



# Parents' & Students' Guide to Transportation

Baltimore County Public Schools  
Towson, Maryland 21204



An integral part of the educational process is getting children to and from school safely. The safety of children going to and from school, whether on foot or by bus, is a responsibility shared by many people.

This handbook will explain the roles of the various people involved in student transportation. Parents/guardians are asked to review the contents of this booklet and to work with their children so they will understand their responsibilities.

Contact Baltimore County Public Schools' Office of Transportation at 410-887-4321, with specific questions relating to student transportation, or consult the following web sites:

- Baltimore County Public Schools' Office of Transportation  
[www.bcps.org/offices/transportation](http://www.bcps.org/offices/transportation)
- National Association for Pupil Transportation  
[www.napt.org](http://www.napt.org)
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
[www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)
- Maryland State Department of Education  
[www.marylandpublicschools.org](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org)
- Pupil Transportation Safety Institute  
[www.ptsi.org](http://www.ptsi.org)
- School Transportation News  
[www.stnonline.com](http://www.stnonline.com)

## Facts To Know

### **Eligibility** **Board of Education Policy 3410**

The Office of Transportation shall be organized to provide school transportation service for eligible students based on safety, efficiency, adequacy, and economy. The Board of Education (Board) hereby directs the Superintendent to establish rules to implement this policy.

1. School bus transportation is provided under the jurisdiction of the Board from established stops for elementary and middle school students who must walk more than one (1) mile to the assigned school.
2. School bus transportation is provided under the jurisdiction of the Board from established stops for high school students who must walk more than one-and-one-half (1-1/2) miles to the assigned school.
3. School bus transportation is provided under the jurisdiction of the Board from established stops at mid-day for all half-day prekindergarten students.
4. The supervision of students while walking to, from, or waiting at the established bus stop is the responsibility of the students' parents or guardians.
5. The supervision of non-transported students to and from school is the responsibility of the students' parents or guardians.



**School Bus Stop Law**  
**Maryland Transportation Article, Section 21-706**

If a school vehicle is stopping or has stopped, and is operating the alternately flashing warning lights, the driver of any other vehicle meeting or overtaking the school vehicle shall stop at least 20 feet from the rear of the school vehicle (if approaching the school vehicle from the rear), or 20 feet from the front of the school vehicle (if approaching the school vehicle from the front), and may not proceed until the school vehicle resumes motion or deactivates the alternately flashing warning lights.

**Crossing Procedures For Students**  
**Superintendent's Rule 3420**

Taking into consideration that motorists all too frequently ignore a school bus' flashing red lights, the following procedures have been established in the interest of safety:

- Students are to be at their designated bus stops and on the side of the road of the bus pickup five (5) minutes before the bus arrives.
- Except at specifically designated bus stops, the students are not to wait until the bus stops and then cross the road to board the bus.
- Students getting off the bus are to wait on the side of the road where they get off.
- Students must stand away from the side of the bus until the bus pulls away, leaving better clearance for vision in both directions.
- When traffic is cleared and it is safe to cross, the students proceed to the other side of the road.

School administrators and parents need to reinforce rules continually about safe crossing with the students. If assistance is needed, seek the support of the Baltimore County Public Schools' Office of Transportation. Refer to the School Bus Safety curriculum guide.

Same side service will be provided:

- For elementary students residing on a 35+ mph roadway.
- For secondary students residing on a 40+ mph roadway.
- Where deemed appropriate in the interest of safety by Baltimore County Public Schools' Office of Transportation personnel.

#### **Transportation Services from Child Care Facilities** **Superintendent's Rule 3410**

1. Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) will provide transportation from a child care provider to a public school providing the child care facility is within the boundaries of the school district and the transported area of the school.
2. Children who have transferred to a public school under existing transfer policies and are attending a child care facility within the boundaries of the school district and the transported area to which the child has transferred will likewise be provided transportation from the child care facility to the public school.
3. Children attending child care facilities that are within the non-transported area of an assigned school will not be provided transportation, unless the walking conditions as determined by the Office of Transportation are unsafe.

## Transportation Services For Magnet Schools

### **Elementary Schools**

Baltimore County Public Schools provides transportation to and from elementary magnet programs for students who reside within the established transportation zone of the magnet program. Some transportation is arranged as shuttle service from the home school location. This may require students to ride the regular neighborhood bus or to walk to the home school where they are picked up as a group and then transported to the magnet program.

Magnet schools will notify parents/guardians of specific transportation provisions prior to the opening of school.

### **Secondary Schools**

Baltimore County Public Schools provides transportation to and from magnet programs in secondary schools for students who reside within the established transportation zone of the magnet program. Transportation is provided from a limited number of pick-up points located at designated school sites in each of the five geographic areas of the county. Parents/guardians are responsible for providing transportation for their students to and from their designated pick-up point.

