

Transportation Services

for

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)

Pre-Kindergarten

Kindergarten





We welcome you to School Bus Services!

This outline is intended to provide you with the basics of our service. Opening issues, service eligibility, key safety issues, and emergency procedures are discussed.

Please take the necessary time to review the information. Your efforts will help us to provide safe and appropriate bus service for your child.

Identification Tags

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
IDENTIFICATION TAG

Name: _____
Bus to School: _____ Bus Stop: _____
Bus to Home: _____ Bus Stop: _____
Teacher: _____
School: _____

At the start of the school year, each ECI, kindergarten, and pre-kindergarten student will receive a name tag. This name tag will identify the child's name, bus number, parent/guardian's name, bus stop, teacher's name, address, school name, and contact numbers. To ensure visibility of the ID tag by school staff and bus drivers, it is imperative that the tag be placed on the outer clothing each day (**not on your child's backpack**).

School Bus Service Eligibility

School bus services are provided to transport eligible students between bus stops and assigned schools. Student transportation eligibility is generally determined by distance guidelines established by the Anne Arundel County Board of Education: **One-half (1/2) mile for kindergarten and pre-kindergarten; all ECI students receive transportation.**

Parents, Students & Transportation Safety



Meeting the Bus & Supervision

PreK-/K *Children are not kept on the school bus when parents/guardians are not at the bus stop at the time of afternoon discharge. This includes kindergarten and pre-kindergarten students.*

If you are not able to greet your child at the bus stop, and you do not wish for your child to be discharged without adult supervision, please make arrangements for another responsible adult to be at the bus stop, or call your child's school and ask that your child not be placed on the bus. If you request that your child stay at school, you must promptly provide for your child's pick up at the school.

ECI Students enrolled in the Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Program, will be delivered back to their bus stops in the afternoon. **A parent/guardian is required to meet the bus at the stop to receive the child, as drivers are not permitted to discharge an ECI student without the presence of a parent/guardian.** If a parent/guardian is not present when the bus arrives, your child could be taken back to school.

Parents/guardians are responsible for the supervision and safety of their children receiving bus transportation from the time children leave home in the morning until the time of boarding the school bus. The same rule applies at the time of discharge from the bus on the way home from school. The school administrator and bus driver are responsible for supervision while children are on the school bus.



Be On Time

Children should leave home early enough to arrive at the designated school bus stop five minutes before the scheduled arrival time of the school bus. This requirement is not just to ensure that there is enough time; there are important safety considerations involved. Being late causes panic, and catastrophic consequences can result. Further, remember that the school bus operator activates the alternating flashing warning lights at bus stops. Motorists stop for these lights. Tardy passengers cause motorists to become impatient, and some will ignore lights. For this reason, bus operators are instructed, generally, not to wait for persistently late passengers.



Conduct on School Buses

Proper student behavior on the school bus translates to safe transportation. **Any distractions to the driver may have significant student safety consequences.** Riding the school bus is a privilege. This privilege may be temporarily denied or permanently revoked if misbehavior jeopardizes the safe operation of the school bus or the safety of students riding the bus. School suspension is a possible sanction for students misbehaving on the school bus.



Property Damage

Parents/guardians are responsible for their child's behavior while on the school bus, and retain full responsibility for damage caused by their children to the property of others, including the school bus. When students walk to and from the bus stop or school, and while students wait at the school bus stop, they must show consideration and respect for the property of those citizens whose homes and places of business are located along the route.



Unauthorized Entry Into a School Bus

The Maryland Education Article, Section 26-102, prohibits unauthorized entry into a school bus. Persons violating this rule are subject to a misdemeanor offense. Conviction may result in fines up to \$1,000 or imprisonment up to six (6) months, or both.



Detaining a School Bus

Issues concerning school bus transportation should be discussed with the school administrator at school, not with the bus driver at bus stops.



