

## **TRANSPORTATION**

An essential element of the education process is the safe and efficient transportation of students as they travel between home and school. The success of this undertaking relies on the collective responsibility and efforts of drivers, students, parents, schools, and the transportation department. School bus drivers go through a rigorous driver training and certification process set forth by school system, state, and federal regulations. This driver preparation includes annual training regarding safe driving methods and student behavior management techniques for all drivers provided by CCPS Transportation.

Maryland State Department of Education law requires students to participate in two school bus evacuation drills during the school year. One drill is conducted in the fall and another is conducted in the spring. Bus evacuation drills teach students how to react in a possible emergency situation.

Prekindergarten and kindergarten students will not be left unattended when dropped off at bus stops. If the parent or other responsible adult is not present at the drop-off, the driver will return the child to school where it will be the parent's responsibility to pick up the child. Should this become a continual problem, the student could receive a suspension of bus privileges. The school office should be notified immediately when an emergency situation arises that prevents the parent or other responsible adult from being at the bus stop.

Student transportation to and from school is a privilege and not a right. The public school system is not required to transport students to and from school, and students may be denied transportation if they violate the rules set forth by the school and the transportation department. Inappropriate behavior on the school bus is considered serious, unsafe misconduct, as this type of behavior on a bus may have more severe implications. Infractions are handled at the school level.

A student's bus riding privileges may be suspended for a period of time or for the remainder of the school year. Students suspended from their school bus may not ride any other school bus to or from school while they are on bus suspension. Parents are notified by school staff if there is a bus infraction and of the disciplinary action taken. Any student suspended from the bus may be required to attend a re-admit conference with parents and school officials before being granted school bus riding privileges. The school bus ride is an extension of the school day, and consequences of student misbehavior may result in school disciplinary measures being taken that might include suspension from school.

Any action on a school bus that could result in a suspension from school may also result in a suspension from the school bus for any amount of time up to and including the remainder of the school year. This may include any violation of the *Code of Student Conduct* while on a school bus, such as the possession of a weapon, alcohol, tobacco, or a controlled dangerous substance.

## **School Bus Rules**

1. Be courteous and respectful of the driver and all passengers; use no profane or abusive language. Bullying or harassing behaviors are unacceptable.
2. Keep the bus clean- avoid drinking, eating, or chewing gum on the bus.
3. Keep the aisle clear for the safety of everyone on the bus.
4. Enter and leave the bus through the front door. Rear doors are to be opened only for emergencies.
5. Be respectful of all property and avoid accidentally or intentionally damaging or defacing any part of the bus. Any malicious or willful damage to a school bus will result in the immediate withdrawal of transportation services for the student involved. In addition, the parents and student are responsible for any damages caused by students. Continuation of bus riding privileges will only be considered after consultation with the parent, school administration, and transportation department representatives and financial restitution is made.
6. Consider the health and well-being of those on the bus. The action(s) of one student could unintentionally cause harm or discomfort to the driver, attendant, and other passengers. Students must:
  - a. Remain seated in the seat assigned until the bus comes to a complete stop.
  - b. Keep body parts inside the bus at all times.
  - c. Never throw objects on or outside of a bus as it could cause injuries or accidents.
  - d. Respect the driver and fellow riders.
  - e. Be considerate of others and avoid spraying perfume/cologne/deodorant etc. on the bus.

## **Student Responsibilities**

- Students should arrive at their assigned bus stop five minutes before the regularly scheduled bus arrival time; any students waiting in vehicles should be out of the vehicle when the bus approaches.
- Students should wait for the school bus in a safe and orderly fashion, well out of the way of traffic.
- All students should wait until the bus has completely stopped and has activated the flashing red lights before moving toward the bus. Students who must cross the roadway should check that the roadway is clear of traffic before moving toward the bus.
- Students should board the bus in a quiet and orderly fashion and should always use the bus handrail and steps in a safe manner.

## **While on the Bus**

- Students must walk to their assigned seats and be seated as quickly as possible.
- Students must obey the directions of the bus driver and other school staff at all times.
- Students must sit in their assigned bus seats, facing forward with feet out of the aisle and hands, arms, and head inside the bus.

- Students must remain in their seats at all times when the bus is in motion. Changing seats anytime during the run is prohibited.
- Students may talk in a normal manner, but loud, profane, obscene, or harassing language is not permitted.
- Students may not throw objects out of bus windows or yell or gesture at individuals outside the bus or in other vehicles.
- Students may not sit in the driver's seat or tamper with any controls or bus equipment.
- Students must not touch or tamper with emergency door or emergency window handles unless a student is directed to do so by the bus driver.

### **When Unloading from the Bus**

- Students must wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before getting out of their seat.
- Students must get off the bus only at their regularly assigned bus stop unless school permission has been previously granted.
- Students should use the handrail near the step to avoid mishaps and accidental tripping when leaving the bus.
- Students should never walk behind the bus to cross the street. Traffic should be checked carefully before crossing the street in front of the bus.
- Students who must cross the road after leaving the bus must do so prior to the bus's departure from the stop and approximately 10 feet in front of the stopped bus while the bus's flashing red lights are activated.

### **What is Permitted on the Bus**

Students may transport their book bags or other allowed items on the bus as long as the books and other items:

- can be held on the student's lap without interfering with other students in the same seat, extending into the aisle or through a window, and extending above the student's chin; or
- can fit under the student's seat without blocking or extending into the aisle. At no time may any item be transported if the item negatively affects safety or causes a disruption of the driver's schedule.

### **What is NOT Permitted on the Bus**

- Glass or other breakable containers;
- Pets or animals, unless approved in advance by the school administration;
- Sharp instruments that could cause damage to the interior of the bus or be considered a weapon;
- Skateboards/scooters;
- Balloons; and
- Any other item, the possession of which violates the *Code of Student Conduct*.

The Charles County public school system, and its employees, agents, and contractors, are not responsible for the loss, theft, damage, or destruction of any item brought onto a school bus by a student, whether allowed or prohibited.

### **School Bus Video Surveillance**

CCPS reserves the right to videotape students on school buses. This might include both audio and video recording. The use of recording systems helps to deter and investigate inappropriate student behavior, gather information in case of an emergency, and evaluate bus drivers.

### **Cell Phone/Personal Electronic Devices**

See proposed Cell Phone/Personal Electronic Device section for use on school buses or school-chartered vehicles.