

PARENT INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN RECEIVING GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION BUS TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

Berkeley Unified School District
Transportation Department
1314 Seventh Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
(510) 644-6182

<https://www.berkeleyschools.net/departments/transportation/>



Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Berkeley Unified School District Transportation Department to support the academic achievement of our students by providing for the safe operation of a school transportation service. We believe that pupil transportation enhances the educational opportunities of our children. We are dedicated to providing courteous, respectable and professional service to our customers when addressing all of your transportation needs. Students are our priority. The safety of our students is our primary concern.

To Parents, Adults and Guardians:

Berkeley Unified School District Transportation Management has prepared this information manual to acquaint you with the rules and regulations covering your child's school bus transportation. We need your assistance and cooperation to maintain a timely, reliable and safe service. Your familiarization with, and adherence to these procedures will aid considerably in transporting your child safely.

It is important that our school bus drivers are able to concentrate on driving the route safely. We take pride in safety record of our school buses and the professionalism of our transportation team. If anyone makes your child feel unsafe at the bus stop or on the bus ride, please contact us at the transportation department at 510-644-6182, rather than trying to discuss it at the bus stop with the bus driver.

Our goal is to provide the safest, most reliable transportation service possible for your child. Please read this information to familiarize yourself with the guidelines and procedures for transportation. Your cooperation is needed to ensure reliable, safe and efficient school bus service.

Parent Precautions, Safety Trips for Children Walking to School or the Bus Stops

Walking is good exercise for children, but it is up to parents to decide if walking to school or to the bus stop is safe. When deciding if it is safe for a child to walk to school, parents should consider the following factors:

- Children under the age of ten (10) usually do not have the skills to walk alone in areas with traffic. Parents should consider the readiness of each individual child, regardless of age for the traffic situation.
- Some traffic volume and speed of motorists may not allow a safe route to school.
- High crime areas create an unsafe environment and potentially dangerous situations.
- Adequately posted signs and traffic signals can help protect drivers and children from being injured or fatal in traffic related incidents.
- Crossing Guards at school site intersections, crosswalks where many children cross can help to get them to the other side safely.
- Distance to the school, parents need to understand the risk of encountering a traffic safety hazard increase.

Note: BUSD Transportation Department is not responsible or permissible to enforce traffic laws for motorists, bicyclists violators, etc. Berkeley Police and Alameda County have sole oversight for crossing guards at school sites throughout the City of Berkeley.

BUS ASSIGNMENT

Pre-existing bus stops have been established based on eligible students who live within their zone of attendance and beyond the 1.5 mile “walk boundary.” We do not provide bus service for general middle or high school students.

Scheduled bell times for each Berkeley school site are created in collaboration with school staff and determined by school site principals. They are based on a variety of factors including what best serves Berkeley students learning achievements. BUSD Transportation schedulers creation of the bus service routes are planned and designed based scheduled release times for eligible students. Preschoolers, kindergarten students have an earlier release time than other grades. A separate afternoon bus route is scheduled for preschoolers, kindergarten students who fall under the “must-be-met” criteria mentioned in the “Drop-Off Procedure”.

Special education transportation is arranged between the Special Education department and requests are submitted to Transportation.

In order to ensure that we can provide the necessary service and support, the Special Education program consults with us regarding the need for service. They then send us documents with all of the relevant student data. When we have the required Transportation Request Form (TRF) and IEP information regarding a student’s abilities, medical information, and emergency contacts, and any relevant bus information, including special equipment needs, we place the student on a bus route and make the appropriate contacts to begin the service

After-school bus requests are made by the after-school programs once your child is enrolled. We do our best to transport students who attend after-school programs, but cannot guarantee this service and will be provided on a space availability basis for non-eligible students. Bus service will be granted based on schools in your child’s attendance zone and scheduled at a pre-existing designated bus stop location. Every effort is made to grant requests within these guidelines.

BUS STOPS

BUSD Transportation will attempt to schedule all general and special education students who are assigned to a designated bus stop within a mile from their residence. Under some conditions special education students are transported from their front door to school and return. All school bus transportation home-to-school services are during the school day. Services have been expanded to allow for drop-offs at afterschool programs, day care providers at pre-existing bus stops on an approval basis and space availability.

A designated bus stop will not be placed in any area determined to be unsafe. Safety always takes precedence over other criteria. State law requires that no child be permitted to leave the bus at a point other than the assigned designated bus stop. Parents or guardians must not make private arrangements with the bus driver. All changes must be cleared through the transportation office.

