

# Most Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. Who is eligible for school bus transportation?

Transportation on regular school bus routes is authorized for public school pupils. Public school pupils include three-year to five-year-old pupils that are disabled and the K-12 regularly enrolled students during the 180 days school year. Three and four year old children attending public school sponsored kindergarten or child development programs must be permitted to ride state owned buses to the extent funds are made available by the General Assembly.

## 2. Under the law regarding all day kindergarten classes, will buses transport students to and from mid-day?

The law allows parents the option to sign-out their child(ren) for a half-day only program, however the parent is required to provide transportation.

## 3. Are parents permitted to ride the bus to and from school if they do not have transportation?

Transportation on regular school buses is authorized for public school pupils. A parent is not covered under any insurance provisions nor is it in the best interest of other children. Parents may ride the bus to and from school when engaged in "volunteer" work within the school during the school day. This request must be submitted in writing to the school principal, approved by the principal and forwarded to the Transportation Supervisor. This service may be provided on a space available basis only.



## 4. Can a non-handicapped sibling ride a special education bus?



Assignments to special education buses are dictated by the student's IEP. Approval for a non-handicap sibling to ride a special needs bus may be authorized on a Space Available bases or under provisions of a 504 plan.

## 5. Can a student be picked up or dropped off at an alternate address, including day care centers on a recurring basis?

Students/Parents requesting an alternate pick up/drop off location must forward a written request directly to the local STS office. Request must include the student's name, parent/guardian's name, home address, alternate address, and telephone numbers. To be considered, (1) students must be eligible for transportation and (2) the alternate address must be within the attendance zone of the school. The local STS office will review request with a written response forwarded back to the requesting party and copy to the attending school.



**6. How are bus stops established, eliminated, or changed?**

Students may be required to walk up to a .3 mile to access their school bus route. In cases where students live more than a .3 mile from an existing route, an additional route segment would be added. Distances are measured from the home entrance. Written request for establishing or changing bus stops should be forwarded directly to the supporting Transportation Office for assessment and approval. Bus stops on each route cannot be closer than two-tenths of a mile apart, at safe points. Stops must have a clear visibility of 600 feet in each direction, or a "School Bus Stop Ahead" sign must be located at a point 600 feet in each direction from a designated stop. Stops and turn-about shall not be made on blind curves, steep grades, or near the crests of hill or other unsafe traffic enjoyment. Backing up a school bus is to be avoided.

**7. Why can't the school bus come down my road? Are buses permitted to travel on private roads?**

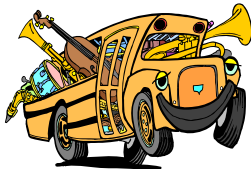


In addition to student eligibility rules, school buses are only allowed to travel on roadways that assure the safe transport of students. Safety is determined by the ability of the school bus to meet and pass another vehicle of equal size, and the roadway must be well-built enough to avoid damaging the school bus or creating the potential for an accident. The quality of the roadway during bad weather also must be taken into consideration. The safety of the student passengers must be the given the top priority. School buses are restricted from using certain private roads. Private roads are only used with the permission of the owner(s). Buses are intended for use on public roadways only. However, if a request is made to enter onto a private roadway, (1) the Transportation Supervisor must determine the safety and maneuverability of the bus entering the area and (2) the owner of the private roadway must provide written authorization for use and complete a notarized "Release of Liability" form.

**8. What is the process to have newly enrolled students assigned to a school bus?**

Any time a new student is enrolled in a school and lives within the school zone, and outside the mile and one-half radius, a registration form should be completed on the child and contact made with the STS. The STS office will copy furnish the bus drivers, as well as give the school administrator the assigned bus route number. **Children attending schools with an administrative transfer are required to provide their own transportation.**

**9. Can band instruments be transported on the bus to and from school?**



Safety is the main issue where band instruments are concerned. In the event of an accident, a student could be seriously injured as a result of an instrument that becomes airborne. Realizing that many students are unprepared for class if they do not have their instrument at home to practice, we will make every effort to accommodate when possible. These items must be held in the student's lap and must not extend beyond the student's seating space. The child is not allowed to sit on a book bag or similar carry-on items or store items on the floor of the bus. These are safety requirements. Under no circumstances shall a band instrument (a) block an emergency exit, (b) block the service door (c) block the driver's compartment and (d) obstruct the aisle of the bus. Instruments will not take up a seat, the student with the instrument must sit nearest the window and be able to hold and control the instrument during transit.

**10. Why don't school buses have seat belts?**

Buses in South Carolina are designed to protect students based on the compartmentalization theory. By this, bus seats are spaced, heavily padded, and raised to protect the student. In addition, the exterior construction is designed to prevent the penetration of objects into the passenger area or the collapse of the roof.

**11. What can I do to make my child's trip to school safe?**

Accompany or arrange for an adult to accompany your child to the school bus stop and wait for the school bus to arrive. The same is true in the afternoon. Be at the school bus stop when the bus arrives, and accompany our child home. State law places the responsibility for a child's safety on the parent until the school bus arrives at the bus stop in the morning, and after the bus leaves the site in the afternoon.

**12. When are emergency evacuation drills conducted? Who must participate?**

Federal law requires that at least twice during the school year; each student who is transported in a school bus shall be instructed in safe riding practices and participates in Emergency Evacuation Drills. Drills should be conducted within the first two months of school for the first semester and before Spring Break during the second semester. Pre K-1<sup>st</sup> grade students are given "hands-on" safety training to include evacuation drills within the first weeks of the school year.

**13. Can a student assigned to one route ride another route on a particular day to or from school?**

The District usually allows this with proper notice. The parent must submit the request in writing to the school principal. A copy of this shall be forwarded to the local STS office. It is best to get a confirmation from a school official that your request has been accepted. This service is provided on a space available basis only.

**14. What is the maximum ride time for my child?**

State law does not limit the ride time or distance. Although it is rare for a route to be longer than 1 hour and 15 minutes, this does sometimes occur, especially when transportation is provided out of the zoned school area. The STS office monitors ride times and tries to shorten them as much as possible within the limitations of the bus fleet.

**15. Why can't I get on the bus to talk to the bus driver?**

State law does not allow parents or other adults to board a school bus or impede its progress in any way. This law protects the safety of students and helps assure that routes run on time. If a parent has a concern, the parent should communicate with the school principal and/or district's transportation office.

**16. Can CDL/Bus Certified school personnel drive the activity buses?**

Effective February 19, 1990 the user/driver system that allowed district personnel to operate activity buses to transport student to different events was discontinued. The District's interest and safety of students are better served by using certified school bus drivers. Individuals engaged in the transport of students must possess a CDL with the appropriate endorsements.

**17. Are coaches, teachers, or chaperones on field trips authorized to carry their own children on the buses?**

Only the principal shall authorize the participants of field trips. Should a teacher, chaperone or coach allow unauthorized participants to ride the bus, that person and the school district is liable for any injury, etc. claims. It is not advisable for anyone to violate this rule.

**18. Can students be required to sit in a designated school bus seat?**

Yes, students can be assigned to a seat. This is a practice used by many school districts to control behavior on the school bus. State law gives schools districts this authority.



**19. Can a Bus Driver suspend a student from the bus?**

No, the Bus Driver is responsible for maintaining order as outlined in the District's Discipline Code and reporting discipline problems to the school. School bus drivers must be able to concentrate on their driving at all times. A momentary distraction from their concentration on the road can lead to a serious accident. The safety and well being of each student depends on following the standards of discipline outlined by the District. Behavior corrective and disciplinary actions for students are reported for action.