

CCPS

**TRANSPORTATION
HANDBOOK FOR
PARENTS AND STUDENTS**



**Carroll County Public Schools
Transportation Services
Department
125 North Court Street
Westminster, MD 21157
410-751-3229**

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Introduction

Each school day thousands of children will be standing in groups, on corners or at the end of a driveway waiting for their yellow transport to carry them to school, never knowing or caring about the complex and endless web of laws, regulations, policies and procedures that must be followed by those who dutifully provide the service. Youngsters do know, however, that within minutes of a designated time, the operator of their school bus will engage a vast array of lights and appendages as eighteen tons of rolling vehicle glides to a stop just for them. The gateway to school will open and a resounding, enthusiastic “*Good Morning!*” is heard from a smiling face beckoning them aboard. Parents, grandparents, guardians or siblings who have been left behind, either along the street, on the porch or inside the house, wave goodbye to those who are most precious to them. They are confident their safety and well-being is the primary concern of the individual who puts the coach in motion. Keeping two eyes on the road and on the precious cargo behind them, the driver negotiates the yellow cocoon through a maze of stop lights, left turns, construction barriers, overhanging tree limbs and Nascar wannabees. Very soon the bus arrives at its destination and a loud gush of air is heard as the driver engages the parking brake and opens the door. As they descend and go through the door, each student is bid farewell with a “*Have a good day!*” As the last student steps from the bus to the sidewalk, he or she turns back to the driver and says “*Thank you.*” The driver smiles as the door is closed, the parking brake is released and the school bus accelerates down the road to where the next group of students is waiting for their bus to carry them to school.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Transportation Services Department is to support the learning process by providing safe, adequate, efficient and economical transportation services for all eligible students in compliance with federal, state and local policies and procedures.



Transportation Services Facts

Approximately 24,500 students are enrolled in Carroll County Public Schools and nearly 23,500 of those students will be riding a school bus. While providing over 259 buses, traveling over 5,200,000 miles, the Transportation Services Department of the Carroll County Board of Education continuously routes and re-routes buses. In order to ensure safe and reliable service, each of these buses has had a thorough inspection during the summer months. In addition, the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration, in cooperation with the Transportation Services Department, conducts three additional comprehensive safety inspections during the school year.

Drivers on all Carroll County Public Schools’ buses are thoroughly trained and qualified individuals. During each school year, bus drivers must participate in an in-service training program to improve driving skills and student behavior management skills. New drivers must complete a detailed, comprehensive program, including individualized on-the-road training. All drivers are regularly evaluated by on-the-road observations, subject to pre-employment drug testing, pre-employment and criminal background checks, random drug and alcohol testing, post-accident drug and alcohol testing, as well as reasonable suspicion drug and alcohol testing. School bus drivers must also have a satisfactory MVA driving record.



School Bus Stop Law Violations

Maryland Motor Vehicle Law requires the driver of a vehicle to come to a full stop, remaining at least **20 feet from the front and rear** of a school bus with the red warning lights functioning while loading or unloading students. The Transportation Services Department, in cooperation with the Maryland State Police, Carroll County Sheriff's Department, municipal police departments and State's Attorney's Office, will continue to emphasize the importance of the stop law and fully prosecute those who violate the red warning lights, that help protect our school-age passengers. Maryland legislation, which became law July 1, 1988, requires the Maryland State Police to follow up on complaints and to issue appropriate citations.

Motorists are advised that school buses operate with an eight-light warning system. The amber flashing lights are activated at least 100 feet in advance of the bus stop. The red flashing lights are then activated when the bus is fully stopped. The message is clear:"

Prepare to Stop and DO NOT Run the Warning Lights!



Buses may stop in an acceleration, deceleration or a through lane of a roadway to pick up and drop off students and must use the red flashing warning lights. **Motorists are required to stop.** Many school bus stops in Carroll County, particularly on state routes, are using an "off-road loading zone" procedure. In such cases, buses pull completely off the traveled portion of the roadway to pick up or discharge students and students do not cross the roadway. When an off-road maneuver is being performed, buses activate only the right turn signal and motorists may pass the bus on the left only.

The only time a motorist does not have to stop for the red-flashing warning lights is on a **divided** highway. In places, where Route 140 is divided by a grass or concrete median, motorists coming in the opposite direction do not have to stop. Route 26 is a seven-lane highway, but it is **not** a divided highway; and, motorists are required to stop when approaching a bus with the red flashing warning lights activated in each direction.