Drivers must follow established routes. Drops at a non-designated stop location is not permitted. Bus drivers may not make changes on their routes unless authorized by the transportation office.

BUS SCHEDULES

Prior to the beginning of each school year, parents/guardians will be informed of their child's pick up and drop off schedules. Buses, routes and times may need to be changed throughout the school year to accommodate new students or for better route efficiency. Parents/guardians will be notified of time changes of more than five (5) minutes. Buses may run late during days of unfavorable weather conditions such as rain or fog. Any bus running late more than 5-10 minutes, parents can contact the Transportation office or refer to the "StopFinder" bus route app (if applicable) for updated information.

PICK UP PROCEDURE

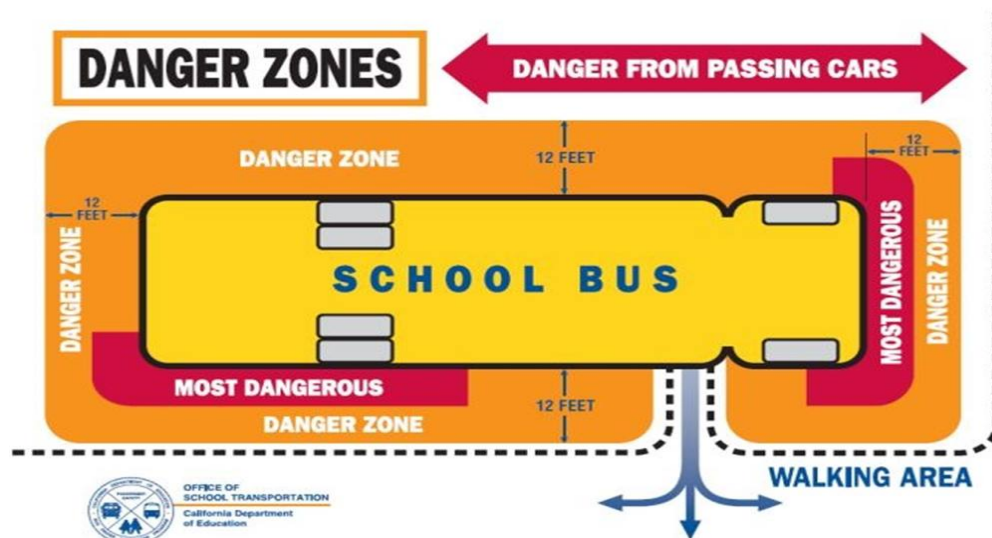
Must-Be-Met: A parent, adult or guardian must be present, and at least 18 years of age to supervise students who meet the "**must-be-met**" criteria until the bus arrives.

You are required to have the child ready for pick up five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled time. (There is a Motor Vehicles regulation prohibiting drivers from honking their horns except in a driving emergency.)

Bus routes must operate on a definite schedule in order drop students at school sites prior to the bell time. Buses will not depart from a stop prior to the designated pick up time. The designated schedule time is also the departure time.

A bus will not be sent back to pick up a child who was not ready on time. The parent, adult or guardian will be responsible for transporting the student from the house to the bus.

Students need wait in an orderly manner, at least 12 feet away from the curb. "See Danger Zone illustration below". There will be no playing or roughhousing at the designated stop while waiting for the bus. Students must not move toward the bus until the bus comes to a complete stop and the door is opened. Do not push or crowd the door entrance.



The bus driver may not leave the bus except to perform a red-light cross over procedure or to operate the lift gate for students in wheelchairs. It is the bus driver's responsibility to load and unload the students and to ensure that the wheelchairs are secured and all seat belts are fastened.

Students will go directly to a seat or to the seat assigned by their driver. Bus riders are to sit in their seats facing forward, feet flat on the floor, out of the aisle. All portions of their bodies are to remain inside the bus at all times. Each student scheduled on a bus route may be assigned to a particular seat at the discretion of the bus driver when necessary.

Passenger Restraints (seat belts): All passengers in a school bus or in a school pupil activity bus that is equipped with passenger restraint systems in accordance with sections 27316 and 27316.5 of the Vehicle Code shall use the passenger restraint system.

DROP OFF PROCEDURE

All scheduled students for bus transportation shall be dropped at their assigned bus stop. No student will be permitted to leave the bus at any point other than the assigned stop. Students shall exit the bus in an orderly manner, using the front door only, unless otherwise directed by the bus driver. Students shall use the handrail when descending the steps.

