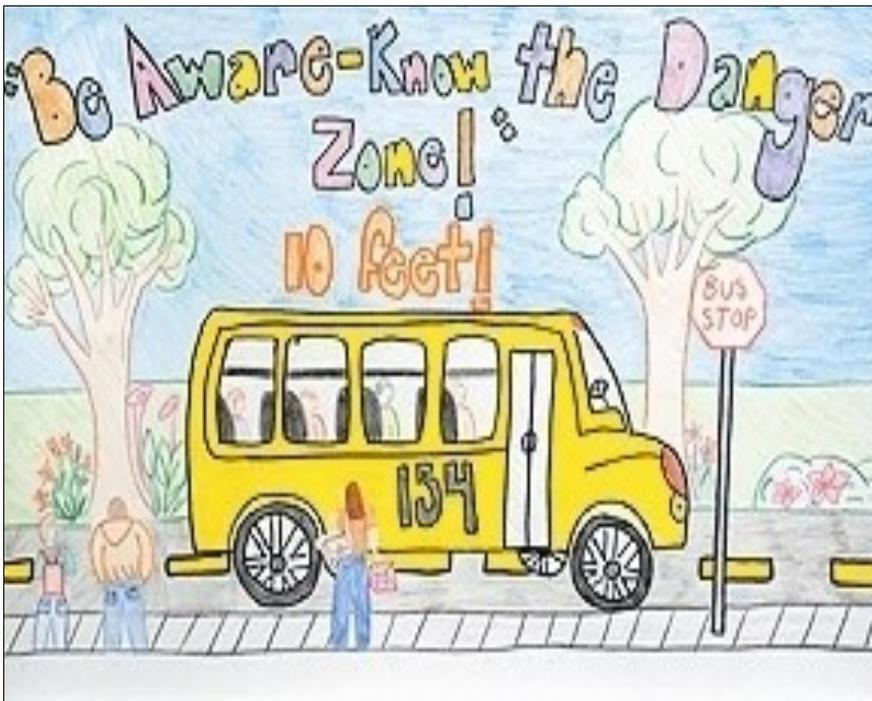


**ALWAYS CROSS IN  
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**2015 - 2016  
SAFETY FIRST HANDBOOK  
FOR  
PARENTS AND STUDENTS**



**Carroll County Public Schools  
Transportation Services  
Department  
125 North Court Street  
Westminster, MD 21157  
410-751-3229  
[www.carrollk12.org](http://www.carrollk12.org)**

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## AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The 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 Office of Community and Media Relations at 410-751-3020 or [publicinfo@carrollk12.org](mailto: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 or the Supervisor of Community and Media Relations:

Raymond Prokop  
 Director of Facilities  
 125 N. Court Street  
 Westminster, MD 21157

Carey Gaddis  
 Supervisor of Community  
 Media Relations  
 125 N. Court Street  
 Westminster, MD 21157

410-751-3177

410-751-3020

### NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS) is firmly committed to creating equal employment and educational opportunities for all persons with regard to its employment practices and in the provision of services, programs and activities. (CCPS) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ancestry or national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The CCPS provides nondiscriminatory access to school facilities in accordance with its policies and regulations regarding the community use of schools (including, but not limited to, the Boy Scouts). The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Gregory J. Bricca  
 Director of Research and Accountability  
 125 N. Court Street  
 Westminster, MD 21157  
 410-751-3068

## 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 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 a significantly higher risk of injury or death than using the yellow school bus. For the safety of children, 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 four 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 and a first aid kit.
- The statistics about school bus safety deserve consideration:
  - \* For every 100,000 passenger miles traveled in a car nationwide, there are an average of **.94** deaths. There are only **.01** deaths which occur per 100,000 miles traveled on school buses nationwide.
  - \* Annually an average of **600** school-age children are killed during school hours in a vehicle other than a school bus. An average of **10** children on a school bus are killed annually. The school bus is **87** times safer than the family car.

## TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT

### 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 wannabe’s. 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 25,000 students are enrolled in Carroll County Public Schools and nearly 24,000 of these students will be riding school buses. While providing over 260 buses, traveling over 5.1 million 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, are subject to pre-employment drug testing, pre-employment 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.

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

- **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.
- **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.
- **Third Offense** -The school administrator may suspend the student's bus riding privilege for up to one week.
- **Fourth Offense** -The school administrator may suspend the student's bus riding privilege for one week or longer.
- **Fifth Offense** – The school administrator may revoke the student's bus riding privilege.

***Fighting and other unsafe actions may cause immediate suspension.***

**DIGITAL CAMERAS**

Digital cameras with video/audio capabilities are installed on all CCPS buses 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.



## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Transportation Services' Responsibility

- 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 time and stop location 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's Responsibility

- Follow the designated route, time and schedule.
- Pick up and discharge students at approved stops only.
- 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 as necessary.
- Drive the bus in a safe and professional manner.



### 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 Pre-K program at most elementary schools. 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. Transportation is available for these students. Students who reside in an elementary school district which has a Pre-K program may ride the regular school bus to school. These students will attend school for 2 1/2 hours and will be returned to their homes/daycares. 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 the at least the first **two** weeks of school. All Pre-K classes will start the second week of school.

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, for 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, which 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 8-light warning system, activating the amber flashing lights 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 in 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 drop off 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 is **not** a divided highway, and motorists are required to stop when approaching a bus with the red flashing warning lights activated.

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

**Parents' Responsibility**

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 the guidelines listed below:

- Be certain that your children arrive at the bus stop on time and dressed properly for weather and safety conditions. The Transportation Services Department recommends students arrive at the bus stop 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 red school lights. **No one should ever cross behind the bus.**
- Teach your child 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, the 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 back pack 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 stuck 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.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

### **Student's Responsibility**

- Be at the bus stop five minutes before 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.

## 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. 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 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 10 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 equipment.



## INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES

When inclement weather conditions occur, a decision may 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/closings as early as possible. Also, there 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 7:00 a.m., schools will open two hours late as originally announced. All weather-related announcements will be made through the CCPS Connect-5 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/W MIX 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 Pre-K and PREP Programs as follows:**

### **School Opening Delayed by Two Hours:**

- A.M. Pre-K and PREP Programs will be canceled.
- P.M. PREP Program will be on a regular schedule.



## INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES

### **School Closing to be One Hour Early:** (A Decision will be made by 11:45 a.m.)

- A.M. Pre-K and PREP Programs will be dismissed on a regular schedule.
- P.M. PREP Programs will be canceled.

### **School Closing to be Two Hours Early:** (A Decision will be made by 10:45 a.m.)

- \*A.M. Pre-K and PREP Programs still in session, will be dismissed at 11:00 a.m.
- P.M. PREP Program will be canceled.



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### **School Closing to be Three Hours Early:** (A Decision will be made by 9:45 a.m.)

- A.M. Pre-K and PREP Programs will dismiss at 10:00 a.m.\*
- 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 or individual school administrators will make separate announcements regarding evening and weekend activities. 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 our foremost concern always being the safe travel of all Carroll County Public School students.



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