Video Cameras and Audio Recording Devices

Many school buses are now equipped with video camera and audio recording devices. These tools provide a view of the passenger occupied area of the bus and record sounds and voices that ordinarily would be heard by the bus operator. The objective is to provide an important additional tool to assist the driver and school administrator in managing student conduct on school buses, an important safety consideration that benefits all.



Walking Routes and Pedestrian Practices

Parents/guardians and children should develop a safe walking route to and from the school bus stop that is direct and uninterrupted.



The Maryland School Bus Stop Law

Maryland law requires motorists to bring vehicles to a full stop 20 feet from a school bus when the bus' red alternating flashing warning lights are in operation. This law applies to vehicles meeting or overtaking a school bus from either direction when the bus has stopped to receive or discharge passengers. The driver of the vehicle shall not allow the vehicle to move until the school bus resumes motion or the red alternating warning lights are no longer flashing. The driver of a vehicle coming upon a highway with separate roadways (dual lanes) need not stop upon meeting a school bus which is on the opposite roadway. Roads with common left turn lanes are not divided highways, and vehicles from both directions must stop.



The Danger Zone

Although school bus transportation services are among the safest form of transport service, there are still dangers. Nationally, the most common student transportation oriented fatality occurs as a result of injuries sustained outside of the bus, in an area called “the danger zone.” In a typical school year across the nation, more students are lost to accidents occurring outside of the bus in the danger zone, than those resulting from injuries occurring within the bus. About half of the most serious injuries result from failure to stop for school bus warning lights. Younger children are the most common “danger zone” victims.

Children who must cross the street to board or depart the school bus at the bus stop are to wait until the bus has stopped with warning lights flashing, and all traffic in both directions comes to a complete stop. Children must cross the street only in front of the bus. Teach your children that dropped papers must be left behind. Instruct your children to ask the bus driver to supervise the retrieval of dropped items. Parental/guardian supervision at the bus stop is most critical for younger students.

Inclement Weather

Proper Clothing

Encourage your child to wear clothing appropriate for the weather, and which will also allow other people to see them. If children cannot be seen by operators of vehicles, they are exposed to unnecessary danger. For example, white clothing is difficult to see in snow but makes one clearly visible at night. If weather is inclement, the child should be dressed for the occasion and leave a few minutes earlier than normal in order to reach the school bus stop or school safely and on time.

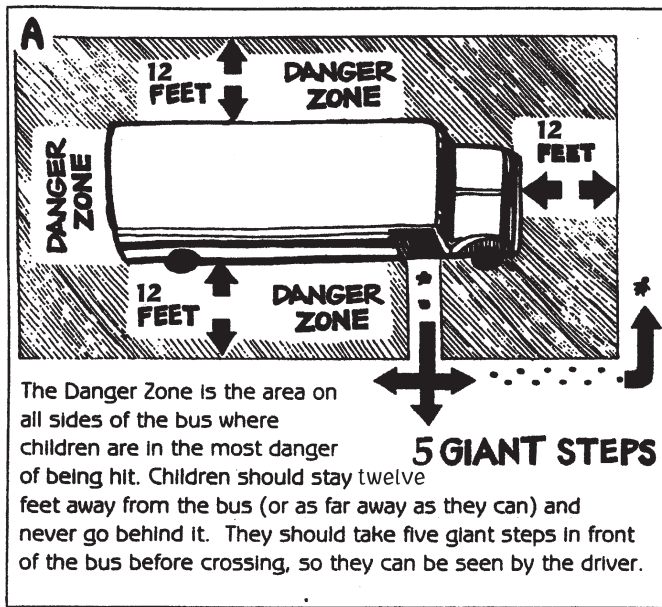
Special Note about School Hour Adjustments

Parents of morning session ECI and pre-kindergarten students need to know that whenever there is a scheduled, or unscheduled, two-hour early closing, ***the morning session will close at the regular time, or 11:20 a.m., whichever is earlier.***

Questions, Comments & Suggestions

We want to transport your child safely to and from school. Your understanding and support of safety practices, procedures and services will help us make your child’s daily bus ride a safe one. Should you have any suggestions, questions or comments about our services, please contact us by phone at 410-923-7890, or by mail at Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Transportation Division, 1681 Millersville Road, Millersville, MD 21108.