Please help make this a safe school year for all bus riders *and* walkers. Motorists are an extremely important part of the safe pick-up and discharge of students. The Transportation Services Department hopes motorists will use an added degree of caution to protect our school children whenever buses are on the roads.

Transportation Services Policies

The Carroll County Public Schools' transportation system is operated under state and local policies and guidelines established by the Maryland State Department of Education and the Carroll County Board of Education. The Transportation Services Department emphasizes the following policies for parental information:

- To be eligible for bus transportation, public high and middle school students must live one mile or more from school. All elementary students are eligible for transportation. Students who are transported are expected, where necessary, to walk these same distances to bus routes or bus stops. This walking distance is not measured for persons living on unimproved roads or for special needs students.
- All eligible students shall be provided transportation to attend ONLY the school within their appropriate attendance area.
- Bus stops should be not less than 1/4 of a mile apart.
- One a.m. and one p.m. stop shall be allowed for each student. Exceptions will be made only in cases of an emergency or when an extenuating circumstance exists, and must be approved by the principal.
- Students should be at the bus stop five minutes prior to pick-up time.
- Students who must cross the road shall do so approximately ten feet in front of the bus and without unnecessary delay. Students should look both directions and cross only when the bus has stopped and activated its red warning lights. Never walk behind a bus.
- ***Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children while walking to or from school or the bus stop, and while waiting at the bus stop.***
- Those who are legally entitled to ride school buses are: bus contractors, bus drivers, assistants, assigned students, and employees assigned for student supervision. Without prior approval from the school principal, following a written request by the parent, students may not ride buses other than those to which they are regularly assigned.
- A student who damages a school bus in any manner shall be denied the privilege of riding. Suspension of riding privileges shall be authorized by the principal and may be restored after restitution has been made.
- Without prior approval by the driver, students shall not bring large musical instruments or bulky items on board. Live insects or animals are not permitted. If space is available and an unsafe situation is not created, students attending the Outdoor School Program shall be permitted to transport their luggage.



Kindergarten

Kindergarten students will ride to and from school on regular route buses with the remainder of the elementary school population. An identification tag will be provided which will list the drop-off address and bus number of each student in order to assist teachers and afternoon bus drivers with placing students on the proper bus and delivering them to the proper address. Students should wear the tag for **at least the first two weeks of school.**



Pre-Kindergarten

Carroll County Public Schools offers a half-day Pre-K program at most elementary schools. Elmer Wolfe, Cranberry Station, Robert Moton and Taneytown Elementary Schools offer full-day Pre-K Programs. Students attending full-day Pre-K will ride the regular education bus to and from school. Students who reside in an elementary school district which has a half-day Pre-K program may ride the regular education bus to school, attend school for two and one-half hours, and return on a special needs bus to their in district homes/daycares. The goal of this program is to reach out to any four-year old who qualifies in order to build upon academic and social skills. Pre-K students will not be dropped off without a responsible caregiver at the home/daycare. Pre-K students will receive a bus tag from the school that will have their name, home and return address and bus number. Please have your child wear this tag for **at least the first two weeks of school.** All Pre-K classes will start the second week of school.

Inclement Weather Policies

Any decision to close, delay opening or dismiss schools early due to inclement weather is not made lightly. Every effort will be made to provide an instructional school day consistent with the published school calendar, and with the primary concern always being the safe travel of all Carroll County Public Schools students. When inclement weather conditions occur, a decision might be made to delay the opening of school by two hours, to close school, or to dismiss school early. An announcement will be made for delayed openings or closings by 6:00 a.m. Every effort will be made to announce delays as early as possible. There also may be an announcement to delay school openings, with a re-evaluation period to possibly close schools. If no re-evaluation announcement is made by 7:15 a.m., schools will open two hours late as originally announced. All weather-related announcements will be made through the CCPS School Messenger E-mail Alert System, the CCPS website, CCPS CETV-Channel 21 and the following media outlets:

WTTR 1470 AM, WBAL-TV Channel 11, WJZ-TV Channel 13, WMAR-TV Channel 2, WBFF Fox 45, WPOC/WCAO/B104.3, WBAL Radio 1090 AM, Metro Network V-103 (WXTR, WWLG-AM, WGRX, WCAO, WASA, WANN, WBGR, WJHY, WNAV), Infinity Broadcasting (WQSR/WWMS/WMIX 106.5/WLIF 101.9), WRBS 95.1 FM, WAFY-KEY 103, WGET 1320, AM/WGTY 107.7 FM, WHVR 1280 AM/The PEAK 98.5 FM, WFMD 930 AM/WFRE 99.9.

