

Kalamazoo Public Schools

What Everyone Should Know About Bus Transportation in KPS

2023-24

KPS Transportation provides safe and efficient transportation for students to KPS programs and schools each day to ensure that students are on time and ready to learn. Effective transportation requires the cooperation of all persons involved, including students, parents, bus drivers, principals and all school staff.

Our Drivers

Before being hired, each new driver trainee must pass a Department of Transportation (D.O.T.) physical and drug screen, a state police background check including fingerprinting and a driver's license check.

Bus Driver certifications and standards are mandated by both the state and federal D.O.T. Each driver must pass a D.O.T. physical a minimum of every two years and is subject to random drug and alcohol testing throughout the year.

New driver trainees receive in excess of 100 hours of training with a school bus trainer over a minimum of three weeks. In addition to driving and pre-trip skills training, their instruction includes emergency procedures, student pick-up and drop-off procedures, behavior management and other school bus procedures.

Trainees are tested by a Michigan Certified Third-Party Examiner before they are allowed to drive students. This test includes a pre-trip inspection, on-road driving and emergency procedures.

During their first ninety days of driving, each driver must attend a state-mandated three day Beginning School Bus Driver class.

Every other year each driver must attend a state-mandated Advanced Bus Driver class.

At the beginning of each school year drivers attend three days of staff development on various topics including: CPR and First Aid, *CPI Nonviolent Crisis Intervention*, working with students with special needs, policy and procedures updates and many other safety related topics.

Our Fleet

With a staff of 120 employees, we provide daily transportation services to approximately 8,000 students. These students attend general education, special education and non-public programs in 51 schools, located both within and outside the KPS boundary. We are also responsible for transportation services for 16 after school programs each week and more than 1,500 off-site learning experiences and athletic trips each year.

Each year, all school buses must pass a strict vehicle safety inspection by a Michigan state vehicle inspector. During our 2022/23 inspection, our buses passed with all green tags (no red or yellow tags which indicate needed repairs). We employ 6 mechanics to service our fleet of 121 buses. During the 2022/23 school year, our buses traveled over 1,000,000 miles. Our buses consumed approximately 116,000 gallons of diesel fuel and 179,000 gallons of unleaded fuel. We added to our fleet one of the first electric school buses in the State of Michigan. In addition to buses, our mechanics provide service for approximately 60 other district-owned vehicles used by schools and the maintenance department.

Student Responsibilities

The bus driver is required to watch the road ahead, be aware of traffic conditions on the side and from behind, and anticipate the actions of other drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians. The driver's attention should not be distracted by unnecessary student activity.

Students who ride the bus must not jeopardize their own safety or the safety of others. Busing is a privilege which will be denied if students do not follow bus safety rules.

Students awaiting arrival of the school bus:

- Shall not stand or play in the roadway.
- Will respect the property of the owners of the land/homes adjacent to the bus stop.
- Will wait to cross the street when the bus arrives until it comes to a complete stop and the driver signals for them to cross the road.
- Will line up and remain at least five feet from the stopped bus and not approach the bus until the bus door opens.

Students boarding the bus:

- Shall only ride their assigned bus.
- Shall obey the driver's instructions at all times.
- Will only carry items on the bus that they can hold on their lap.
- Shall be seated immediately and remain seated at all times while the bus is in motion.
- Will sit in their assigned seat (if one has been assigned).
- Will keep arms and hands inside the bus.
- Shall not throw items out of the bus window.
- Eating will not be allowed on the bus.
- Will keep aisles clear.
- Shall keep their voice volume to a conversation level.
- Will keep their hands to themselves.
- Shall assist in keeping the bus clean.

Students leaving the bus:

- Shall, if necessary to cross the road, pass in front of the cross-arm and cross only when the driver signals them to cross.
- Shall exit the bus only at their assigned stop.
- Shall promptly move away from the bus.
- Shall not throw objects at the bus.

All school rules and regulations apply when students are under the jurisdiction of the school. This includes all student transportation activities (to and from school, field trips, after-school related activities and all other school-sponsored events).

The sections that follow detail the infractions as well as the possible range of consequences to the violations of the Student Code of Conduct. If a specific consequence is not stated for a violation of a particular rule, then reasonable disciplinary actions may be taken. All actions are at the discretion of the administration and/or designee. Actions may range from a verbal warning to a recommendation for expulsion depending on the nature and severity of the offense, the prior behavior records for the student, the recommendation of school personnel and other relevant circumstances.

Category 1 Infractions Include:

- Standing; walking on the bus while in motion.
- Eating or drinking on the bus.
- Refusing to follow bus rules.
- Profanity/obscenity.
- Disruptive or unsafe behavior.

Category 1 Consequences Include:

- Verbal reprimand.
- Parent/guardian contact and/or conference.
- Individual plan or seating assignment.
- Restorative practices.
- Referral to support services.
- Detention (at school); parent must provide transportation.

Category 2 Infractions Include:

- Riding a bus not assigned to or when suspended from the bus.
- Fighting
- Bullying
- Harassment
- Intentional damage, destruction of property.
- Potentially harmful behavior to oneself or others.
- Refusing to identify oneself.
- Inappropriate physical contact.
- Inciting others to break bus/school rules.
- Illegal substance usage and possession.
- Weapon “look-alike/replica /toys”.
- Extreme or repeated violation of Category 1 offense(s).

