

Calvert County Public Schools

Parent / Student Transportation Handbook



2019-2020

**Daniel D. Curry, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools**



This document is revised and published annually by:

Department of Transportation
Calvert County Public Schools
1305 Dares Beach Road Prince Frederick,
MD 20678 (443) 550-8786
FAX: (410) 286-4000
<http://www.calvertnet.k12.md.us>

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Calvert County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, ancestry or national origin, familial status, marital status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or genetic information or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

*Director of Student Services
Director of Human Resources*

443-550-8000

For further information on notice of non-discrimination, visit the Office of Civil Rights Complaint Assessment System at: <http://ocrcas.ed.gov>, or call 1-800-421-3481.

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Transportation FAQs

- How do I determine the school my student will attend?
 - To locate a school's attendance boundary based on an address visit:
<https://ccpseducation.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=9c7e7604136b48b484c44e346a69ac79>.
- How do I locate a student's bus assignment by address?
 - To locate a bus assignment by address access the bus stop locator:
<https://vtweb.tylertech.com/calvert/elinkrp/Students/BasicTransBoundarySearch.aspx>.
- How do I know if my bus is running late?
 - If you believe a bus is running late, please visit the bus status page:
http://www.calvertnet.k12.md.us/departments/student_transportation/transportation_program_information/bus_status.
- How am I notified of my Pre-K/Special Education student's bus information?
 - The bus driver will call a student's parent / guardian to advise the bus stop location and times.
- When will my transportation requests for a Pre-K/Special Education student be implemented?
 - Implementation will take up to four days from the date the Transportation Department receives the request.
- What steps are taken to temporarily change a Pre-K through 2nd grade student's bus stop location and responsible adult at a drop-off location?
 - Notify the student's school in a timely manner reference any school bus stop change and the school will notify the assigned bus driver. In addition, the school will notify the assigned bus driver of any responsible adult change at a drop-off location. The adult will be required to show proper ID prior to the student being released into their custody.
- At what age may my student be allowed to get off at the bus stop without an adult present?
 - Students in PK through 2nd grade must have an adult or family member present to get off the bus. If the student has an older sibling on the bus, they may get off the bus with that sibling.

Calvert County Public Schools' transportation services are available to every student enrolled in the school system. The Department of Transportation strives to provide economical and efficient transportation for all students which is safe, both physically and emotionally in compliance with federal, state and local policies and procedures.

Transportation designs, monitors and revises over 150 daily school bus routes while also scheduling hundreds of co- and extra-curricular bus trips for instructional supervisors.

Transportation Facts

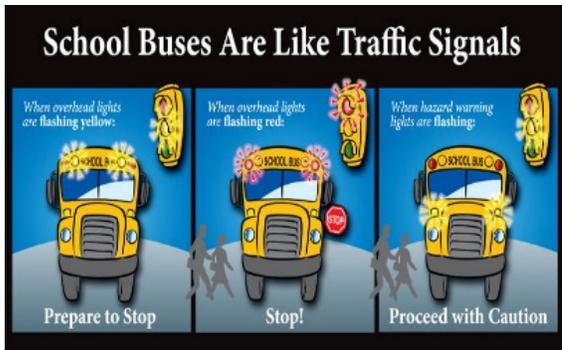
Approximately 15,500 students are enrolled in Calvert County Public Schools and nearly 12,000 of these students will be riding school buses. While providing over 150 buses, traveling over 3,100,000 miles, the Transportation Department of the Calvert County Board of Education continuously routes and re-routes 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 Department, conducts three additional comprehensive safety inspections during the school year.

Drivers on all Calvert 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 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, pass a US DOT Medical Examination every year and are regularly evaluated by on-the-road observations.

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 Department, in cooperation with the Maryland State Police, Calvert County Sheriff's Office 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 200 feet in advance of the bus stop. The red warning lights are then activated when the bus is fully stopped. The message is clear:



Prepare to Stop and DO NOT Run the Red 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 Calvert County, particularly on state roads, 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 4 is divided by a grass median, motorists coming in the opposite direction do not have to stop.

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

Transportation Procedures

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

- **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.**
- Students in PK through 2nd grade must have an adult or family member present to get off the bus. If the student has an older sibling on the bus, they may get off the bus with that sibling.
- Students who are transported are expected, where necessary, to walk from where your driveway intersects with the roadway up to 1 mile for secondary students and ½ mile for elementary students to 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 exist. The parent must make the request in writing and must be approved by the principal and the Transportation Department.
- 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 he bus has stopped and activated its red warning lights. **Never walk behind a bus or use any electronic devices when crossing a road.**
- A family member, known to the bus driver, must be present at the bus stop for students in the second grade or younger.
- A student who damages a school bus in any manner shall be denied the privilege of riding. Suspension of riding privileges may be authorized by the principal and may be restored after restitution has been made.
- If space is available and an unsafe situation is not created, students shall be permitted to transport their equipment bags, instruments and projects on the bus. Live insects or animals are not permitted

