

Contact Information

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Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a reference tool that can be utilized by students, parents, schools and transportation staff to communicate policy, procedures and general transportation information. It is our belief that this is an important step toward improving our transportation services. It is SJPS desire to provide safe and timely transportation for our students.

Eligibility

St Johns Public Schools will provide bus transportation to and from school for students in grades Pre K-12 who reside within district boundaries. Students remain eligible to ride the bus when they adhere to appropriate behavior. If a student violates the SJPS Code of Conduct, the Transportation Manager may collaborate with the building principal to reach resolution. Discipline administered may include loss of bus-riding privileges in addition to any school consequences. When students ride a bus for extracurricular activities, the student Code of Conduct remains in effect. The school bus is an extension of the classroom.

Change to Transportation Needs

Any change to your child's school bus transportation needs must be in writing. Please complete a Transportation Request form, available either in your child's school building or on the schools' website. Updates to the bus schedule will be made and the parents will be notified. Please allow five (5) business days for processing.

Inclement Weather

On occasion, inclement weather may disrupt bus service to and from school. It is possible that start times may be delayed for two hours or school may be canceled for the day. Information regarding bus delays will be posted through the IC Messenger and provided to local media as time allows. Should there be a two hour delay, students should report to their bus stops 2 hours after the regular scheduled time, (i.e., if the stop is at 7:52 a.m., be at the bus stop at 9:52am). In the case of threatening weather at the end of the day, buses may be delayed until the threat of severe weather subsides.

Parent Responsibility

Parent cooperation is essential to student well-being on and off the school bus.

- Review all bus safety rules with your child, encourage proper conduct.
- Provide the necessary protection for students traveling to and from the bus stop during times of inclement weather.
- Visit the bus stop with your child and determine the safest route to take to the stop, where to wait (at least 10 feet from the roadway), and to be aware of unsafe situations.
- Backpacks are helpful for keeping all school supplies intact and freeing hands for holding handrails when entering or exiting the bus. Teach your children to secure loose drawstrings, long backpack straps, and other objects that may get caught in the handrail or door of the bus as they are exiting.
- Have a plan with your child if the bus is missed.
- Have a plan in case of early dismissal.
- For Pre K and kindergarten students: parents/caregivers are required to be present when the bus arrives. If the driver does not know that someone will be responsible for the child when they get off the bus, the child will be returned to the Transportation Office and the parent/guardian will be responsible for picking up your child.
- Provide the necessary transportation if your student is suspended from riding the bus.

Student Responsibility

Riding the school bus is a privilege and all rules shall be followed by students. Your bus driver has the responsibility for your safety and the safety of all students assigned to the bus. The driver can only perform this responsibility with your cooperation and assistance in the following ways:

- Be at the bus stop ten (10) minutes before the scheduled pick up time. In order to be consistent and stay on schedule, buses will not wait at bus stops.
- At the bus stop, wait in a safe location and distance from the street.
- If you must cross the street to board or depart your bus, cross only in front of your bus-- never behind it. Students shall cross only after they have been directed to do so by the bus driver.
- Stay in view of your driver at all times.
- Walk— never run to the bus.
- Remain seated until the bus comes to a full stop.
- When boarding or leaving the bus, do so in an orderly manner.

Bus Rules for Students

Safety for all students is our priority when transporting students. The following rules, although not all inclusive, have been established to maintain order, safety, and well-being for all.

- Follow **all** bus driver's directions
- Sit on back pockets facing the front
- Classroom behavior is expected
- Talk quietly; be respectful of others
- Beverages, food, candy, and chewing gum are not allowed on the bus
- Do not throw items on or out of the bus
- Aisles must be clear at all times
- All items must be in backpack/bag, and be held on your lap, including band instruments
- Large or fragile items are not appropriate for bus transportation
- Athletic and playground balls need to be in a bag or container
- Do not write on or damage seats
- Any behavior that distracts the driver will be cause for discipline
- SJPS policy for tobacco, alcohol, weapons, and illegal substance/materials is enforceable on the school busses
- Electronic devices are a privilege—not a right. Inappropriate use may result in loss of that privilege:
 - ✚ Telephone calls shall not be allowed after boarding the bus
 - ✚ No video recording, sound recording, or picture taking will be allowed
 - ✚ Sounds must be muted or turned off
 - ✚ Drivers shall remove a device that is not being used appropriately

Bus Routes and Bus Stops

Setting bus routes and bus stops involve many factors, most importantly those set by the Federal and State of Michigan Laws. Also taken into consideration are additional factors such as road configurations, speed limits, school grade, and students with special needs. Every effort is made to make every bus stop safe for students. Students are expected to walk to a bus stop. Our department will strive to make walking distances reasonable and uniform throughout the district. Door-to-door service is not provided in some areas.

If there is a concern regarding the location of a bus stop, a written request can be made to the SJPS Transportation Office for review. The request should include:

- Location of the bus stop
- Safety concern
- Contact information for a response

Transportation department staff will review the request and if necessary, visit the location prior to responding to the request.

Passing a School Bus

It is illegal in the State of Michigan to pass a stopped school bus, from either direction, when its red lights are flashing. If a vehicle passes a SJPS bus, our students are put in danger and the license number will be reported to local law officials. Please help keep our students safe and never pass a bus when its red lights are flashing.

Accidents or Emergencies

In the case of a bus accident or emergency, students should stay in their seat and wait for the driver's instructions. Routine bus evacuation drills will be held during the school year to teach students the proper procedure in an emergency evacuation.

Bus Passes

School bus transportation shall not be used for play dates, scout meetings, birthday parties, school projects, or other social activities scheduled for after school. Parents are expected to transport their children for these events. If a family emergency occurs, a written, signed note by a parent/guardian is required.

Upon arrival to school, the student should present a note to the office which includes:

- Student's name/address
- Dates the change will be needed
- Reason for the emergency change
- Bus number and name and address of the person they are going home with
- Parent contact phone number

Video Monitoring System

For the safety and security of our students, all district school buses may be equipped with a video monitoring system. Students should be aware that their actions and communications could be recorded at any time by this recording system and used for disciplinary action. Parents should be aware that the recorded video will not be made public and will only be viewed by authorized district personnel.