

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION FOR ALL RIDERS

COMMUNICATION

There are two channels of communication for transportation questions. For questions regarding concerns on the bus, such as student behavior problems, safety issues or route schedules, please call the bus Dispatcher for Prior Lake School Bus Association directly at 952-440-1166. Please call the District Transportation Office at 952-226-0050, to report change of address, change of day care, or for problems that the bus company is not able to help you with. Our mailing address is:

Independent School District 719
Transportation Department
P.O. Box 539
Prior Lake, MN 55372

or FAX to: 952-226-0049

BUS STOPS

We are not able to make bus stops within eyesight of every student's house, however on the noon kindergarten routes we try to get them closer to homes. To help make the bus stop as safe as possible, we do recommend that a parent wait with younger students at the bus stop.

BUS ROUTES

Bus routes are planned and established annually by the Transportation department working with the Prior Lake School Bus Association. The routes are planned with emphasis on safety, reasonable lengths and adequate time to accommodate arrival at the student's school in time for daily program. The planning process also takes into consideration efficiency and cost effectiveness of running the transportation program. Routes may be different for public, private, elementary, secondary and kindergarten students. The routes may also be changed from year to year and even within the school year due to increases in enrollment or when changes in location of children to be picked up occur or modifications in school programs require a change to meet deadlines. This is particularly true of our noon kindergarten routes where the location of students can change significantly from year to year or as they change daycare providers during the school year.

DAYCARE TRANSPORTATION

If your child will get picked up or dropped off at an address other than your home address, please fill out the Alternative Bus Stop Request Form. The school district policy does not allow a student to be transported from or delivered to any address other than the child's home address unless this form is on file in the transportation office. A copy of this form is attached. **Alternate bus stops must be on existing routes and the stop must be the same five days a week.** The deadline for these forms is June 15. This allows us time to establish bus routes before the start of school in the fall. We may not be able to fulfill your transportation need in the time frame you would like if this form is returned after June 15. We keep supplies of these forms in each of the schools or you may get one by calling our office. Daycare providers can get supplies of the form by calling our office. **If there is a change in your daycare during the school year a new form must be provided. Please allow forty-eight (48) hours to make the necessary arrangements for an alternate bus stop.** We require a new form be filled out prior to the start of each new school year.

MAKING YOUR CHILD'S TRIP SAFE

Your child is about to enter upon the adventure of learning. He or she will soon come to know and enjoy the thrill of achievement, of meeting new friends and exploring new worlds. For most children, this new experience will include riding the school bus to and from school. They will experience the responsibilities of walking to the bus stop with friends. There are some things you can do to help make the trip safe and enjoyable.

The safety of all school children is a joint responsibility between the principals, parents, students, school bus operators and administrative staff. A major ingredient of that is communication. Please let us know when anything changes in the busing routine of your child so that we can contact the necessary people to make sure the change goes smoothly.

YOUR CHILD AS A PEDESTRIAN

When your child walks to the bus stop, it is essential that he/she possess a basic knowledge of pedestrian safety rules. Your child should be aware of the route to the bus stop and should have practiced it several times with you prior to the start of school.

The basic rules of pedestrian safety should be discussed with your child. These include very important rules to cross only at corners and look both directions before crossing the street. Please review with your children the safe practice of not talking to strangers, not accepting rides from anyone and watching out for each other.

THIS IS MINNESOTA

One of the most important things for the parent of any school age child to remember is that this is Minnesota, the land of infinite variety as far as weather is concerned. As you all well know, conditions can approach the most severe conditions in short periods of time. It is very important that you remain alert to impending weather patterns and your child is properly clothed for the current and anticipated weather conditions.

Severe weather conditions cause delays for all forms of traffic including school buses. Parents of transported students are urged to consider how long their children might have to wait at a bus pickup location during conditions of extreme cold. The official radio station for announcements about school closing or late starts is **WCCO**. We also contact radio station **KCHK** and TV stations Channel 4, 5, 9, 29 and 11. Early dismissals are announced on **WCCO**. We recognize that all parents will not uniformly agree with our decision to open school on time, close school or start late. As the child's parent or guardian the final decision is always yours as to whether or not you consider conditions appropriate for your child to ride the bus to school. We respect your right to make this decision and only ask that should you decide to hold your child at home because of weather or road conditions that you inform your child's school of that decision.

SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR SAFETY

- ✓ Dress your child in bright clothing in winter, clothing easily seen by bus drivers and others motorists.
- ✓ Dress your child in warm clothing appropriate for the weather conditions, clothing that does not obstruct his/her vision.
- ✓ Please have your child use a book bag to carry their belongings. Children have been injured chasing after a project or assignment that has blown out of their hands into the street. Please have a name tag on the book bag in the event it is left of the bus we will know to whom it belongs.
- ✓ Remind your children of their role in bus safety. National statistics bear out the fact that most bus accidents occur when a driver's attention is momentarily distracted from their driving responsibilities by misbehavior of students on the bus.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

IT'S NO ACCIDENT

BUS LOADING

It is essential that your child be ready on time to meet the school bus. Since individual clocks may vary, he/she should be at the bus stop at least **five minutes** before the scheduled pickup time. We use WCCO time. The bus driver cannot wait for late arrivals. In addition, students should not arrive at the bus stop earlier than ten minutes prior to the scheduled pickup time. The more waiting time, the more potential for unsafe or unacceptable behavior.

