

## Frequently Asked Questions:

**Late Bus Report** located on the HCSD Mobile App or district website: Transportation/Late Bus Report

**Transportation Call Center:** 352-797-7003 during regular school days (7:00 AM – 5:30 PM)

## Index/Hyperlinks:

- [Bullying on the bus](#)
- [Bus accident](#)
- [Bus attendants](#)
- [Bus driving unsafely](#)
- [Bus goes past my house](#)
- [Bus is late dropping off](#)
- [Bus is late picking up](#)
- [Bus registration card](#)
- [Bus seat selection](#)
- [Bus stop etiquette](#)
- [Bus suspensions](#)
- [Bus videos](#)
- [Choice school stops](#)
- [Crowded bus](#)
- [Daycare stops](#)
- [Driver left my student](#)
- [Driver yelled](#)
- [Eligibility for transportation](#)
- [Enhanced Cleaning/Disinfecting](#)
- [Facemasks](#)
- [Friends riding the bus](#)
- [I just missed the bus](#)
- [Inclement weather](#)
- [Items left on the bus](#)
- [I'm late for "Must Be Met" child](#)
- [Magnet school stops](#)
- [Meet with bus driver](#)
- ["Must be met" students](#)
- [Phone/address changes](#)
- [Split custody](#)
- [Stop location & times](#)
- [Student misconduct](#)
- [Ten days for a new stop](#)
- [Transporting large items](#)
- [Walk zone criteria](#)
- [Wheelchair](#)

### **If my child is being bullied on the bus. What should I do?**

All bullying concerns should be immediately reported to the administration of your child's school.

### **What happens if a school bus is involved in an accident?**

The bus driver immediately radios transportation dispatchers with vital information. Dispatchers then notify the appropriate emergency personnel/school administrators/Transportation Safety Dept. The school notifies parents of the accident.

### **Why are there "bus attendants" on some buses?**

Bus attendants assist with students who have documented special needs, including physical, medical, etc.

### **Bus driving unsafely on roads/streets?**

Phone the Transportation Call Center with any driver safety concerns.

### **I notice my child's bus drives past my home. Can the driver stop at my house to pick up and drop off my child?**

Only certain students (medical/health/IEP/504) qualify for curbside bus stop accommodations. For other students, service is provided in accordance with distance guidelines set by the state of Florida. Every effort is made to improve route efficiency by clustering students to stops.

Also, with budgetary constraints, & where possible, buses are routed as efficiently & safely as possible using primary roads and streets

### **Why is the bus late for drop off?**

Delays to school buses include traffic, road closures, weather, mechanical issues, driver shortages, late release from school or a late prior route. If a bus is running more than 20 minutes late, refer to the **Late Bus Report** which are updated. Also, there is radio contact with all buses.

### **What should I do if the bus does not arrive on time?**

Know your child's bus route number. Check the **Late Bus Report**. School buses run late due to traffic, accidents, road closures, driver shortages, mechanical issues, prior run delays, etc. Students should arrive at the stop at least 10 minutes before the scheduled time and wait for at least 30 minutes after the scheduled time. If a bus is running more than 20 minutes late, the **Late Bus Report** are updated. You may also phone the Transportation Call Center. Receptionists answer phones from 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM. If a student is late to school due to a delayed bus arrival, they are not marked tardy.

### **Why do I have to fill out a registration card and give it to the driver? Doesn't the school have the information?**

It is absolutely imperative bus drivers have the most recent emergency contact information available on the bus. This is necessary in case of an accident, medical emergency or some other event involving your child which may require immediate parental/guardian notification.

### **Who selects the seating on the bus?**

It is the driver's responsibility to assign seats on the bus. Due to many variables including safety, medical & health reasons, seats are assigned. Certainly family connections are an important consideration.

### **Bus Stop Etiquette**

The school bus and bus stop are considered an extension of the classroom and students are to observe the same code of discipline expected in the school classroom. In accordance with School Board Policy 8600, parents, guardians are responsible for the following:

- a. ensuring the safe travel of their students ...to and from home and at the assigned bus stop when the District provides bus transportation;
- b. ensuring students ride only on their assigned school buses and get off only at their assigned bus stops;
- c. ensuring, when a physical disability of a student renders him/her unable to get on and off the bus without assistance, the parent or guardian provides necessary assistance as required by District policy or the student's IEP.
- d. While waiting at a bus stop, students should respect people's property and not litter nor disturb lawns, flowers, shrubs, vehicles, mailboxes etc.
- e. Problems at school bus stops can be referred to local law enforcement agencies.