Decisions to delay the opening of schools, close schools or dismiss schools early will affect the Career and Technology Center, Pre-Kindergarten and PREP Programs in the following ways:

SCHOOL OPENING DELAYED BY TWO HOURS

- Career & Technology Programs will be on an adjusted schedule. (See *School Times* for details)
- A.M. half-day Pre-Kindergarten and A.M. PREP Programs will be canceled.
- Full day Pre-Kindergarten will follow the Carroll County Public Schools' delayed schedule as announced.
- P.M. PREP Programs will be on a regular schedule.

SCHOOL CLOSING TO BE ONE HOUR EARLIER THAN USUAL

(Decision must be made by 11:45 a.m.)

- Career and Technology Program will be dismissed one hour early. (See *School Times* for details)
- A.M. half-day Pre-Kindergarten and A.M. PREP Programs still in session will be dismissed at regular time.
- P.M. PREP Programs will be canceled.

SCHOOL CLOSING TO BE TWO HOURS EARLIER THAN USUAL

(Decision must be made by 10:45 a.m.)

- Career and Technology Programs follow an **altered** schedule. (See *School Times* for details)
- A.M. half-day Pre-Kindergarten and A.M. PREP Programs still in session will be dismissed at 11:00 A.M.
- P.M. Prep Programs will be canceled.

SCHOOL CLOSING TO BE THREE HOURS EARLIER THAN USUAL

(Decision must be made by 9:45 am)

- Career and Technology Program will dismiss at 10:45 A.M.
- A.M. half-day Pre-Kindergarten and AM PREP Programs still in session will dismiss at 10:00 AM.
- P.M. PREP Programs will be canceled.

On days when schools are closed, or there is an early dismissal because of inclement weather, school activities scheduled for that evening, as well as the Adult Evening Program classes, may be canceled. The school system and/or individual school administrators will make separate announcements regarding evening and weekend activities that may be canceled.

***Buses will arrive as soon as possible.**

Roles and Responsibilities

The number one priority of everyone in the Transportation Services Department is the safe transport of students to and from school. In order to achieve this goal, the following basic guidelines governing the behavior of students are required to ensure a safe and orderly environment:

Student Responsibilities

- Be at the bus stop five minutes before a.m. pick up time.
- Walk safely to the bus stop and wait in a safe manner away from traffic. Board in an orderly manner, without pushing or shoving.
- Respect the rights of property owners while walking to or from and while waiting at the bus stop.
- Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop prior to boarding.
- Watch your step and use the handrail when getting on and off.
- Take your seat promptly and remain seated during the ride to and from school.
- Sit facing the front and keep your feet, books and belongings out of the aisle.
- Always keep your hands and head inside the bus.
- Speak quietly and respectfully to your bus driver and other students.
- Do not damage any part of the bus and report any damage that you see to the driver.
- Eating, drinking, smoking or using vulgar language is prohibited.
- Do not tamper with any of the bus equipment or controls.
- Your conduct should be quiet & orderly so the driver is not distracted from the important job of driving.
- Never throw any object on or outside the bus.
- Your driver is responsible for the safe operation of the bus; listen to his/her instructions.
- Wait until the bus has come to a complete stop before leaving your seat.
- Always cross ten feet in front of the bus under the protection of the red warning lights.
- Always look left, right, then left again to check for traffic before crossing any street, even when crossing in front of the bus with the red warning lights on.



