

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Can my child lose his/her bus riding privileges?**

Yes. In Georgia, riding a school bus is a privilege and not a right. Each local school district has adopted rules of conduct for waiting at the bus stop and for riding the school bus. If your child does not follow the rules, your child could lose his/her privileges for the entire school year.

### **Why did you suspend my child from riding the bus?**

Behavioral expectations on the school bus are much like those in the classroom. Then, factoring the mobility of that "classroom" and traffic, added noise and the size of the "classroom" and you have a potential catastrophe if there are not clear expectations and enforcement. The behavioral expectations on the bus revolve around the individual rights of every person on the bus, including the driver and the collective rights of students and driver as it pertains to safety. Anything that jeopardizes the safety on the bus is viewed as serious.

When there is an infraction, a referral is turned into the school administrators, who are responsible for contacting the student and parent to solve the lack of compliance with bus expectations. The school administrator is solely responsible for consequences based on the incident as described by the driver and student.

### **Why does my child have a seat assignment?**

Seat assignments are a positive way for the ride to be consistent and safe. It is also our procedure for elementary and middle school students to be assigned to a specific seat. This aids the driver with discipline and learning each student's names at the beginning of the school year. We trust our drivers to let us know when this procedure is no longer effective.

### **Why can't my child get off the bus wherever he or she wants in the afternoon?**

To avoid multiple problems, this allows the drivers to focus on driving and safety instead of having to decide whether the student should be allowed to change their routine and get off with a friend or ride to an entirely different neighborhood. This should be the decision of the parent. The driver has no other way to verify that the parent has made this decision. This policy avoids confusion and the chance of students getting lost or running away.

### **Will the bus leave the stop without my child if she/he is not waiting at the bus stop location?**

Yes! The student must be waiting at his/her stop at least 5 minutes prior to the designated time, regardless of weather conditions.

### **Why is my child's bus late?**

Weather, traffic, driver absenteeism, maintenance difficulties, and unforeseen incidents are responsible for delays in the arrival of school buses in the morning and afternoon.

Sometimes the bus routes must be doubled out or run as a second load to or from the school due to the regular driver being absent.

Drivers check buses before their routes and sometimes find mechanical problems that can cause delays and require driving another bus that day. This can cause the bus to not be punctual.

Please know that we are doing everything humanly possible to have all buses on schedule every day. In the event that your bus does not arrive as scheduled, please allow 10 to 30 minutes before calling the transportation office or the school.

### **Why can't you call when you know the bus will be late?**

There are as many 50-70 students on each bus. That is at least 50-70 phone calls in a short time frame to parents who are quite possibly at the bus stop with their student. It is just not feasible. Please know that there is a bus on the way and that we will do everything humanly possible to transport your student to and from school in a timely manner every day. If your scheduled bus is more than ten minutes late, please allow for the time that it requires for the route to be driven as a second load before contacting us. We have [Notify Me](#) on our website that allows parents to receive notifications when there is a bus change at any of our school. The notifications are sent out in the mornings and afternoons each day for each school with changes.

### **Why can't you come further into my sub-division?**

School buses come in various sizes ranging from 25 to 36 feet long, 20,000-26,000 pounds, 12-13 feet high and 6-9 feet wide. The length is what limits the school bus to be maneuvered in cul-de-sacs and tight places. Smaller buses can turn in a shorter radius, while longer buses cannot maneuver the same circle without backing the bus, which is avoided in routing if possible. Residents sometimes park trucks, boats, and trailers on the streets. Children leave their bicycles, skateboards, and basketball backboards on the streets. Although our drivers are trained to be able to parallel park their buses, some sub-divisions are not designed with school bus transportation in mind. Please know that

we will design school bus routes to be safe and convenient to the majority of students within the limits of time and physics.

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

It is against the law! If you need to talk to the driver please come to the driver window or call transportation and they will arrange a meeting with that driver.

**Why can't my child bring band instrument home?**

Student may bring band instruments as long as there is room in their lap and does not bother the other student in the seat with them. All items brought on the bus must be kept in the child's lap. It is state regulation that nothing is in the floor or that the child is not sitting on these items, such as band instruments or book bags. All emergency exits must be kept clear.

**My child's bus is overcrowded. Can some children be placed on another bus?**

Passenger capacity for elementary school buses is three students per seat. Middle school students are assumed to ride two-three per seat. High school students are assumed to ride two per seat. The bus may seem crowded but is not over capacity and is still safe. It is our goal to fully utilize all the space on all the buses in our fleet.