Make a notation of the name of your child's school, teacher's name, school bus route number, and the pickup/drop off location. Also note the school telephone number and that of the Bus Dispatch (952-440-1166) and Transportation Department (952-226-0050)

Have your child wait at the bus stop at least four feet back from the curb. Explain to your child that he/she should wait for the bus to come to a complete stop, and for the driver to open the door, before approaching the bus.

BUS RIDING

Parents of kindergarten children should discuss the safety rules of bus riding with their child. A copy of the district bus discipline policy is attached. It is important that your child recognize and understand their responsibility for acceptable behavior and have respect for others and their property.

Occasionally a child may experience problems while riding the school bus. When instances of unacceptable behavior occur, the parent should work with the principal, transportation department and the school bus driver to correct the misbehavior. Remember, the main concern is the safety of all riders. Infractions of the bus rules can result in a child having a Bus Conduct Report written by the bus driver, which can result in the child being excluded from the bus. **YOUR CHILD'S RIDE ON THE BUS IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT !**

THE RETURN TRIP HOME

On the return trip home parents should anticipate the arrival of the school bus and be alert for any changes in normal routine. Your child should be instructed to come **directly home** and report to you before he/she goes out to play.

Occasionally unscheduled early dismissal occurs due to weather or building emergencies. It is also possible that an emergency may delay your arrival time to meet your child. Be sure that arrangements have been made in advance for a safe place for your child to go if he/she returns home and no one is there. Be sure your child knows what to do and where to go.

DRIVING YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL

Occasionally it may become necessary for you to drive your child to and from school. You should be aware that during the AM arrival or PM dismissal times the streets surrounding elementary schools become areas of congestion with school buses, neighborhood traffic and parents all competing for the same few spaces to park at the same time. In these instances, parents can become serious traffic hazards. Heavy traffic movement around our schools is not compatible with young pedestrians. If you are driving around our schools during these periods, the best is to expect the unexpected from young pedestrians. Please use the designated areas for parent traffic, our buses need the designated areas for them to safely pick up the other children. If it is essential that you drive your child to school here are a few tips to follow to make it safe:

1. DO NOT let the child out of the car on the wrong side of the street from the school causing them to cross a traffic lane to get to school.
2. DO NOT stop in the center of the street when letting your children out of the car. Never allow an opportunity for a vehicle to pass on the right while your child is exiting the car.
3. DO NOT double park when dropping off children. The operator of the car or school bus parked along side you may not see your child and may start up unexpectedly.
4. DO NOT STOP OR PARK IN SCHOOL BUS LOADING/UNLOADING AREAS. The areas in front of the school are signed and reserved for the loading and unloading of our school buses.
5. DO NOT under any circumstances block the path of a school bus. If your child misses the bus, drive them to school. If your child inadvertently boards when you planned to pick them up for an appointment or activity, meet the bus at the regular stop. Drivers do not have authorization to release students from their bus at any place other than the designated drop off point for each child.

A FEW NOTES OF CAUTION FOR THE STUDENTS

- ✓ Walk in an orderly manner – do not run to catch your bus. Do not shove or play around in the waiting lines for a bus.
- ✓ Always wear light colored clothing in the early morning to help motorists see you.
- ✓ Cross streets only at corners or crosswalks when able.
- ✓ Before crossing any street look in every direction – then look again.
- ✓ Watch for cars – most times it’s easier for you to see the car than it is for the car to see you. Don’t assume that an approaching car sees you. Be cautious and assume it doesn’t.
- ✓ Never walk onto a street from between two parked cars.
- ✓ Where there are no sidewalks, making it necessary to walk in the roadway, always walk on the left side of the street facing traffic.

BASIC SCHOOL BUS SAFETY RULES

- ❑ Leave home early. Arrive at the school bus stop **at least five minutes** before the scheduled pickup time but not more than ten minutes.
- ❑ Wait for the school bus in a safe place, if possible with other students. There is safety in numbers. Be sure to wait for your bus out of the roadway as much as possible.
- ❑ Do not play on snow banks or hills while waiting for the bus. You could slide down in front of an oncoming vehicle.
- ❑ Always wait for the bus driver to bring the bus to a complete stop, put out the red stop sign and signal for you to cross the street.
- ❑ Enter the bus in an orderly manner. Do not push or shove when entering or exiting the bus.
- ❑ Remain in your seat at all times when the bus is in motion.
- ❑ Use your book bag to carry all your belongings. No animals, large musical instruments, school projects or sports equipment (tuba, hockey sticks, sleds, etc.) are allowed on the bus. In general, if it does not fit on your lap or in your back pack it is not allowed on the bus.
- ❑ Walk directly away from the bus when you get off. If you must cross in front of the bus when you exit, walk far enough in front of the bus (10 feet) so the driver has you in his/her vision at all times. A rule of thumb, if you can see the driver’s eyes – they can see you.

- ❑ If you drop something, wait until the bus leaves before you try to retrieve it. Never stop beside or reach under you school bus to try to retrieve something of yours. If the object must be retrieved before the bus departs from your stop, tell the driver and let your driver assist in retrieving the object.
- ❑ NEVER WALK ALONG THE SIDE OF, OR HANG ONTO THE SCHOOL BUS WHEN IT IS MOVING. Always stay out of the school bus danger zone as shown in the diagram below. We ask all parents or guardians to instruct their children about the danger zone around the bus and insure that the child understands why it is so important that the bus driver be able to see them at all times.
- ❑ Do not stick your head, arms or any other object out the window of the bus.

School bus safety is no accident. It takes planning, training, and follow through. As parent's, I hope you will work with us to make sure all our children have a safe and enjoyable trip to and from school. Please take the time to teach them the basics.

Cordially,

Jim Dellwo
Director of Operations/Transportation