Parent Responsibilities

The safe operation of any student transportation operation is best achieved with the cooperation and collaboration of parents, students and staff. Parents play a key part in the Transportation Services Department safety team. Parents can help ensure their children remain safe by following these guidelines:

- Be certain that your children arrive at the bus stop on time and dressed properly for weather and safety conditions. Students should arrive at the bus stop at least five minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time.
- Help your children develop and practice safe walking routes to and from school and the bus stop.
- Encourage your children to obey all traffic rules, signs and signals. The best instruction is often a good example.
- Accept responsibility for the proper conduct of your children before they board the bus and after they are discharged.
- Make every effort to cooperate with those who have the important job of getting your children to and from school safely.
- Remind your children to walk ten feet in front of the bus and to look both ways before crossing, only after the bus has stopped and has activated its red school warning lights. *NO ONE SHOULD EVER CROSS BEHIND THE BUS.*
- Teach your children that riding a school bus is a privilege, not a right. This privilege may be temporarily suspended or permanently revoked if a student's conduct jeopardizes themselves, or the safety of others.
- Teach your children to report to you, their school administrator or their teacher if they are approached by a stranger at the bus stop.
- Teach your children to carry their books, papers and school supplies either in a backpack or some container that can be held on their laps or between their legs on the floor.
- Teach your children to never pick up papers or objects that have dropped when they are crossing in front of the school bus. When this occurs, your children cannot be seen by the bus driver, and are in danger. The dropped object should be picked up after the bus has left the area.

- Remind children to make sure straps or other objects, are not hanging from their backpacks as they may become caught in the bus door when it closes.
- If you must drive your children to the bus stop, **please park at least thirty feet from the bus stop**. This will reduce congestion and allow room for students to safely board the bus.
- Remember that only the driver, students, school or transportation administrators are permitted to board the bus. Parents should *never board the bus* unless granted permission by the driver.

Transportation Services Department Responsibilities

- Route, schedule and tier school buses in adherence with federal, state and local guidelines so that all students eligible for transportation are given access to safe, adequate and economical bus transportation.
- Establish bus stop locations in adherence with state and local policies.
- Address concerns from parents, school administrators, bus drivers, contractors and the motoring public regarding the operation of Carroll County Public Schools' buses.
- Provide screening and training to ensure Carroll County Public Schools' bus drivers and assistants are highly qualified.
- Establish and enforce transportation procedures, regulations and rules.
- Inspect all buses in accordance with federal, state and local statutes and regulations.
- Provide critical data regarding school bus number, pick up and drop off times and stop locations, to parents through schools, the CCPS web site and local newspapers. This data is provided in mid-August every year. Pick up and drop off times are estimates only and are subject to change.
- Notify parents when school bus changes occur so that they can make necessary adjustments.

Driver Responsibilities

- Follow the designated route, time and schedule.
- Pick up and discharge students only at approved stops.
- Ensure the bus is in safe operating condition.
- Maintain a safe and orderly environment on the school bus.
- Inform students of behavioral expectations.
- Report unacceptable behavioral violations to the school administrator.
- Drive the bus in a safe and professional manner.

Disciplinary Procedures

Riding the school bus is a privilege

A student who does not follow the school bus safety rules, endangers himself or others, or who does not respect the rights of others, may lose his/her riding privilege. In order to maintain a safe and orderly school bus environment, it may be necessary to use disciplinary measures with students displaying unacceptable behavior. The disciplinary steps a driver should implement are listed below:

1. **First Offense** - The bus driver will warn the student that the behavior is inappropriate and that a disciplinary referral will result if the behavior continues.
2. **Second Offense** -The bus driver will write a disciplinary referral to be submitted to the school administrator and recorded. The school administrator will send a warning letter to parents.
3. **Third Offense** -The school administrator may suspend the student's bus riding privilege for up to one week.
4. **Fourth Offense** -The school administrator may suspend the student's bus riding privilege for one week or longer.
5. **Fifth Offense**—The school administrator may revoke the student's bus riding privilege.

Fighting and other unsafe actions may cause immediate suspension.

Why Should My Child Ride the Bus?

Some parents struggle with the decision to allow their children to ride the school bus. Their reasoning may be that they believe their children will be better protected from danger in the family car than with an unknown bus driver. For this reason, many parents drive their children to school. Other parents choose to drive their children to school for convenience or to spend additional quality time with their children. Although the parents making this choice believe they are protecting their kids, the reality is that no form of transportation is safer than the school bus. In fact, a well-meaning parent's decision to drive their children to school puts their children in significantly higher risk of injury or death than using the yellow school bus. For students' safety, we ask parents to use the school bus transportation afforded them by the Carroll County Board of Education.

