



TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
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Dear Parent/Guardian:

The FCPS Transportation Department would like to welcome you and share guidelines to ensure a safe and pleasant experience. Students and families are our partners in maintaining a safe journey to school. We encourage and support this partnership for the safety of all of our students, whether they walk to school or are transported by school bus. It is important that we work together so that all students will behave in a safe and considerate manner in their travels to/from school each day and will allow others to have a safe and comfortable trip.

When students walk to school we recommend the following:

1. Walk together in groups
2. Arrange for adult supervision for younger students
3. Identify and use appropriate walk routes

Many resources for students and families, including how to create a "Walking School Bus," are available on our website at <https://www.fcps.org/transportation/information-for-walkers>.

Students who are transported by school bus should follow FCPS' policy and regulation regarding expectations for student behavior, along with the commitment to prevent acts of bullying as we strive to maintain the safety of every student. **Please be aware that riding a public school bus is a privilege, not a right.** Below are rules to be followed when traveling by school bus:

1. Follow directions from the bus driver the first time they are given.
2. Stay in your seat at all times while the bus is in motion.
3. Keep all parts of your body inside the bus.
4. Keep hands, feet, legs, arms, personal property, and *your voice* to yourself.
5. **NO** eating, smoking, drinking, or vulgar language at any time on the bus.
6. Abide by all student conduct rules (see FCPS Regulation 400-8 and 400-48).
7. Students may ride only the school bus to which they are assigned. Inviting friends home via the school bus makes it difficult for schools and bus drivers to account for students and can cause bus capacity problems. In an **emergency situation only**, school principals may approve a parental request allowing a child to ride another bus. Bus drivers can honor the request only if they receive a parent note that is also signed/approved by the school administration. Transportation to jobs, social meetings, non-school sporting events or practice remains a parental responsibility.

Drivers are given the latitude to assign seats by groups or individually when it is in the best interest of the entire group. Many drivers automatically assign seats to assist with accountability of students and more efficient loading, and will work closely with schools to determine the need for assigned seats. Kindergarten and pre-kindergarten students *must* be seated in the front of the bus.

If a student breaks a rule, the following procedures will be followed:

STEP 1:

Verbal Warning - Driver will give a verbal warning, using the student's name and the action for which he or she is being warned.

STEP 2:

Driver Action - The driver has the right to select and implement (in any order) one or more of the following available "Step 2" actions; however, the first point of contact by the driver will be with the parent/guardian.

- *Parent/Guardian Communication:* Communication may be made by way of telephone call, email, or handwritten document.
- *Probation Period:* This will be one week in length. The student will be referred to the principal's office if misbehavior continues during the period of probation.
- *Seat Assignment:* The student will be assigned to the front seat for one week. If behavior is appropriate during that week, the driver may choose to permit the student to select a seat or the driver may assign the student another seating location. The student will be referred to the principal if misbehavior continues.

STEP 3:

Office Referral - Should misbehavior continue, the driver will prepare/submit an electronic referral, which will be automatically sent to school administration and the designated Transportation Manager.

NOTE: In the event of a severe incident of exceptional acts of misbehavior (e.g., fighting, gross safety violations, purposeful destruction of property, etc.) more severe consequences may result, which may include long term seat assignment and/or suspension.

The bus driver has the responsibility to discuss this transportation policy with the students. We ask that you also discuss it with your child, and we thank you for your support.

We appreciate students who contribute to a safe bus ride by following the rules, and appreciate those students who maintain good safety practices when walking to/from school.

We look forward to another school year of safe travel for all students. Please feel free to contact us at any time.

Sincerely,



Fred Punturiero
Director of Transportation