**My child left an item on the bus. How can I retrieve it?**

Drivers check their buses after every run. Items left by students are held by the driver for several days and may be claimed on the bus by the child. Fragile items are often taken out the buses in the evening for their protection, but will be available the next morning. After several days the driver will make an effort to locate the owner. Unclaimed and unlabeled items are donated to charity. You can help by labeling all of your child's school belongings. Please know the number of your child's bus, when inquiring about lost articles

**My child is starting kindergarten. Will the bus pick my child up in front of my house?**

There are no special laws or regulations for transporting regular education students enrolled in kindergarten. If your district provides transportation, it will be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Pupil Transportation Act, and local district policy with regard to the placement of the bus stop.

**Is there a specified distance that must exist between school bus stops?**

The lights on a school bus which are used to notify other traffic of an upcoming stop must, by law, be activated 200 feet from the stop. Thus, bus stops must be at least 200 feet apart.

**What about the safety of my child getting to and from the bus stop? There are no sidewalks where we live and it's not very safe walking on the busy road we live on.**

It is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian to see that a child gets safely to and from the bus stop. The school district provides transportation as a non-mandated service and establishes placement of the bus stops in accordance with the requirements of the law.

**I make my child wait inside of my house until the bus is at the stop. I have heard this is not allowed – is this true?**

Georgia law requires children to be waiting at the bus stop prior to its arrival. Bus drivers count the students at the bus stop before they load and as they get on the bus to ensure all children are safely on board. If students are not waiting at the bus stop the bus driver cannot count them and cannot be certain the students are all safely on board. Waiting at the bus stop before the bus arrives further ensures that no one chases after the bus – this is a very dangerous thing to do. Many districts also instruct their buses to not stop at locations where no students are waiting.

## **Special Needs Transportation**

**How can I receive transportation for my special needs student?**

A committee of people already involved in a student's education determines transportation needs. After it has been determined that the student would benefit from being transported apart from the mainstreamed students, the teacher will complete and send a special needs request to the county office for approval. County office will send a transportation request to our office for processing.

**How long does it take to set up transportation for my special needs student?**

Three to five (3-5) business days are needed to assign a child to a route once transportation receives paperwork. This is to obtain all emergency information, process routing information, contact drivers and communicate with parents and other professionals involved.

**Why can't last minute changes be granted?**

SAFETY is our main goal and concern. Due to the needs of all students last minute changes affect student's routine which may cause difficulties with parents, schools, and staff being notified in short notice.

## Why can't my regular education student ride the same bus with my special needs student?

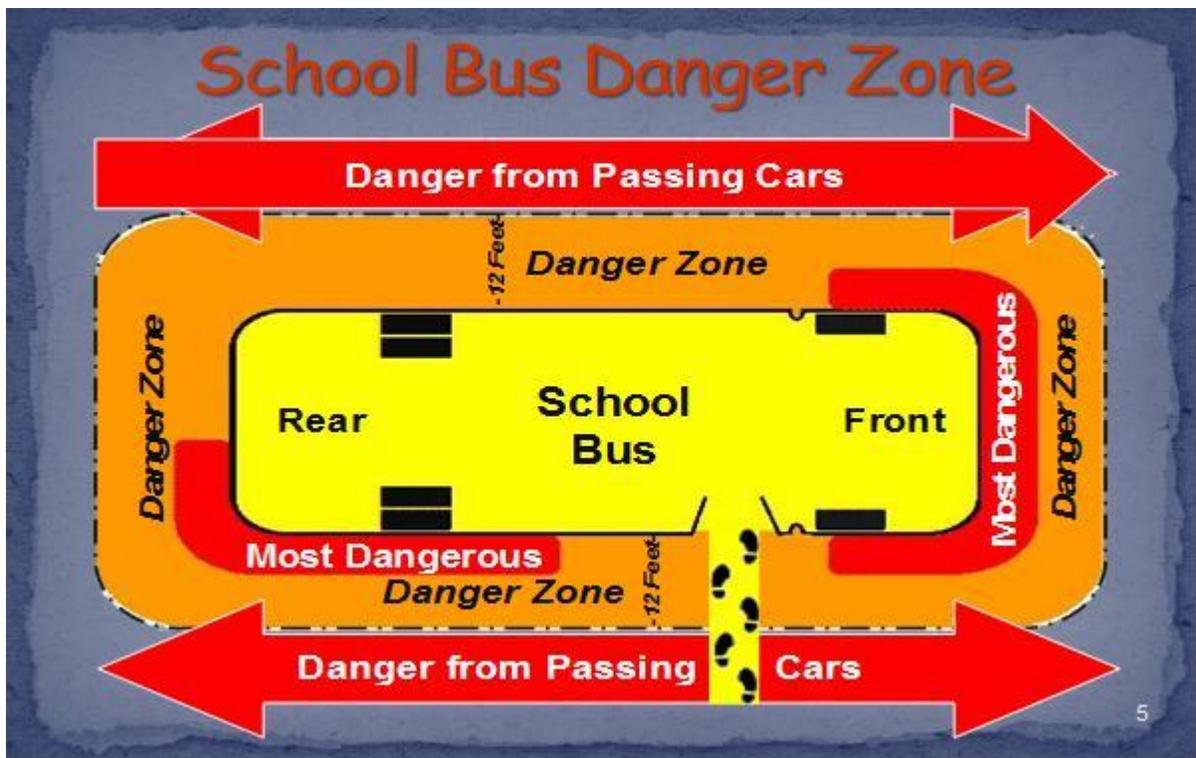
Special needs transportation is granted in accordance with a student's needs as a related service to the IEP (Individualized Education Plan). Students who receive an education without an IEP are provided transportation through conventional means.