Magnet schools will notify parents/guardians of the respective pick-up points prior to the opening of school for the upcoming year. Pick-up points do not fall under the same guidelines as regular bus stops with regard to distance and walking conditions. Supervision of the students at the pick-up points is the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

***NOTE: BCPS transportation is not provided for students who reside outside of the established transportation zone of a magnet program.***

## **Transportation Procedures for Elementary Students**

### 1. Mid-day

- Mid-day bus stops for prekindergarten students will generally be established at the student's home or the nearest corner to the home.
- Bus stops may be grouped (example: apartment complex, adjacent houses).
- Bus stops shall be at the same location 5 days a week.
- Schools are responsible for seeing that all k and prek students board the bus from school wearing a prominently placed I.D. tag with the following information:



- \* School name
- \* Student name
- \* Home address
- \* Home & emergency phone numbers
- \* Bus stop
- \* Applicable day care information (provider name, address, phone number)
- \* Picture I.D. or tag color-coded with the bus name/color preferred.
- Parents are to be sure that afternoon half-day prekindergarten students are wearing the I.D. tag upon boarding the bus from home.



- Half-day prekindergarten students must be met by a responsible, authorized person at each mid-day stop. If a student is not met, the driver shall complete the route and return the student to school. The driver shall immediately notify the Office of Transportation when a student is not met.





### Transportation Procedures for Elementary Students

2. End of the Day
  - The Office of Transportation shall establish bus stops for all eligible full-day elementary school students. Afternoon half-day prekindergarten students will use the same stops.
  - Bus stops shall be at the same location 5 days a week.
  - I.D. tags will be prominently placed on k and prek students by school personnel.
  - **All** students will be discharged at their appropriate bus stop at the end of the day. Bus drivers are responsible for students from the time they enter the bus until they exit the bus. A parent does not have to be present at the bus stop. When the regular or substitute bus driver is sure that it is the student's assigned bus stop, then the student may be discharged. When the regular or substitute bus driver is not sure whether the stop is the correct bus stop or is concerned for the safety of the student for any reason, the driver shall complete the route and then return the student to school. When the driver makes the decision to return a student to school, the Office of Transportation must be called immediately.
3. K and prek students shall be seated in the front of the bus.
4. End of the day transportation procedures will be used for scheduled early dismissals and emergency early dismissals.

It is important for student safety that everyone be familiar with the drop-off procedures. Parents are encouraged to develop a back-up plan for the end of the day drop-off and to review it with their child.

If you have questions regarding these procedures, please contact the Office of Transportation at 410-887-4321.

To ensure that all parents/guardians and students have read and understood the drop-off procedures, please complete and sign the enclosed form and return it to your child's school.

Thank you.

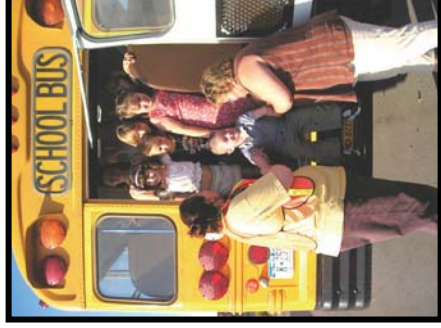


### **School Bus Emergency Evacuation**

In September and February, each school must conduct school bus emergency evacuation drills. Every precaution must be taken to see that the procedures and appropriate behavior for leaving a school bus in case of an emergency have been discussed and practiced with all students. Students must have practice in leaving the bus through the bus emergency door, as well as through the front door.

Such drills are to be conducted with the same seriousness as displayed during the monthly fire drills in the school building. Students should practice leaving the bus in an orderly manner without pausing to gather up books and personal belongings.

Practice drills in emergency evacuation are to be conducted on the school grounds. It should be noted that in a true emergency many hazards would exist along a roadway that do not exist in a practice drill on the school grounds. Therefore, appropriate conduct of students after they have left the bus is extremely important.



### **Video Camera Procedures**

The following information pertains to buses that are equipped with video technology:

- Buses equipped with video technology will display a notice indicating students may be videotaped.
- The installation and removal of all videotapes or digital data from the video unit is the responsibility of the Office of Transportation supervisory personnel or the owner, manager, or supervisor of a contracted vehicle.
- Video equipment is activated when the bus engine is turned on and deactivated when the bus engine is turned off. Bus drivers do not have the ability to activate or deactivate the video equipment and do not have access to the recorded material.
- To maintain student confidentiality, videotapes and data files are only reviewed by appropriate administrators.



## **Special Needs Transportation**

### Bus Stop Location

- Whenever feasible, service to the home address is provided for students with special needs. However, there are many streets that buses cannot safely negotiate. In these cases, parents/guardians or child care providers are responsible for meeting the bus at the nearest safe location as determined by the Office of Transportation.
- The bus attendant assists with loading, unloading, and the care of students while on the bus.

### Occupant Restraint Systems

- The Office of Transportation will work closely with the school, parents, and IEP team to plan for approved occupant restraints or support devices, as required for individual students.

### Driver and Attendant Training

- Drivers and attendants are required to attend annual training sessions developed by the Office of Transportation. Topics include first aid procedures, use of epi-pens, safe driving practices, and other related topics.
- In addition to the required training, drivers and attendants may be given supplemental training at the schools. Topics may include techniques in positive behavior management and other disability-specific procedures.
- Drivers and attendants are available to meet at the school with parents, the school nurse, or IEP team members to discuss specific considerations as they relate to individual students.