School bus stops: a risky part of the ride



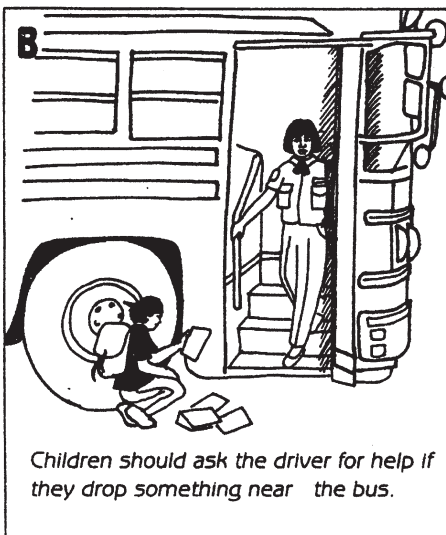
Why students are in danger

Millions of children in the United States ride safely to and from school on school buses each day. Although school buses are the safest way to get them to school, an average of 33 school-age children die in school bus-related traffic crashes each year.

Most of those killed are pedestrians, five to seven years old. They are hit in the danger zone around the bus (A), either by a passing vehicle or by the school bus itself. It is illegal for a car to pass a bus with its red light flashing (see other side).

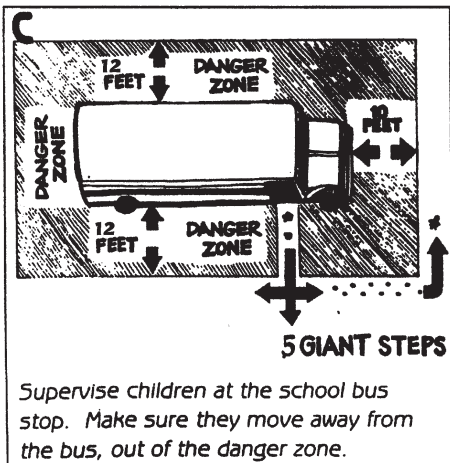
Young children are most likely to be hit because they:

- hurry to get on or off the bus,
- act before they think and have little experience with traffic,
- assume motorists will see them and will wait for them to cross,
- don't always stay within the bus driver's sight.



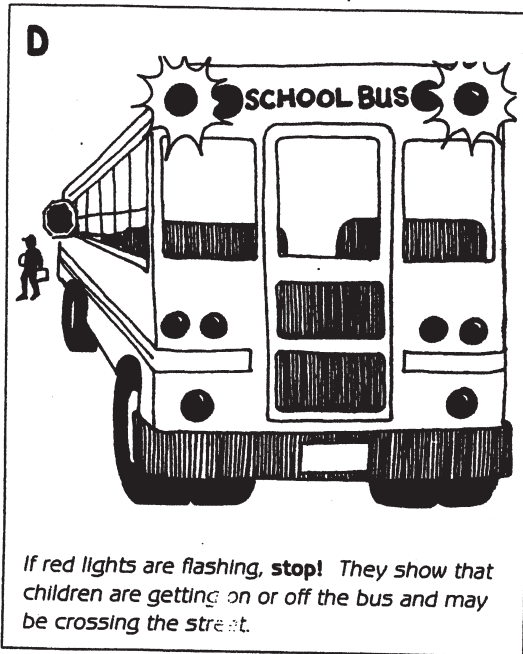
Safety steps you can take

- Supervise children to make sure they get to the stop on time, wait far away from the road, and avoid rough play.
- Teach your child to ask the driver for help if he drops something near the bus (B).
If a child stoops to pick up something, the driver cannot see him. Then he could be hit by the bus. A book bag or backpack helps keep loose items together.
- Make sure clothing has no loose drawstrings and backpack straps are short, so they don't get caught in the handrail or bus door.
- Encourage safe school bus loading and unloading (see below).
- If you think a bus stop is in a dangerous place, talk with your school office or transportation director about changing the location.



