MCPS MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org MARYLAND

July 1, 2019

Dear Elementary School Parent:

Enclosed are route schedules for buses serving your child's school. This information is also available on the MCPS website. Please note the appropriate time, location, and route number for your child. Route numbers are displayed on each bus, on the side window. Questions about transportation should be directed to your transportation depot. Your school or the MCPS website can provide you with contact information for your transportation cluster manager.

Bus stops previously scheduled may have been eliminated or relocated to provide economies in operation. Every effort is made to minimize inconvenience to students and parents, and provide a reasonable level of service. Saving support budget dollars provides more resources for classrooms.

Appropriate student behavior is important to the safety and comfort of everyone. Parents are encouraged to discuss behavior with their children regularly to reinforce this message. It is important that all students follow the rules stated in the *"Ride by the Rules."* campaign. For more information on this, please visit: http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/transportation/ or ask your school for one of the *"Ride by the Rules"* pamphlets.

School bus transportation is provided for elementary school children who live more than one (1) mile from their home school. If you live within one mile of the school and you do not see a stop on the list that is in your neighborhood, your child is not eligible for transportation.

Parents are responsible for their children on the way to the bus stop, at the bus stop, and on the way home from the bus stop. Children should arrive at the stop at least five minutes before the established pick-up time. Parents are responsible for children as soon as they get off the bus at the afternoon bus stop and should plan to meet the bus or arrange for a caretaker or other responsible adult to accompany the children safely home or to the child care provider. Parents should instruct their children where to get off the bus and familiarize them with unique aspects of the bus stop or landmarks so that, prior to the first day they will ride the bus, the children will clearly know the stop where they should get off the bus. Please note: bus operators do not know all of the possible caretakers for each child that might be picking up a student on a particular day, and are unable to

Department of Transportation
West Farm Depot

11920 Bournefield Way ♦ Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-7808 ♦ 240-740-1857 ♦ Fax: 240-740-1861

match each child to a specific adult. When students get off the bus, they are entirely in the care of the parent or other caregiver, or are on their own to walk home if no parent or caregiver is present. Please provide the tools for your children to become independent riders by making sure they know exactly where to get off the bus as well as the need to immediately alert the bus operator, before getting off the bus if possible, if they do not see a parent or other person who normally meets them at the bus stop. Once alerted, the bus operator would return the student to the school, or take other steps to ensure the child's safety.

If you usually meet your child at the bus stop, and cannot make it on a given day, call the school well before dismissal time and ask that your child be kept at the school to be picked up rather than placed on the bus. This is an emergency back-up plan that should only be used in those rare circumstances when you are unexpectedly and unavoidably delayed in making it to the bus stop. Keep the school phone number in your cell phone or other convenient place so you will be ready should an emergency arise. Establishing a buddy plan for your child with an older sibling or classmate is advised in case your child ends up at the afternoon bus stop without you or another caregiver. Bus schedules are approximate and may vary due to traffic, weather conditions, and student changes, so be at the bus stop ahead of the normal drop off time.

Following safety rules when boarding, riding, and getting off the bus is very important. Reviewing safety rules with your child will help to ensure bus safety.

Key Points:

If you want your child to be supervised by an adult while walking home from the afternoon bus stop, you must make sure that happens. Once the student gets off the bus, only you can ensure your child is appropriately supervised. We recommend the following when students need supervision after getting off the school bus:

- Plan for you or another caregiver to be at the bus stop ahead of the normal drop-off time as the bus could come early on any given day.

- Plan in advance for another adult who is normally at the bus stop to care for your child if you are not there one day.

- Call the school, well before dismissal time, if you have an emergency and cannot make it to the bus stop one day, so your child will be kept at school for pick-up rather than put on the bus. Be sure you always have the school phone number with you in case you need it.

- Be sure your child knows and can identify the proper bus stop and knows not to get off the bus at any other stop.

- Arrange an older student "buddy" who will walk home with your child, or allow your child to stay at their house until you pick up your child. Be sure to work with the other student's parent when arranging this plan.

- Be sure your child knows to tell the bus driver, before getting off the bus, if something is "not right." This could include, among other things, a parent or caregiver who is usually at the stop being absent; missing their stop; or having gotten on the wrong bus and not recognizing any stop.

When bus stops are scheduled at intersections, students should stand safely away from traffic, within 150 feet of the stop. Students waiting for buses may choose to stand in carports and garages for protection from the elements. This is acceptable only if: (1) it does not alter the route; (2) it does not increase the number of stops; (3) it is acceptable to all parties involved; and, (4) it is reasonably close to the regular stop (so that a substitute bus operator, not familiar with special arrangements, may easily locate the students). Please note that bus operators are only authorized to stop at designated stops. Please do not request unauthorized stops. Montgomery County Public Schools realizes a substantial fuel savings by limiting the number of bus stops.

Students who wish to ride home on a friend's bus, or get off their own bus at a friend's stop must bring a note from their parent. Once approved and signed by the principal, the student should give this note to the operator of the bus they will be riding. This practice will normally be approved where space permits.

Inclement weather creates many hardships for us all. It is not possible to provide additional transportation during winter months or on rainy days, and for this reason, students should dress accordingly. In case buses are not able to reach designated stops due to snow and ice accumulation, parents are encouraged to make advance arrangements with bus operators so that students who live in these areas can board at alternate locations when necessary.

Student transportation can only operate effectively if we all do our part to make things work. Parental assistance and cooperation is needed to provide a safe transportation system for student riders.

Sincerely,

Sinisha Pavlovich
Depot Manager

SP:tk

Enclosures