

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is my student'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 for that day. This can cause the bus to be unpunctual.

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

What do I do when my student needs to ride a different bus/get off at a different stop?

Please send a note with your child or contact your child's school before 1:00 p.m. A school bus pass is given to the student to present to the bus driver with the appropriate information to assure the bus driver is aware of where the child needs to go. Any transportation changes should be requested in writing and submitted to the bus driver.

Why did you suspend my student from riding the bus?

Behavioral expectations on the school bus are much like those in the classroom. Then, factor in 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 of individuals on the bus is viewed as serious.

Most drivers have bus rules or expectations posted on the bus. 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.*** Most buses have video cameras, which are used to verify incidents. Our goal is never to deny any student transportation to and from school, but we must maintain safety for all students.

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. 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 at least 30 minutes for proper arrangements to obtain an alternate bus to pick up your child. Feel free to contact the Laurens County School Systems Central office with concerns.

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. 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 does my student have a seat assignment?

Seat assignments are a positive way for the ride to be consistent and safe. It is also our policy for students to be assigned to a specific seat to aid 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 policy is no longer effective.

Why can't my student get off wherever they want in the afternoon?

To avoid multiple problems, the driver requires a bus pass signed by school administrator to alter the destination of students. 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.

How do you decide when it is too dangerous for school buses to transport students to school due to inclement weather? Who decides? How is the public notified?

The Superintendent of schools is responsible for the final decision to close schools due to inclement weather. The decision is made after administrative staff report from various positions in the county regarding road conditions. Other factors considered are school facility information (heat, water, power), school parking lot conditions, temperature and wind chill, snow and ice buildup on main and secondary roads and weather forecasts and predictions. A decision

will be made and the public will be notified by 5:30 AM. The district provides messaging alerts via telephone and also local TV and radio stations are notified of any changes in school due to weather or any other emergency.

If schools close during the day, the students will be sent home on their regular bus or daycare van unless other directions are on file at the student's school. **IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO ACCEPT PHONED IN INSTRUCTIONS THAT DAY UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.** Please ensure you have given your student's school written instructions in advance regarding inclement weather transportation.

Why are there only 30 students riding some buses and my student's bus is crowded?

Decisions regarding each bus route are made by careful planning based on information from the school registration, previous similar routes, and Department of Transportation data. Most routes are fixed during the summer months and changes are made after the first two weeks of school, if not sooner. The more current information we are given, the better decisions regarding specific routes we can make. Distance from school, number of buses and drivers, and grouping of students and neighborhoods are factors considered also. Sometimes it is just not possible to have the exact number of students on every run. State and National guidelines allow for up to 20% over capacity seating. Our guidelines are as follows:

Our Passenger Seating Guidelines

Bus Seat Capacity	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
60	60	49	44
72	72	52	47
84	82	64	59

What is a zero tolerance policy?

Zero Tolerance means that when a discipline infraction occurs under the policy, the student is subject to a mandated suspension with **NO** exceptions. Specific zero tolerance infractions, which include drug, weapons, alcohol, tobacco, and bullying, and the suspension designated for each offence are listed in the individual Laurens County School handbooks.

How do I find out my student's bus number?

Contact the Laurens County Schools Transportation Department at (478) 272-4767 or your child's school office for bus route information. Occasionally, a substitute (spare) bus may be utilized; thus the bus number may be different.

How do I find out where the bus stop is and at what time students should be at the bus stop?

Contact your child's school for this information. All students should be at their designated bus stop five minutes prior to their pick up time.

How do I find out who my student's bus driver's Supervisor is?

Bus Driver's Supervisor is the Transportation Director, Mr. Greg Pauldo. His office is located in the Laurens County Schools Central Office, 467 Firetower Road, Dublin, Georgia 31021. His contact number is (478) 272-4767.

Can my student get off the bus without a parent/guardian/designee there to meet them? What happens if I am not there to meet the bus?

Students 8 years old and younger may be brought back to their school in the afternoon if a parent, guardian or parent/guardian designee is not present at the bus stop to receive them or if they otherwise appear to have no appropriate supervision. This is in accordance with the Department of Family and Children Services Guidelines for safety and supervision of children.

What are the laws that apply to drivers/citizens in relation to school buses?

Some of the laws governing school buses can be found at Georgia Department of Education and Pupil Transportation.

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 Special Needs Team being the process to provide necessary transportation.

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

Three to five (3-5) days are needed to obtain all emergency information, process routing information, contact drivers and communicate with parents and other professionals involved.

What is the average time length of the ride for special needs students?

Our goal, for students within the Laurens County district, is no more than 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ hour.

Why can't last minute changes be granted?

SAFETY is our main goal and concern. Changes may be granted for consistent schedules within the student's regular route.

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.

Can I reach someone in the Transportation Department before 8 AM?

Our office doesn't open until 8:00 a.m. and the Bus Shop Foreman is available to radio school bus drivers in the case of emergencies. Our bus shop telephone number is (478) 272-0335 and the Central office telephone number is (478) 272-4767.