Consider the Facts

- School bus drivers are professionally trained and undergo rigorous pre-service training, pre-employment drug screening, criminal background checks, random drug screening after certification, yearly in-service education and regular performance evaluations.
- School buses are thoroughly inspected at least three times a year, are built with reinforced steel to remain intact during collisions and are larger than most other vehicles on the road. The sheer size and weight of a school bus affords students additional protection.
- Passive passenger restraint is provided by compartmentalization. In case of an accident, students are protected by the padded, high-back seats in front and in back of them.
- School buses are equipped with safety features which include: emergency window exits, a rear emergency door exit, roof hatches, a fire extinguisher, safety flares, a first aid kit and a body fluid kit.
- The statistics about school bus safety deserve consideration:
- Less than one percent of youth fatalities during school travel hours occur on a school bus.
- The school bus is **70** times safer than the family car.
- According to the National Safety Council, the national school average accident rate for the school bus industry is 0.01 per 100 million miles traveled, compared to 0.04 for trains, 0.06 for commercial aviation and 0.96 for other passenger vehicles.
- According to the Transportation Research Board, school buses represent 25% of all the miles traveled by students, but account for less than 4% of the injuries.

Digital Cameras

Digital cameras with video and audio capabilities are installed on all CCPS buses in order to protect students and staff as well as provide for a safe and orderly environment. The privacy of students and the recording are kept secure and are reviewed **only** by authorized CCPS personnel.



TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT STAFF

DIRECTOR:

MICHAEL HARDESTY

SUPERVISOR:

KEITH SHORTER
SOUTH CARROLL AREA
AND
OUT-OF-COUNTY SPECIAL NEEDS

AREA SUPERVISORS:

KRISTIN EBERT
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JOHN O'MEALLY
NORTH CARROLL
AND
FRANCIS SCOTT KEY
AREAS

SCOTT PARSONS
WESTMINSTER AREA

Office Phone: 410-751-3229
Office Hours: 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (school days)

CONSENT AND RELEASE

Permission to Photograph, Videotape or Audiotape

Throughout the school year, the Carroll County Public School System frequently covers school activities and may use your child's photograph, video image, or voice for educational, informational, or public relations purposes, with or without identification by name.

If you do not wish to have your child's voice reproduced on tape or to have his/her image appear in such things as a video or a photograph, or on the school or school system website or social media, please notify the school principal in writing. It is assumed that parents and guardians consent to their children being audiotaped, photographed, videotaped, or having their image placed on a school website or social media by the school system unless such notification is received.

There are also occasions when the media cover certain school events (such as when a government leader visits a school). If you do not wish to have your child's name or likeness published by the media, you should address your concerns directly to the school involved so that the media is so advised. Please be advised that the school system has no control over the media when they are covering activities such as sporting events and musical programs that are open to the public.

Use of Student Work on Websites or in Publications

There may be times throughout the year when the Carroll County Public School System wishes to display student work on school websites, social media, or in publications. If you do not wish to have your child's art, poetry, writing, etc. appear on school websites, social media, or in publications, please notify the school principal in writing. It is assumed that parents and guardians consent to their child's work being displayed on school websites, social media, or in publications unless such notification is received.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Board of Education of Carroll County does not engage in discrimination that is unlawful or contrary to Maryland State Department of Education guidance on the basis of age, color, genetic information, marital status, mental or physical disability, ancestry or national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

The Board of Education of Carroll County is firmly committed to creating equal employment and educational opportunities for all persons by providing an environment that supports optimal academic achievement and productive work and is free from any form of unlawful discrimination, including access to school facilities, educational programs, and extracurricular activities.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Director of Human Resources, 125 North Court Street, Westminster, Maryland 21157, (410) 751-3070.

ADA ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS) does not discriminate on the basis of disability in employment or the provision of services, programs or activities. Persons needing auxiliary aids and services for communication should contact the Communications Office at 410-751-3020 or publicinfo@carrollk12.org, or write to Carroll County Public Schools, 125 North Court Street, Westminster, Maryland 21157. Persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, may use Relay or 7-1-1. Please contact the school system at least one (1) week in advance of the date the special accommodation is needed.

Information concerning the Americans with Disabilities Act is available from the Director of Facilities Management, (410) 751-3177, or the Communications Officer, (410) 751-3020, 125 North Court Street, Westminster, Maryland 21157.

ALWAYS CROSS IN FRONT