### **Can a school bus operator suspend my child from riding the bus?**

No. A school bus operator does not have disciplinary authority to suspend a student from the bus. An operator can only refer student actions (via a bus referral) to the school for due process. The Hernando County School District has an approved Code of Student Conduct which outlines and guides school-based administrators as to the disciplinary action appropriate for each situation and grade level.

### **Can I view a video of my student's bus?**

Parents/guardians may only be given the opportunity to review a video if it is pertaining to a disciplinary issue relating to their own child, and may only be viewed at the school. Due to student confidentiality issues, parents may not view the videotapes of non-disciplinary issues. Arrangements to watch a video must be made through school administration.

### **Is Transportation provided for Choice Students?**

School Bus Transportation for Choice is only provided on a space available basis, using existing stops.

### **What if my child's bus is too crowded?**

During the first weeks of school, we can experience unexpected bus crowding. Buses are designed to fit three (3) children in each seat, and bus drivers will first make sure all seats are being properly utilized. If a bus reaches its capacity, the bus drivers will contact the Dispatch Office for assistance. At no time do we encourage students to sit on the floors of the bus or anywhere else other than a seat.

### **Can a stop be set up for after school care for my child?**

Some elementary schools have an on-site daycare program. We do not transport to other day care locations, and we cannot add stops for child care purposes.

### **My child was running towards the bus and the operator just drove off. Why?**

While it might look as though the operator “looked at the child and drove off” it is generally not the case. Operators must check all the mirrors on the bus before moving. By looking at the mirrors it may seem as though the operator looked at the child, but sometimes the child may not be in their line of sight. The best way to make sure your child does not miss the bus is to be at the stop at least 10 minutes before the scheduled pick up time.

### **Driver yelled at students?**

Noise volume inside a bus is often loud due to the engine, students and ride conditions requiring drivers raising their voice to be heard. However, please contact the Transportation Call Center with any concerns.

### **Is my child eligible for school bus transportation?**

All students are eligible for transportation if they are legally enrolled in the District’s public schools and live outside of the walk zone of the school for which their residence is zoned.

### **What is my student’s bus stop location or pick up/drop off time?**

Use the **Bus Stop Locator** tool linked on the district website: [hernandoschools.org/Transportation/Bus Stop Locator](http://hernandoschools.org/Transportation/Bus%20Stop%20Locator). You can also call the student’s school or the Transportation Call Center for assistance.

### **Can my child ride the bus home with a friend after school?**

No. Students are not permitted to ride to or from an alternate location with a friend. In the event of a serious family emergency, contact the principal’s office as early as possible so alternate arrangements can be explored.

### **My child missed the bus. Should I follow the bus in my car and allow my child to board the bus at another stop?**

If your child misses the bus, for safety reasons do not attempt to chase, pass, or block the bus along its route. Any action taken to impede or delay the progress of a school bus is unlawful. If possible, take a different route to a stop ahead of the bus and let your child board there. When in your car, directly behind a school bus, it is very dangerous for a child to attempt to run from the car along the side of the bus to board. Nationwide, fatalities have occurred where students have fallen in front of the rear wheels of a departing bus after they jumped out of a parent’s car to run up and board the bus.

### **Inclement Weather**

In the event of “inclement weather,” drivers are instructed to follow certain procedures that could result in the bus being delayed. Know your child’s route number and refer to the **Late Bus Report** for any delays of 20 minute or longer.

### **If my child has left an item on the bus, how do I get it returned?**

If a driver finds an item on the bus, normally it is secured. Because there is very limited storage space on a bus and certain items when stored in an open place pose a danger in the event of an accident, most items are removed from the bus. Ask the driver if the item was found/turned in.

### **I arrived home late from work and I cannot find my child. The school is closed. What do I do?**

Call the school first, and then the Transportation Call Center. “Must be met” students are usually returned to school if they are not met. If the student is not a “must be met” student, our Transportation staff can assist in locating your child (352-797-7003).