Must-Be-Met Criteria: A parent, adult or guardian shall be present at the assigned bus stop to receive all Pre-K, KG students when delivered by the bus driver. A parent, adult or guardian shall be at least 18 years of age in order to receive the student. Pre-K, KG students are scheduled for bus transportation based on the set bell release time from the school site and only permitted to ride with other grade students on scheduled the release minimum days.

If there is an emergency and the parent is unable to meet the bus, it is the parent, adult or guardian responsibility to notify the transportation office in advance when making any arrangements for another adult to be present when the bus arrives. If the parent, adult or guardian feel that their child other than a pre-k, kindergarten does not need to be met at the bus stop by an adult, this must be communicated to the transportation office as soon as possible.

In the event that no responsible adult is available to meet the student at the designated bus stop and there is no authorization on file to drop the student off alone, the following process will take place:

- The bus driver will notify the transportation office immediately, and if other students are on board they may continue with the route and return. This can take up to 30 minutes or more which can impact the bus driver's additional scheduled bus routes.
- The transportation office will make every attempt to locate the parent, adult or guardian regarding whereabouts to pick up their child. If unable to contact the parent, adult or guardian, the student will be returned to their school site".

***Consistent failure to meet the bus may be cause to suspend transportation service.**

BUS RIDE TIME

There are many special circumstances that affect the development of the bus routes. There are equipment considerations, logistics, geographic factors in place etc. Each of these factors and others can affect the total ride time for students who receive home-to-school bus transportation. There are no current state/federal regulations regarding the amount of ride time for students on school buses. Whenever possible, we attempt to have the total bus ride time for the students no more than sixty (60) minutes on Berkeley buses.

ROUTE CHANGE TO YOUR CHILD'S TRANSPORTATION

If you move or make any changes that will affect your child's transportation during the school year, you must notify your school, BUSD Admissions or Special Education Department, five (5) days in advance to insure continuous transportation service.

Once you provide the updated information and live within their zone of attendance and beyond the 1.5 mile "walk boundary", please forward the information to the transportation department via phone call or email. At that time, Transportation will assign your child to a pre-existing bus stop, and notify with a new scheduled pickup and drop off times.

Note: Bus drivers cannot accept changes of address from parents. Transportation will not be provided until we retrieve the new address information in Admission's InFinite Campus.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

In order to keep emergency information on each child as current as possible, parents, adults, guardians will be required to provide updated contact information at the beginning of each school year. The transportation office will provide the form to the parents, adults or guardians along with their child's bus schedule prior to the start of the school year. You can call the Transportation office at 510-644-6182 with any updated contact information or send an email to transportationdept@berkeley.net. The transportation office must receive any changes, updates with five (5) days prior to beginning transportation service.

LOST ARTICLES

We recommend labeling all children's personal items who are transported on the school bus. BUSD Transportation Department assumes no responsibility for all lost items. Any items such as backpacks, a lunch box found will remained on the bus be and returned to the student by the bus driver. A lost item such as a musical instrument assigned to a student by the school, cell phone or computer device found on the bus we recommend bus drivers bring those items to the office where a parent, adult or guardian may retrieve by the end of the business day.

ILLNESS

Please notify the bus company by telephone at least one hour prior to the pickup time whenever you are not sending your child to school.

Please do not send even a mildly ill child to school because he/she may become acutely ill on the bus. In fairness to your child and other children, keep a sick child at home. Most doctors recommend that children be free of fever for at least 24 hours before sending them back to school.

If a child becomes ill at school, the parent will be asked to transport the child home.

After three (3) consecutive days of a student not riding the school bus, the bus service will be discontinued until the parent/guardian calls the bus company to restart the service.

If you drive your child to school, you will need to call the transportation office to let them know he/she needs a ride home.

Medication - For safety purposes, all medication must be placed among the child's personal belongings. The bus driver will not be responsible for keeping or distributing medication to students while on the bus.

Personal Hygiene - For the comfort of the other persons on the bus, it is important to maintain adequate standards of hygiene. Please be sure to toilet children before they board the bus

Emergency Medical Information - Please notify the school nurse of any medical conditions (seizures, asthma, allergy to bee stings, etc.) your child may suffer from. Each school site, district nurse must be provided with an emergency medical information communicated to the transportation office when necessary in giving the bus driver basic first-aid instructions on what to do when faced with a medical emergency on the bus.

