

## **Diamond Elementary School**

### **Bus Safety Reminders**

One of our commitments to the school community is to provide a safe and secure environment for all students, staff members, and families the moment children step onto the school bus and then arrive to school to when they step off of the school bus in the afternoon at their bus stop.

Parents/guardians 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. The information below from MCPS Bus Transportation Office will help in reminding some of the bus rules and what to do if you want to make sure your child is supervised by an adult while walking home from the afternoon bus stop.

Please take the time to read this information very closely as it contains important and helpful information.

- Children should arrive at their bus stop at least five minutes before the established pick-up time.
- Parents can help further the safety of all students by making sure their children know the bus rules and etiquette that help ensure safe, orderly, and pleasant bus trips. Parents also should make sure their children know their bus route number, located in windows on both the right and left side of the bus, near the front (see Route Numbers section below). The number that is painted on the bus, usually on the body and bumpers is not used for bus route identification.
  1. Understand that the school bus is an extension of school, and the same standards of behavior expected in the classroom apply to the bus as well;
  2. Obey the instructions of the bus operator, just as they would follow the instructions of a teacher or school administrator;
  3. Show consideration for other students on the bus and at the bus stop
  4. Speak respectfully to everyone, including their peers, without using vulgar language;
- For elementary and middle school students, it is recommended that a parent or other adults wait at the bus stop with the students to monitor and supervise their behavior and help with any problems, such as a late bus. Both students and adults should stand near the bus stop, not more than 150 feet away, where they can observe the bus as it arrives
- Parents have a central role in making school bus trips safe for their young children. To fulfill this role, make sure students:
  1. Know basic principles of traffic safety, such as how and when to cross the road safely
  2. Stay out of the road while waiting for the bus
  3. Are supervised by a parent or other adult while walking to and waiting at the bus stop (at some bus stops, parents rotate this duty, while at others, parents escort their children to the bus stop and remain with them until the bus comes)
  4. Move toward the bus only after it stops and the driver has signaled that it is safe
  5. Understand the importance of following the rules on the bus.

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**Safety Between Home and School: Riding the School Bus**

*If you want your child to be supervised by an adult while walking home from the afternoon bus stop, MCPS bus transportation office and Diamond ES recommend the following:*

- Plan for you or another caregiver to be at the bus stop ahead of the normal drop-off time, as the bus may arrive early on any given day. Our bus drivers want to make sure our kindergarten students have someone who will meet them at the bus stop or that they have an older student to walk them home.
- Plan in advance for a back-up plan for another adult who is normally at the bus stop to care for your child if you are not there. Get to know other parents at your local bus stop. Exchange phone numbers so you can contact one another for coverage support when needed, especially in emergencies. We encourage every family to collaborate with other parents at the bus stop so you have another parent that your child can go home with if no one from your family is at the bus stop to pick them up. The parent buddy system is a great resource to have and every family should have a back-up plan.
- If you have an emergency and cannot make it to the bus stop, call another parent/adult at the bus stop to watch your child, or call the school well before dismissal time (before 3:00 p.m. if possible), so your child will be kept at school for pickup rather than put on the bus. Be sure you always have the school phone number with you in case of any emergency.
- Be sure your child knows and can identify the proper bus stop and understands not to get off the bus at any other stop. Parents/guardians 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. Bus drivers try their best to know each of the students, however, it is very challenging for bus drivers to know which bus stop every student gets off at.
- *Please note:* Our bus drivers do their best to get to know the regular caretakers of children on their bus, however, Bus operators do not know all of the possible caretakers who might be picking up a student on a particular day, and are unable to match each child with a specific adult. When students get off the bus, they are entirely in the care of the parent/guardian or other caregiver. They are on their own to walk home if no parent/guardian or caregiver is present, so if you want your child to be supervised by an adult after getting off the afternoon bus stop, please come up with a buddy system with other parents at the bus stop.
- Arrange for an older student “buddy” to walk home with your child, and allow your child to stay at the older student’s house until you are able to pick up your child. Be sure to work with the other student’s parent/guardian when arranging this plan. Establishing a buddy plan for your child with an older sibling or classmate is advised, in case your child arrives at the afternoon bus stop without meeting you or another caregiver. Bus schedules are approximate and may vary due to traffic, weather conditions, and student schedule changes. It is best to be present at the bus stop ahead of the normal arrival time.

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- Be sure your child knows to tell the bus driver, before getting off the bus, if something is “not right.” This includes if a parent/guardian or caregiver who is usually at the stop not being visible; missing the stop; or getting on the wrong bus and not recognizing any stop or familiar adults. Please provide specific information for your children to become independent riders by making sure they know exactly where to get off the bus as well as alert the bus operator, before getting off the bus, if they do not see a parent/guardian or familiar person who normally meets them at the bus stop. Once alerted, the bus operator will return the student to the school, or take other steps to ensure the child’s safety.
- We encourage every family to develop and discuss an emergency plan with your children for what they should do on early dismissal days or if they are dropped off at the bus stop and no adult is there. What do you want them to do? Where do you want them to go? Who is a trusted neighbor or another parent/guardian at the bus stop that your child can go with if the child’s parent/guardian is not there?
- It takes a village! If you notice any children who get off the bus who appear to be lost or do not see their parent there to pick them up, we encourage you to ask the child’s name and please call the school at 240-740-2120 and we will assist in contacting the child’s parents.

Buses follow a routine schedule and typically arrive at their stops within a few minutes of the schedule. Except for snowy or icy mornings, parents and students should wait at the bus stop for at least 20 minutes past the scheduled arrival time before calling the Clarksburg Bus Depot office at 240-740-4728. On days of inclement weather, students and parents should expect some delays due to road and traffic conditions. It is recommended that only one student or parent at a bus stop call the transportation office to determine the length of the delay. Students should not leave the bus stop unless advised by the transportation office that there will be no bus.

You can find more information about riding on the school bus at ***What You Should Know about Riding on the Bus:***

<https://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/transportation/rules/riding.aspx>

We can work together to make sure our students are safe. We appreciate your understanding and patience with this important matter. Any questions or concerns, please contact the main office staff at 240-740-2120.