Category 2 Consequences Include:

- Required parent/guardian meeting.
- Referral to support services.
- Suspension for 1-3 days from bus.
- Individual plan or seating assignment.
- Restitution of damages.
- Confiscation of item; notify school authorities and Public Safety notified if appropriate.

Category 3 Infractions Include:

- Assault
- Arson
- Battery
- Bomb threat
- Explosives or fireworks
- Illegal substances
- Vandalism
- Weapon
- Using an object as a weapon.
- Sexual misconduct.
- Extreme or repeated violation of category 2 offense(s).

Category 3 Consequences Include:

- Suspension of bus privileges up to ten days.
- Public Safety notified where necessary.
- School administration notified.
- Restitution of damages.
- Expulsion/Exclusion.

Bus suspensions only affect the ride to and from school. Students are expected to be in attendance at school unless the suspension is from school specifically.

Any other offense not specifically listed, which are similar to above violations may be subject to classification as Category 1, 2 or 3 Infractions by school/bus authorities

**Students are held accountable for all rules as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and school officials will use that publication as an outline when dealing with infractions taking place on the bus or at the bus stop.*

Parent Responsibilities

To insure a safe ride to and from school for your child, we ask your cooperation in the following:

- Explain the above rules to your child and make sure he/she understands them.
- Get to know your child's bus driver and know their bus number.
- Be sure your child is at the bus stop ten (10) minutes before the scheduled time.
- Students should not be inside vehicles waiting for the bus – this creates a danger when students get out of cars and run for the bus.
- Have your child dressed properly for cold and rainy weather.
- Be sure your child waits a safe distance from the road and refrains from horseplay.
- Encourage your child to respect private property while waiting for the bus.
- Insist on good behavior and cooperation on the part of your child so the bus driver can concentrate on driving the bus.
- Practice the bus routines before the first day of school. Make sure your child knows how to get home from the bus stop. Students enrolled in K-12 programs are allowed to exit the bus without being met by an adult unless enrolled in a program that requires the student to be met. Teach them to never get off the bus if they do not know where they are.

- Do not ask the driver to change the bus stop.
- Have your child ride only their assigned bus(es). Your student may have up to two regularly scheduled morning pick-up locations and up to two regularly scheduled drop off locations. Pick-up and drop-off locations must be on a set schedule. Telephone calls or written notes for same-day or temporary bus assignments will not be accepted.
- Inform your child's school of any change of address as soon as possible. It may take a few days to schedule a new bus stop.
- An individual may not enter a school bus without the authorization of the bus driver. An unauthorized person attempting to board a school bus is subject to citation for a civil infraction and may be ordered to pay a civil fine of not more than \$500.
- Transport your student to school if they have been suspended from the bus.
- Bus stops are dropped if there has been no one at the stop for ten days. Bus pick-up and drop-off times change as bus stops are added and deleted from routes. If your child has not ridden the bus in ten days, contact Transportation for schedule updates before your child begins riding the bus again.
- Allow the driver to control bus crossing directives.

Principal/School Staff Responsibilities

It is important for students' academic achievement to arrive at school safe, on-time and ready to learn. School staff can help facilitate safe, efficient transportation by:

- Designating a safe location at the school for bus drop-offs and pick-ups that is away from parent vehicle traffic to the extent possible.
- Assigning staff to supervise at the bus drop-off and pick-up location and prohibiting public parking and person vehicle drop-offs in the bus area.
- Assigning a staff person to release buses when all students have boarded their buses.
- Insuring that students understand school bus rules and regulations and insisting that they must be followed.
- Providing support for the drivers in their effort to maintain good school bus conduct and observance of the rules.
- Encouraging teachers to include "riding the school bus" in appropriate lessons dealing with positive behavior support and safety.
- Promoting parental support in matters pertaining to school transportation.
- Promptly investigating reported violations of bus rules and regulations and taking appropriate action.

- Returning the referral form with action taken noted on the form to Transportation. The form will be returned to the driver.
- Immediately notifying the Transportation Department of student enrollments/address changes so that students can be assigned a bus in a timely manner.
- Insuring that all students placed on a bus have an assigned bus stop.
- Informing drivers of new students or change in bus stop locations when placing them on the bus.
- Keeping the school building staffed and accessible by phone before opening and until all students have been returned safely to their homes. Be available to receive any students returned to the building, especially PEEP students and students with special needs, and provide assistance with searching for students reported to not have arrived home.
- Reminding staff to not send snacks home with students at the end of the day.
- Not allowing students to ride buses they are not assigned to.

The building principal is ultimately responsible for discipline in the building and on the bus.

Bus Driver Responsibilities

The bus driver is carefully selected and professionally trained for his/her job. Providing safe and efficient transportation is their goal. To do this they shall:

- Safely deliver students to and from school on time and in a welcoming atmosphere where students feel valued and cared about.
- Follow a planned route and time schedule.
- Make pick-ups and drop-offs at scheduled stops only.
- Keep the bus clean and in safe operating condition.
- Operate their bus following all traffic and school bus laws and regulations.
- Adhere to all KPS policies and procedures.
- Maintain acceptable control on the bus.
- Inform students of bus rules and consequences.
- Attempt to learn their student's names.
- Report violations of bus rules and regulations to the principal on the proper referral forms.