

When the Meriden Public Schools are cancelled for the day due to inclement weather, mini-bus transportation is also cancelled. Please listen to the radio or watch television station WFSB 3 for school cancellation information. If the Meriden Schools are on a delay, the Senior Center maintains our normal pickup schedule.

e. <u>Senior Center Trips</u>

Reservations for rides into the Senior Center must be made by 12:30pm the day before by calling 203-237-3338 or stopping in the Mini-Bus Office. Reservations can be called in Monday through Friday during office hours. Please notify the dispatcher of cancellations by 8:30am. Reservations must be made on a weekly basis, every week, and permanent ride reservations are not allowed. Reservations or cancellations cannot be made with the drivers.

Remember that this mini-bus service is designed to promote mass transportation, as well as to meet individual needs. Therefore, riders must be flexible when requesting a specific time for a ride. The first mini-bus rides are available beginning at 8:15 am, and the last ride is at 4:00pm. Riders wishing to use Senior Center mini-bus transportation to visit the Senior Center must sign up by 12:30pm the day before their desired ride. Passengers must communicate weekly with the Mini-Bus Transportation dispatcher to continue daily pickups.

Passengers must be ready at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to the scheduled pickup time. If the passenger is not curbside, the mini-bus driver will honk the horn twice and wait only five (5) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time. Once five (5) minutes have elapsed, the driver will continue with their scheduled route.

f. <u>Medical Transportation Reservations</u>

Medical transportation reservations must be made at least 3 days prior to the scheduled appointment. Appointments must be between the hours of 8:45am - 3:00pm. You must be ready for a return ride home by 3:00pm.

Every effort will be made to accommodate an individual's appointment. Service may be denied if the schedule is full, the appointment is not within our operating hours or service area, or if the individual needs hands-on assistance.

Passengers with wheelchairs must be accompanied by an aide.

g. <u>Shopping Transportation</u>

Riders wishing to participate in a shopping trip must sign up with the Mini-Bus dispatcher by 12:30pm of the day before their desired shopping trip. For grocery shopping transportation, passengers are limited to the number of bags that they can safely carry in one trip on and off the bus, so as not to delay the other passengers. Shopping trips need a minimum of at least 4 riders for the trip to run. **Each shopper is limited to two (2) bags on the shopping trip.** The driver will notify the passengers of the pick-up time when they arrive at the grocery store and passengers must complete their shopping before the scheduled pickup. The bus will wait ten (10) minutes after the scheduled pickup time, and then will leave the shopping center and continue the route.