## My child has an I.E.P. but transportation is not being provided. Why is this?

A child who has an I.E.P. does not automatically receive transportation unless the I.E.P. team writes this into the related services. If transportation is not included on the I.E.P. your child will be transported similarly to regular education students in your district.

# Know the DANGER ZONE!

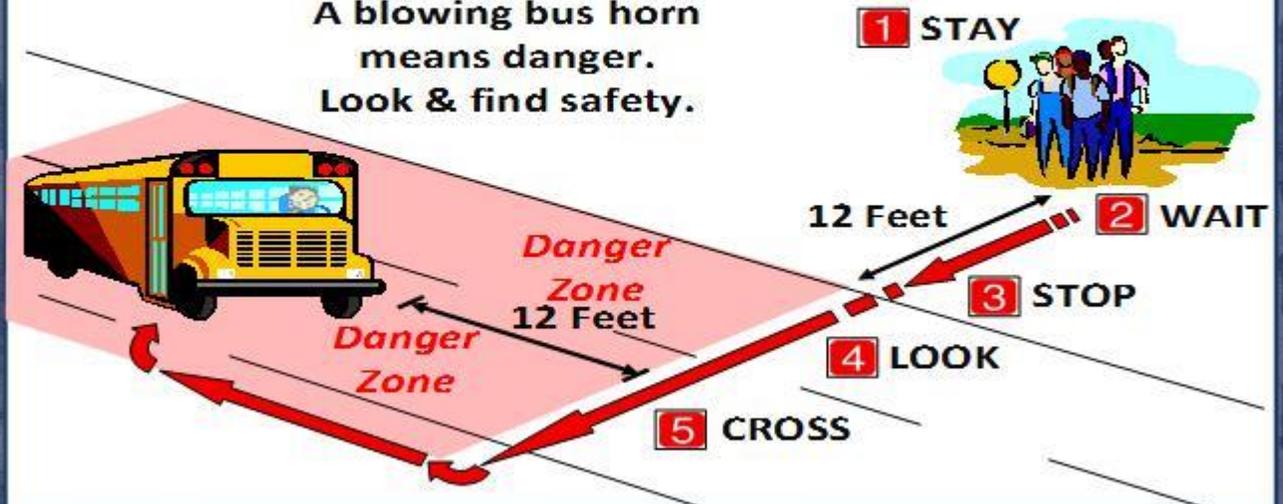
The Danger Zone is the area on all sides of the bus where children are in the most danger of being hit. Children should stay twelve (12) feet away from the bus (or as far away as they can) and never go behind it. They should take six (6) giant steps in front of the bus before crossing so that they can be seen by the driver.



**TEACH YOUR CHILD TO GET ON AND OFF OF THE BUS SAFELY:**

# Loading from Across Road

A blowing bus horn means danger.  
Look & find safety.



# Unloading to Across Road

A blowing bus horn means danger.  
Look & find safety.



