



Transportation Support Services
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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ATTENTION PARENTS:

IMPORTANT MAGNET TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION; PLEASE READ ENTIRELY

The MCPS Department of Transportation (DOT) plans school bus transportation for over 100,000 children annually, including nearly 7,000 eligible special education children and children in special programs. These special programs include **Centers for the Highly Gifted, International Baccalaureate, Language Immersion, and Magnet.**

Bus routes for special programs are designed to provide transportation service for all eligible students enrolled in special programs on a cooperative basis with parents. These bus routes are planned by Transportation Support Services, based on student locations and programs, as communicated by the schools. Not all programs receive the same bus services, stop locations, or have the same activities. Please check with your school program coordinator for more information about your child's program.

Keep in mind that this document is a *general* information piece. School bus routes are always subject to change as population, student locations, school and program locations, and other factors change each year. Every effort is made to minimize changes after school starts.

The following information is provided to help answer frequently asked questions about transportation for special programs:

(1) Where do the buses stop?

Central stops are placed at MCPS schools and other government facilities. Stops are placed at safe locations, however they may not necessarily be safe for your child to walk to and from the bus stop. Not all students will have a bus stop within walking distance of their home. Stops at the home school is not guaranteed.

In some cases, buses serve a combination of students from multiple special programs. These programs may have students who are permanently or temporarily served by curb or corner stop locations. Students in the above-named special programs may board and disembark at any "central stop" on the route. We recommend that parents choose the stop location and have their child use that stop regularly.

(2) How does my child meet the bus?

It is the responsibility of the parent to transport their child or arrange safe walk routes or other transportation to and from the bus stop. MCPS operates these routes from schools or major community centers. MCPS does not, and has no responsibility to transport students to and from their residence and the central stop location. Parents must transport or arrange a walk route, escort, car pool, bike route, group walk, or other means to transport their child. MCPS does not provide supervision at central stops.

(3) What if my child misses the bus?

MCPS buses run on pre-set schedules and are unable to wait for late students. Students should be at the bus stop 5-10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time. Buses may not

return to pick up students who miss the bus; parents are responsible for transportation when this occurs. Buses are not permitted to leave the bus stop before the scheduled stop time.

(4) Will schedule changes be made?

During the first two weeks of school, no changes will be made to bus schedules for special programs. This allows DOT to evaluate routes for efficient service. If changes to special program routes are necessary, DOT will notify schools and students in advance of the change. New stop requests may be considered if they do not deviate from the established bus route, are not in close proximity of an existing stop, and if they are MCPS schools or other government facilities.

(5) Is the afternoon schedule from school the same as the morning schedule going to school?

Not necessarily. All stops are carefully reviewed for safety and efficiency, fleet availability, and route effectiveness. We attempt to keep morning and afternoon routes the same, however many have different stops or route numbers for operational reasons.

(6) Are after school activity buses available?

Activity buses will operate if arranged by the school or program coordinator. Established "central stop" drop-off locations are used.

(7) Parent Responsibilities:

(a) Transportation to and from bus stops – Parents are fully responsible for student safety and for transportation between the child's home or daycare and the bus stop.

(b) Awareness – Discuss your child's bus route and stop location. Have your child memorize their central stop location and bus route numbers (which are located in the 2nd window on each side of the bus).

(c) Safety – Discuss bus rules with your child. Students must remain seated while the bus is moving. Eating and drinking are not permitted on the bus. Students must be respectful of others. Severe disciplinary action, including loss of riding privileges, may result from student misbehavior. More information about school bus safety and rules can be found on the MCPS Transportation webpage at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/transportation/rules/>.

(d) Inclement Weather/Delays – Weather, traffic, mechanical breakdowns, and other issues can delay buses. Parents are encouraged to listen to the radio or watch the local news channel for information related to delayed openings and early dismissals. Call your bus depot when your child's bus is more than 20 minutes late.

(e) Back-up Plan – We recommend that you have a back-up plan in case of emergency, so your child knows what to do under any circumstance.

Given the wide-ranging student placements and programs, the Department of Transportation strives to create the safest and most efficient rides possible.

As always, safety is our primary concern.