- **Pick-Up and Drop-Off of Students**

- All children must be ready to board the bus at least five (5) minutes before the scheduled time.
- All students with special needs must be accompanied to and from the approved bus stop by a parent or guardian.
- If no one is at the approved bus stop to receive a student, the driver will contact the Office of Transportation to receive further direction. The driver may return to the bus stop after completing the route, or return the student to school.
- Parents/guardians may provide prior written authorization for students to be discharged from the bus without someone to receive them.

**Special Transportation Considerations**

- Parents/guardians, the Office of Special Education, and/or the IEP chairperson may request that a representative from the Office of Transportation attend the IEP meeting to address transportation concerns.



## Parent's Role In Transportation

Parents/guardians have the responsibility to ensure that their children know, understand, and follow all bus rules. Listed below are some suggestions for parents:

1. Teach children that riding the school bus is a privilege. This privilege may be temporarily suspended or permanently revoked if a child's behavior jeopardizes the safe operation of the bus or the safety of other children riding the bus. Speak with children about the importance of obeying the safe riding rules.
2. Children should leave home early enough to arrive at their school bus stop five (5) minutes before the scheduled arrival time of the bus. If they arrive too early, they may become involved in behavior that could lead to injury, or if they arrive too late, they may miss the bus.
3. All parents/guardians should be familiar with the walking route children will be taking. Shortcuts through isolated fields and woods, or across streams or railroad tracks often can be dangerous. Entering abandoned houses or deserted buildings on the route can also be dangerous.
4. Parents/guardians with younger children should walk with the children to and from the school or bus stop, taking the opportunity to teach the children proper pedestrian practices, such as when and how to cross streets.



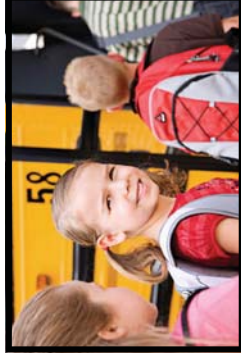
5. Parents/guardians should encourage children to carry all their papers, books, and other belongings inside a backpack.
6. Buses may be delayed during bad weather, so it is important that children dress appropriately for the weather.
7. During inclement weather, media announcements regarding school closings begin at approximately 5:15 a.m. Pertinent information concerning school closings or delays will be announced on the local radio and television channels, the Baltimore County Public Schools' Education Channel, and on the web at [www.bcps.org](http://www.bcps.org).
8. Parents/guardians are responsible for the supervision of their children from the time the children leave home in the morning until they board the school bus, and at the end of the day from the time the school bus departs the unloading area until the children reach home.

## Student's Role In Transportation

Students receiving transportation services have the responsibility to follow all bus rules. These rules include:

- At the bus stop, wait in an orderly manner, out of the way of all traffic, until the bus stops and the driver opens the door.
- Stand at least five (5) feet back from the stopping position of the bus.
- Wait until the bus stops completely before moving forward to board it.

- The aisle of the bus must be kept clear, so that the rear emergency exit is accessible at all times. Large objects such as musical instruments, athletic equipment, and school projects are prohibited, unless the student can carry the object themselves, hold the object on his/her lap, or place the object on the floor between his/her legs.
- Cell phone use is prohibited on the bus.
- Once on board the bus, follow the **Bus Rules** as posted:
  - Follow directions the first time they are given.
  - Stay seated, facing forward at all times.
  - Keep all body parts inside the bus.
  - Keep hands, feet, legs, arms, personal property, and your voice to yourself.
  - No eating, smoking, drinking, or vulgar language at any time on the bus.
- Wait until the bus stops moving before getting out of the seat and moving forward to get off of the bus.
- Always board the assigned bus, and get on and off at the regularly assigned bus stop.
- Once off the bus, proceed immediately away from the bus.



## School Bus Driver's Role In Transportation

The school bus driver is the person most directly involved in getting students safely to and from school each day. Due to the safety-sensitive nature of transporting students, school bus drivers must acquire and maintain certain federal, state, and local certification requirements.

Before ever operating a school bus with students on board, each person who applies to drive a bus for Baltimore County Public Schools is subject to a criminal background check, a Motor Vehicle Administration driving record check, a pre-employment Department of Transportation (DOT) physical, a drug test, and must complete prescribed training, both in the classroom and behind the wheel. In order to remain certified, each driver must also complete the prescribed annual in-service training, participate in random drug testing, and receive a DOT physical each year.

On a daily basis, the school bus driver must:

- Perform a pre-trip and post-trip inspection of the school bus.
- Operate the school bus and follow the prescribed bus route safely.
- Pick up children on time and only at designated stops.
- Practice defensive driving.
- Maintain a safe and positive atmosphere on the bus.
- Discharge the students only at the designated bus stops.

Many drivers make as many as five school runs each morning and afternoon. With so many demands on the school bus driver's attention, it is very important that students obey the safe riding rules.

**For further information, please contact  
Baltimore County Public Schools'  
Office of Transportation  
410-887-4321  
[www.bcps.org/offices/transportation](http://www.bcps.org/offices/transportation)**



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