## Bus Safety Tips & Rules

- Parents, get to know your bus driver.
- Be visible at the bus stop by getting out of your car and standing with your child.
- Be at your bus stop 5 minutes early and only use your child's assigned stop.
- Encourage children to load and unload in an orderly line.
- Make sure hands are free and all your child's belongings are inside his/her book bag.
- Teach your child to stay 12 feet from the street and never approach the bus unless it is completely stopped and the door is open.
- Teach your child never to step toward the bus until he looks to be sure all the traffic has stopped in both directions.
- Never assume approaching cars will stop!
- Teach your child to look for traffic before exiting the bus when unloading. She should then proceed in a straight line, in full view of the bus driver, directly to a safe location 12 feet away from the bus and the street.
- If your child must cross the street to load or unload a bus, teach him to always look for moving traffic. Cars may not stop! Your child should always keep eye contact with the bus driver and watch for the driver's signals.
- A child should never cross behind a bus or return to the bus after unloading.
- In the event that a child drops something near a bus advise her to gain the attention of the bus driver by waving her hands above her head from a safe distance, and to never attempt to retrieve the item without the full attention and instruction from the bus driver.
- A blowing bus horn means DANGER. Teach your child to look and find a safe place to go immediately.

## Bus Route Information for the Start of the School Year

Your driver has been instructed to pick up students anywhere along the bus route during the first two weeks of school. After that time, students may be asked to change the location of their stop to better serve all students and to meet our policy requirements. In the afternoon, students will be dropped at their assigned stop according to the route. Students are advised to go to his/her assigned location for pick up and drop off.

No changes will be made in the bus runs during the first two weeks of school. Many students are not enrolled until after school starts and we cannot get a true analysis of our needs until after that time.

Times listed for stops are an estimate. We have instructed drivers to start their runs at the designated times for these critical two weeks, but the arrival time for your stop may not be exact. The driver may make minor adjustments (under 5 minutes), but our office will notify you of major changes. We do ask that your child be at the stop five minutes before the scheduled time each day ready to board the bus.

### A Reminder for Parents/Guardians

As **Parents/Guardians**, you are an important part of the total safety awareness program for students who travel to and from school by bus. Students can benefit from learning to become safe pedestrians and passengers.

Here's how you can HELP:

- Allow enough time in the morning for unhurried, calm school preparation time.
- Have your students wear bright, contrasting colored coats or put a piece of high visibility, reflective tape on coats and backpacks.
- Help your students to leave on time. Allow for weather and plan to arrive at the **bus stop** five minutes before the scheduled pickup time.
- Go with and meet students 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and younger at the bus stop or have a designee assist.
- Teach your students to **Stop, look left, right**, and then **left again** before crossing the street.
- Running games, shoving, or horseplay is too dangerous at the bus stop and around traffic.

- Tell your students to stand six feet (3 GIANT STEPS) away from the street when waiting for the bus and they should wait there until the bus driver says it's OK to board the bus.
- If anything is dropped during loading or unloading the bus, students must wait for instructions from the bus driver before attempting to retrieve it.
- Six feet on both side and ten feet in front of the bus are considered the **Danger Zone**. This is the area most difficult to SEE students around the school bus. **Remind your students about the Danger Zone often.**
- Teach your students to **STOP** and look before hurrying away from the bus as they exit at the end of the day.
- No objects should be thrown on the bus or from the bus.

# Schools by Cluster:

## **Cluster 1 Villa Rica**

Glanton-Hindsman Elementary  
Ithica Elementary  
Sand Hill Elementary  
Villa Rica Elementary  
Bay Springs Middle  
Villa Rica Middle  
Villa Rica High

Supervisor Doris Stewart  
[Doris.stewart@carrollcountyschools.com](mailto:Doris.stewart@carrollcountyschools.com)  
770-834-3346 ext. 3129

## **Cluster 2 Central & Bowdon**

Bowdon Elementary  
Central Elementary  
Roopville Elementary  
Whitesburg Elementary  
Bowdon Middle  
Central Middle  
Bowdon High  
Central High

Supervisor Laura Kirkland  
[Laura.kirkland@carrollcountyschools.com](mailto:Laura.kirkland@carrollcountyschools.com)  
770-834-3346 ext. 3136

## **Cluster 3 Mount Zion & Temple**

Mount Zion Elementary  
Providence Elementary  
Sharp Creek Elementary  
Temple Elementary  
Mount Zion Middle  
Temple Middle  
Mount Zion High  
Temple High

Supervisor Kim Corbitt-Barker  
[Kim.corbitt-barker@carrollcountyschools.com](mailto:Kim.corbitt-barker@carrollcountyschools.com)  
770-834-3346 ext 3114

## **Special Needs**

All county schools

Goal

Families in Transition

Supervisor Tammy Spraggins

[Tammy.spraggins@carrollcountyschools.com](mailto:Tammy.spraggins@carrollcountyschools.com)

770-834-3346 ext 3135