Teach your child to get on and off the bus safely

1. When loading, stay away from the danger zone and wait for the driver's signal. Board the bus in single file.
2. When unloading, look before stepping off the bus to be sure no cars are passing on the shoulder (side of the road). Move away from the bus (C).



Risky business for motorists: Passing a stopped school bus

What is the most dangerous part of the school bus ride? The bus stop!

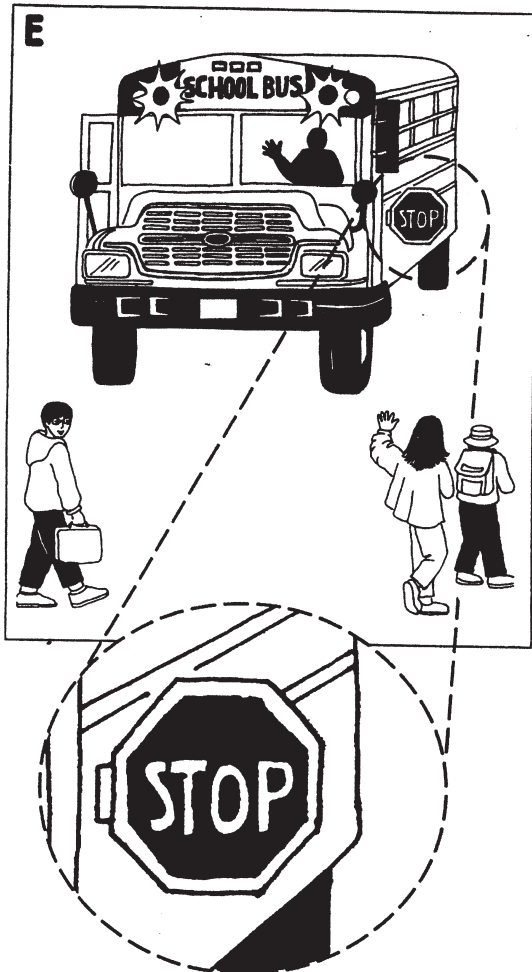
Children are at greatest risk when they are getting on or off the school bus. Most of the children killed in bus-related crashes are pedestrians, five to seven years old, who are getting on or off the bus. They are hit by the school bus or by motorists illegally passing a stopped bus.

In neighborhoods, near schools, and at bus stops, drivers need to take special care because children do not behave like adults.

Elementary school children:

- Become easily distracted and may start across the street without warning
- Don't understand the danger of moving vehicles
- Can't judge vehicle speed or distance
- May be blocked from view by the bus

Most importantly, children expect vehicles to stop for them at the school bus stop.



The extended stop signal arm alerts traffic when children get on or off the bus.

Standard school bus stop laws

Learn and follow the school bus laws for motorists in your state. Laws exist to protect children getting on and off the bus AND to protect you from a tragedy. Check with your school transportation office or police department for more information on your state's laws. Here are standard rules:

- Motorists coming to a school bus from either direction must stop when the bus displays flashing red warning lights and extends the stop signal arm (D and E). These signals show that children are getting on or off the school bus.
- Vehicles may not pass until the flashing red lights and signals are turned off.
- Drivers traveling in the same direction as the bus are always required to stop.
- Never pass on the right side of the bus, where children enter or exit. This is illegal and can have tragic results.

Violation of these laws can result in a citation and fine. In many places, school bus drivers can report passing vehicles!

For more information, call the
NHSTA Auto Safety Hotline:
1-888-DASH-2-DOT
or visit the NHTSA website,
www.nhtsa.dot.gov.





ANNE ARUNDEL
COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Division of Transportation
George Arlotto, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

ELEVATING ALL STUDENTS... ELIMINATING ALL GAPS

Anne Arundel County Public Schools prohibits discrimination in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, or disability. For more information, contact: Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Division of Human Resources, 2644 Riva Road, Annapolis, MD 21401; 410-222-5286; TDD 410-222-5000.

www.aacps.org