



Transportation Support Services  
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**ATTENTION PARENTS: IMPORTANT MAGNET TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION**  
**PLEASE READ ENTIRELY**

The MCPS Department of Transportation (DOT) plans school bus transportation for nearly 103,000 children annually, including nearly 8,000 eligible special education children and children in special programs. These special programs include **Centers for Enriched Studies, International Baccalaureate, Magnet, and Language Immersion.**

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 established program feeder patterns, as communicated by schools. Not all programs receive the same level of bus services, stop locations, or have the same activities. Please check with your school program coordinator for more information about transportation eligibility for 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 each year to minimize changes after school starts.

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

**(1) How are bus routes created?**

Home address, school address, program location, and program feeder patterns are assembled, and central stop locations for eligible students are established. Routes for the new school year will be available mid-August.

**(2) Where do the buses stop?**

Central stops are placed at MCPS schools and other government facilities and locations such as libraries, recreation centers and parks. Stops are placed at safe locations, but it 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.

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

**(3) 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 central stop location. MCPS operates these routes from schools or major community centers as identified above. 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, carpool, bike route, group walk, or other means to transport their child. MCPS does not provide supervision at central stops.

Montgomery County Schools Board of Education Policy EEA, *Student Transportation*, and Montgomery County Public Schools Regulation EEA-RA, *Student Transportation define and provide the criteria for central stop locations and eligibility.*



**(4) What if my child misses the bus?**

MCPS bus routes run on a pre-set schedule 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 their child misses the bus. Buses are not permitted to leave the bus stop before the scheduled stop time.

**(5) Will schedule changes be made?**

During the first two weeks of school, no changes will be made to bus schedules for special programs. This period enables 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, if they are MCPS schools or other government facilities as identified above.

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

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

**(7) Are activity buses available for student after-school activities?**

Late program activity buses will operate if arranged by the school or program coordinator. Established "central stop" drop-off locations are used. Parents must pick up their child at one of the established central stop locations, or make other arrangements for the child to walk or perhaps with a parent-selected escort.

**(8) Parent Responsibilities:**

**(a) Transportation to and from bus stops** – Parents are fully responsible for student safety at the bus stop, 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, located in the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/transportation/ridebytherules.shtm>.

**(d) Missed Busses** – If a student misses the bus in the morning or at school in the afternoon, parents will be responsible for transporting them. Buses are not permitted to return to pick up students who have missed the bus.

**(e) Inclement Weather/Delays** – Weather, traffic, mechanical breakdowns, and other issues can delay buses. Listen to the radio and be informed about delayed openings and early closings. Call your bus depot when your child's bus is more than 20 minutes late.

**(f) 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.

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