

11920 Bournefield Way
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904
Phone: 240-740-1852 Fax: 240-740-1860



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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. Many routes are designed so that students do not need to cross a major roadway to use the bus. This is indicated on route descriptions by "RSO" (right side only) next to the bus stop notation. Parents should not allow their children to circumvent this safety measure by crossing the road to use a different bus stop if there is one on their side of the street. Parents should contact their depot manager if no bus stops on their side of the street. 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.

School bus transportation is provided for elementary school children who live more than 1 mile from their home school. If you live within 1 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. 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: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/transportation/rules/>.

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 the possible caretakers for each child who might be picking up a student on a particular day, and are unable to match each child to a specific adult.

When students get off the bus, they are entirely in the care of the parent or 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 will 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 are 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. This will ensure 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, not present; missing their stop; or realizing they’ve boarded the wrong bus and not recognizing any stop.
- Students should not bring animals, alcohol, tobacco, weapons (including toy or “look-alike” weapons), glass containers, or explosives on the bus.


When bus stops are scheduled at intersections, students should stand safely away from traffic, within 150 feet of the stop. *Parents are responsible for maintaining discipline and safety at bus stops.* 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: bus operators are only authorized to stop at designated stops; do not request unauthorized stops. MCPS realizes substantial fuel and other operational 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 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 are needed to provide a safe transportation system for student riders.

Sincerely,


Kimberly Brown
Depot Manager

KB:grc
Enclosures

What You Should Know About Riding the Bus



Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) provides bus service for:

- Elementary school students living more than 1 mile of walking distance from the school. *
- Middle school students living more than 1.5 miles of walking distance from the school. *
- High school students living more than 2 miles of walking distance from the school. *
- Students who face hazardous walking conditions regardless of distance from school (multilane highways, construction areas, etc.) as determined by the MCPS Department of Transportation.
- Students in special education, magnet, gifted/talented, and some vocational/education programs that are not offered at the student's home school.

*A tenth of a mile may be added to establish a reasonable boundary.

Students

Students are responsible for their behavior and self-control on the bus and at bus stops at all times. Disorderly students can threaten the safety of all riders by distracting the bus operator making the bus ride to and from school an unpleasant and even intimidating experience for other students. Students are expected to obey the instructions of the bus operator just as they would follow instructions of teachers and school administrators.

Parents

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. 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.

Many routes are designed so that students do not need to cross a major roadway to use the bus. This is indicated on route descriptions by "RSO" (right side only) next to the bus stop notation. Parents should not allow their children to circumvent this safety measure by crossing the road to use a different bus stop if there is one on their side of the street. Parents should contact their depot manager if no bus stops on their side of the street.

The Community

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. Children should arrive at their bus stop at least 5 minutes before the established pick-up time. Parents/guardians are responsible for their children once they arrive 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/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.

Please note: 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.

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 school to be picked up rather than placed on the bus at the end of the school day.

The kindergarten teacher will discuss bus safety in detail during the first week of school. 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.

If you want your child to be supervised by an adult while walking home from the afternoon bus stop, we 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.
- Plan in advance for another adult who is normally at the bus stop to care for your child if you are not there.
- If you have an emergency and cannot make it to the bus stop, call the school well before dismissal time, 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 the 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.
- Arrange for an older student “buddy” to walk home with your child, or 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.
- Be sure your child knows to tell the bus driver, before getting off the bus, if something is “not right.” This includes 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.

Once the student gets off the bus, only you can ensure your child is appropriately supervised.

At the bus stop, students are expected to:

- Arrive 5 minutes before the scheduled time.
- Maintain an orderly line in preparation to board the bus promptly, without shoving or pushing.
- Stay out of the roadway.
- Be considerate of nearby yards, driveways, houses, buildings, and private property.
- Move toward the bus only after it stops and the driver has signaled that it is safe.

On the bus, students are expected to:

- Behave appropriately, just as if they were in a classroom.
- Keep the aisle and emergency door clear of obstructions.
- Keep their arms, feet, and head inside the bus at all times.

- Be seated and make room for others to sit as well. Once ridership has been adjusted at the beginning of the school year, standing is not permitted.
- Discard trash in appropriate containers.

On returning home, students are expected to:

- Walk 10 feet in front of the stopped bus, if they must cross the road, and only cross after the bus operator has indicated that it is safe.
- Refrain from trying to direct traffic upon leaving the bus.

At all times, students may not:

- Bring animals, alcohol, drugs, tobacco, weapons, glass containers, or explosives on the bus.
- Use vulgar language or gestures, fight, or engage in sexual harassment or other improper and/or illegal conduct.
- Throw any papers or objects in the bus or out the windows.
- Operate the emergency exits without permission unless it is an emergency.
- Smoke, drink, eat, or play radios without headphones.
- Damage or deface any part of the bus.
- Ride a different bus than the one they have been assigned to, unless they have written permission from a parent and permission from the principle.