CAR SEATS and WHEELCHAIRS

Special Education students who cannot sit safely secured by a seat belt may be issued a safety vest provided by Transportation to the parent.

Majority of BUSD school buses are equipped with car seats in the first two seats or can provide "star" car seats to installed if needed.

Wheelchairs shall be equipped with brakes and seat belt properly maintained by the owner of the chair. (Velcro fasteners do not meet minimum state requirements and shall not be the sole source of seat restraint.) All wheelchair brakes must be maintained so as to prevent the wheels from moving when the brakes are applied.

Electric wheelchairs transported on school buses shall be capable of being locked in gear when placed in a school bus or shall have an independent braking system capable of holding the wheelchair in place. Wheelchair power shall be turned off prior to being transported in a

school bus. Batteries used to propel electric wheelchairs shall be both leak-resistant and spill-resistant or shall be placed in a leak-resistant container. Batteries shall be secured to the wheelchair frame in such a manner as to prevent separation in the event of an accident.

Any wheelchair, which does not meet minimum state requirements, shall not be transported. It is the parent's responsibility to provide all equipment, which meets the minimum safety requirements.

SCHOOL BUS EQUIPMENT

To assure use of safe equipment, all school buses are inspected daily by the bus driver and annually by the Department of California Highway Patrol. In addition, each vehicle must be certified so that it meets all applicable regulations and laws relating to pupil transportation in the State of California. In addition, all of the buses are equipped with two-way radios.

BUS SUSPENSION POLICY

The school bus driver has the authority to recommend the suspension of students for disruptive and/or dangerous behavior, including, but not limited to, infractions of the bus rules. Any student may receive the maximum suspension and/or be denied bus transportation if it is determined that the student created a safety hazard while on the bus. BUSD Transportation management will make the determination of the length of suspension or recommend student be expelled for the remainder of the school year for an egregious behavioral matter.

A "bus conduct report" will be issued for all unruly behavior violations of the bus rules once the school bus driver has warned the student verbally, and in most cases notified the parent/guardian and teacher. In each instance, the parent, principal and school bus driver will get a copy of the bus conduct report.

Vandalism, Destruction of District Property: The California Civil Code, Section 1714.1 states: "Any act of willful misconduct of a minor which results in injury or death of another person or in any injury to the property of another shall be imputed to the parent or guardian having custody or control of the minor for all purposes of civil damages, and such parent or guardian having custody or control shall be jointly and severally liable with such minor for any damages resulting from such willful misconduct up to a maximum of \$10,000." Please refer to the BUSD Transportation Department website under the "Transportation Guide" & "School Bus Rules" handouts for further information.

SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENTS

A school bus accident is any accident, no matter how minor, involving a school bus while students are on board. In every instance, a law enforcement officer (CHP, BPD or Alameda Sheriff) must respond to the scene and delays of up to one hour are common.

When an accident occurs, it is the bus company's responsibility to determine if there are any injuries and the extent of the damages, and to notify the proper authorities, to include California

Highway Patrol, BUSD Transportation manager or supervisor who must also respond to the scene and emergency assistance personnel if necessary.

BUSD Transportation will notify the parents and schools immediately upon determining the names of the students on board, the extent of the injuries (if any), the location of the accident, and a description of the accident.

We understand parents may be worried, concerned when hearing the news their child was involved in a school bus accident. BUSD Transportation Department advises parents not come to the scene of the accident while the investigation is being conducted. BUSD Transportation management, the school bus driver is there to protect the students at all times and will transport all students to their designated bus stop when released by law enforcement personnel.

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS

BUSD Transportation Department requires school bus drivers who are especially competent to give the best service and protection for your child. To assure safe drivers for the children, California state regulations requires all school bus drivers to attend regularly scheduled safety meetings and in-service training sessions to improve their skills in transporting special education children. In addition, state law requires each driver to have a valid commercial license, school bus driver certificate, first aid training, DOT-DMV medical examination and Department of Justice, FBI background criminal clearance.

BUS TRANSPORTATION SERVICE PROBLEMS OR COMPLAINTS

BUSD Transportation Department is committed to providing the finest quality school transportation service to you and your child. For any service related questions, please contact one of our dispatchers directly at 510-644-6182. Please be prepared to give your child's name, bus route and state the nature of your concern.

For your Information, you may contact us at:
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For additional information please visit our webpage on the district's website:

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