### **Is there busing for magnet schools?**

If your child lives within the zoned area for that school, busing is provided following the “walk zone” guidelines established by the State of Florida. If you elect to send your student to a “magnet” school, busing is available at community/area stops located throughout the county.

### **.I would like to talk to my child’s bus operator. How do I go about this? Can I just meet the operator at the bus stop location?**

Most buses service multiple schools and strive to arrive on time. Also, buses follow a timed route so delays affect other parents & schools waiting for it.

Parents are not allowed on a school bus unless officially authorized. Parents who decide to board a bus are trespassing on state property & subject to arrest and prosecution under the law. To meet with a driver, contact the school your child attends and request a conference. Provide the bus number and/or driver's name, if possible. The school will coordinate with the Transportation Department and set up a conference.

#### **Can I require my child be released only if I am at the bus stop?**

Only certain students, whose needs are addressed through an IEP or 504 plan, or in preK-2<sup>nd</sup> grades, are eligible for "must be met" service. These students must be met at the bus every day. For all other students the parent/guardian is responsible for meeting the bus if they deem it appropriate.

#### **To whom should I report an address or telephone number change?**

**IMPORTANT:** If the District needs to contact you in the event of an emergency and in order to assure uninterrupted transportation service for your child, notify your school immediately with any telephone number or address change. Once changes are recorded into the District's database, they will be uploaded to transportation's routing software, normally within 24 hours.

#### **What about transportation for a child in split custody?**

For the sake of the accountability of the thousands of students HCS D transports, all students are assigned to only one bus stop. Parents must work together to get the child to and from that stop.

#### **Who is responsible for student misconduct on a bus?**

The operator's first & foremost responsibility is to safely drive the bus. They strive to ensure students follow all bus safety rules; however, they are unable to see everything happening. All schools have a bus referral procedure for drivers to report incidents of safety rule violations. Also, all buses are equipped with audio/video cameras that assist school administrators in the disposition of bus referrals.

#### **Why does it take at least 10 days to establish a new stop for my child?**

To establish a new, safe stop location it must be identified and then reviewed by a Transportation Department staff member for any potential hazards. Depending on workload, this process can take at least 10 days. Also, the current route has been publicly posted and they must be informed of any changes. A new stop may affect other student stops before/after it and adequate time must be allowed for them to be notified.

#### **Can my child bring a skateboard, large band instrument, sports equipment or other large item on the bus?**

Skateboards & balloons are prohibited. Also prohibited are oversized objects, including, but not limited to, large band instruments/cases, school projects, athletic equipment or any item which cannot be held in the lap, protrude into the aisle or another student's space.

#### **Who determines if a student lives beyond the walk zone from school?**

A walking distance ... is pursuant to section 1011.68, Florida Statutes ...*any distance not more than two (2) miles between the home and school or one and one half (1 1/2) miles between the home and the assigned bus stop.*

The school district obtains the walking distance with the aid of a computerized mapping and school bus routing system. This system utilizes the current registered address from the student database to determine the distance to his or her assigned school.

Distances are calculated using the shortest route a student can walk between their address and the nearest school entrance, or if it is a gated or private community, from the closest exit to the nearest school entrance.

#### **My child uses a wheelchair. What do I need to know?**

Wheelchairs are transported on our school buses in a forward-facing position. If it is possible for your child to transfer to a bus seat, we will assist with that at your request. If your child is to be transported in the wheelchair, the chair must have working brakes and functioning footrests, the seat and back of the chair must be properly attached to the chair, the harness and/or trunk support system must be attached, the chair must have secure attachment points so it can be secured to the bus, and the lap-belt must be "automobile" quality and type. In addition, lap trays, if used by the student, must be removed and stored during transportation. We ask that power chairs be put in the manual position when possible.

#### **Does my student need to wear a mask on the bus?**

It is strongly recommended students wear masks on the bus.

#### **Are there enhanced cleaning/disinfecting protocols on the buses?**

All students are required to be assigned a seat & to remain in their assigned seat for the duration to school or home; Students on regular bus routes with no documented medical concerns will be seated according to their boarding sequence back to front; Some windows will be lowered; There are hand sanitizer dispensers on all buses; Buses are being disinfected daily; If a student has a documented illness on a bus, it will be put out of service until it receives a deep cleaning; Drivers are required to wear masks.