# TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK
# FOR
# PARENTS AND STUDENTS




**Carroll County Public Schools**
**Transportation Department**
**125 North Court Street**
**Westminster, MD 21157**
**410-751-3229**
**www.carrollk12.org/Administration/Transportation**

**updated June 2022**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS


Mission Statement……..…….…3

Transportation Services Facts…….……3

School Bus Stop Law Violations…….…..……..4

Transportation Services Policies……..……...….5

Kindergarten & Pre-K……6

Inclement Weather Procedures…….…..7

Roles and Responsibilities:

Student……..…….9

Parent……...10

Transportation Services Department……11

Driver……..……..11

Disciplianay Procedures…….……12

Digital Cameras……..12

Why Should My Child Ride the Bus?.....13

Transportation Supervisors List……..….14

Americans With Disabilities Act……15

Notice of Non-Discrimination……15

## 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 24,600 students are enrolled in Carroll County Public Schools and nearly 23,600 of these students are eligible to ride school buses. While providing over 250 buses, traveling over 5,400,000 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 maintain 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 or local law enforcement agencies 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!**




Carroll County buses have been equipped with technology to record and process stop law violations instantly when they occur. "Flagged" violations are sent directly to a central location for initial verification, and then forwarded to the Carroll County Sheriff's Department for final approval. Once a violation has been approved, the vehicle owner is sent an evidence package via U.S. mail, which includes a $250. Fine. It is the goal of the Transportation Services Department that this program will reduce the number of stop law violations and make our students safer while loading and unloading the bus.

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 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 it 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 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. 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 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, 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 may 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.







## 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 full-day and half-day Pre-K programs at most elementary schools. 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 may ride the regular education bus to school, attend school for two and one half hours and will be returned on a special needs bus to their home/daycare. 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 Procedures

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/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 7:15 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 930AM, 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. half-day and A.M. PREP Programs will be canceled.
- P.M. PREP Program will be on a regular schedule.
- Full-day Pre-K Programs will operate on a two-hour delay.

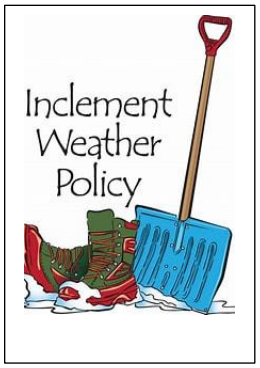







# INCLEMENT WEATHER INFORMATION

## School Closings 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 at the regular time
- P.M. PREP Programs will be canceled.

## School Closings to be Two Hours Early:

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

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




## School Closings to be Three Hours Early:

(A Decision will be made by 9:45 a.m.)

- A.M. half-day Pre-K and PREP Programs will dismiss at 10:00 a.m.*
- Full-day Pre-K students will dismiss with the regular student body and ride their regular bus home.
- 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 administrator 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***



## Roles and Responsibilities

The safe transport of students to and from school is the number one priority of everyone in the Transportation Services Department. 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'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.



## Roles and Responsibilities

## 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 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 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 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.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Transportation Services Department

- 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 location, to parents through schools, and the CCPS web site. 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/schools 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 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 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:

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.***

## Digital Cameras

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



## 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 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:

- 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
410-751-3229

DIRECTOR:

MICHAEL HARDESTY

AREA SUPERVISORS:

KEITH SHORTER FOR:
LIBERTY, SOUTH CARROLL
AND CENTURY HIGH AREAS
AND
OUT OF COUNTY SPECIAL NEEDS

KRISTIN EBERT FOR:
IN-COUNTY SPECIAL NEEDS

JOHN O'MEALLY FOR
MANCHESTER VALLEY AND FRANCIS SCOTT KEY HIGH AREAS

SCOTT PARSONS FOR
WESTMINSTER AND WINTERS MILL HIGH AREAS

For more information, please go to our web site: www.carrollk12.org
Operations/Transportation

## 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.

## 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.

**ALWAYS CROSS IN FRONT**