Unauthorized Entry onto a Bus

School buses are the proprietary use of Calvert County Public Schools with the purpose of safely transporting students to and from school or school-sponsored activities. Parents may not board school buses without the consent of Calvert County Public Schools or its authorized agent. Doing so may constitute a violation of Maryland Education Article, Sections 26-101, *Disturbing activities at school or college* and 26-104, *Obstruction, hindrance, or interference with school bus driver during official duties.*

- Those who are legally entitled to ride school buses are: bus contractors, bus drivers, bus assistants, assigned students, and school employees. 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.

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.*** Kindergarten students must be accompanied by a family member or an adult at their bus stop.

Pre-Kindergarten

Calvert County Public Schools offers a half-day Pre-K program at most elementary schools. 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 midday bus to their homes/daycares or will be picked up by a midday bus at their home/daycare, attend school for two and one half hours and then ride the regular education bus to home/daycare at the end of the school day. 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 bus stop. 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. Pre-Kindergarten students must be accompanied by a family member or an adult at their bus stop.

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 by 5:15 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 School Messenger Alert System, the CCPS website and the following media outlets:

**Television Channels: WRC-TV NBC 4, WTTG Fox 5, WJLA ABC 7, WUSA CBS 9,
Radio Stations: 97.7 FM (The Rocket), 98.3 STAR FM, 102.9 FM WKIK, 103.5 FM
WTOP**

Decisions to delay the opening of schools, close schools or dismiss schools early will affect the Pre-K and Special Pre-K programs as follows:

School Opening Delayed by Two Hours:

- A.M. Pre-K/Special Pre-K programs will be canceled.
- Dual placed students will be picked up 2 hours late.
- P.M. Pre-K/Special Pre-K programs will be on a regular schedule.
- **If there is a planned early dismissal and schools must delay opening due to weather, the early dismissal will be cancelled, and students will stay in school until the end of the regular day.**

Emergency School Closings are typically Two Hours Early:

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

- A.M. Pre-K programs, as well as students in the A.M. Head Start program who reside within the school's attendance area, will not be taken home at their usual times. They will remain at school, be provided lunch, and go home with students in grades K-5.
- Students who are bussed into a Head Start or Pre-K program from another school's attendance area will leave school at 11:00AM on the buses serving regional programs.
- P.M. Pre-K Program will be cancelled.

Regularly scheduled two-hour early school closings:

- Regular AM Pre-K, Special Education Pre-K, and dual placed students leave the schools by 11 AM.
- PM Pre-K will be cancelled.

The number one priority of everyone in the Transportation 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's Responsibility

- Be at the bus stop **five minutes before pickup 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.
- No walking or running towards the bus until the doors are open.
- 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 toes and nose facing forward.
- Keep 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 open or use any body spray on the bus. This includes, perfume, deodorant, lotions, cologne etc.....
- 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 safely.
- 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.
- ***Never cross behind the bus.***
- 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.

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 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 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.
- Meet the bus at the bus stop for students in grades PK through second grade. Students in third grade and above will be dropped off without a parent at the bus stop.
- 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 or use electronic devices while crossing the road.***
- 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 along the same side of the street. This will reduce congestion and allow room for students to safely board the bus.
- Remember that only the bus driver, bus contractor, students, school staff or transportation administrators are permitted to board the bus. Parents should never board the bus unless granted permission by the driver.

Transportation 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 Calvert County Public Schools' buses.
- Provide screening and training to ensure Calvert 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 and the CCPS website. This data is provided in mid-August every year. Pick up and drop off times are estimates only and are subject to change during the school year and from year to year.
- Notify parents four school days prior to when the changes occur so that they can make the 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 parents and school administrator.
- Drive the bus in a safe and professional manner.
- Do not drop off a student in grades PK-2 without a family member or adult present for that student.

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 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 and their parent 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

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.



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 at a significantly higher risk of injury or death than using the yellow school bus. Parents driving their students to and from school also leads to tremendous traffic congestion at many of our schools. For students' safety, we ask parents to use the school bus transportation afforded them by the Calvert County Public Schools.

Consider the Facts

- School bus drivers are professionally trained and undergo rigorous pre-service training, pre-employment drug screening, criminal background checks, random drug screenings after certification, yearly in-service education, yearly physicals 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 behind them when they are seated properly.
- 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 Staff

Director:

Ed Cassidy

Supervisor:

Kevin Hook

Senior Transportation Routing Specialist:

Lionell Sewell

Router:

Traci Lowery

Driver Trainer

Chuck Baker

Office Secretaries

Michelle Arocho

Tyeashia Hurley