



# Transportation FAQs

## **Who can ride the bus?**

All regular education students in grades K-12 who attend their zoned school, and who live more than 1.25 miles from school (1.5 miles for high schools), are eligible for school bus transportation, by State Law. If you do not know your zoned school, please call our Family Information Center at 259-INFO (4636) or visit the link below



Zone Finder ([Zone Finder.url](#))

Special Education, Special Needs, and some Pre-K students are also eligible for transportation. All requests for Special Education must first be processed through the Special Education Office. Since these students often attend out-of-zone schools, special provisions are made on a case-by-case basis. If transportation is granted it could take up to 10 days from the approval for transportation services to be provided. Until transportation, services are provided it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure their student(s) have transportation to and from school. You should contact our Family Information Center at 259-INFO (4636) to be directed to the proper person to assist you.

## **Why are there no seat belts on school buses?**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is responsible for establishing Federal motor vehicle safety standards to reduce the number of fatalities and injuries from motor vehicle crashes, including those involving school buses. We also work with the school bus safety and occupant safety programs. School bus safety is one of our highest priorities.

School bus transportation is one of the safest forms of transportation in the United States. We require all new school buses to meet safety requirements over and above those applying to all other passenger vehicles. These include requirements for improved emergency exits, roof structure, seating and fuel systems, and bus body joint integrity. These requirements help ensure that school buses are extremely safe.

You can find Traffic Safety Facts on the NHTSA website with updated information to the data requiring seatbelts.

The question of whether seat belts should be required on school buses seems obvious. Seat belts save lives in cars, so it seems logical that they would make school buses safer. It appears a lot of people agree with this logic: the results of an online poll conducted by *NEA Today* magazine found that 53% of respondents favored seat belts, while 47% were opposed.

But it turns out that the question isn't so simple. When the NEA members with the most hands-on experience in bus safety — bus drivers — are asked, most of those who have expressed an opinion on the question are strongly opposed to seat belts. And the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration has found that seat belts would not add to the safety of school bus passengers. So what's going on here?

Some of the concerns are:

- Students can and do use the heavy belt buckles as weapons, injuring other riders.
- It is next to impossible to make sure that all students keep their belts properly fastened so that they are not injured by the belts in an accident.
- If a bus has to be evacuated in an emergency, such as a fire, panicked or disoriented students might be trapped by their belts.

When drivers balance these concerns against the many safety features already built into the design of school buses, they conclude that given the way buses are presently operated, they are safer without seat belts.

The legislature is still in the process of discussing this issue and currently, have no definite answer or solution.

<https://www.nhtsa.gov/search?keywords=school+bus&name> (*NHTSA National Highway Traffic Safety Administration*)

<http://www.nea.org/home/64577.htm> (*Seat Belts, School Bus & Safety: National Education Association pg1*)

### **I'm told we live in the "Parent Responsibility Zone" (PRZ). What does that mean to me?**

It means you live within the "non-transport" area-1.25 miles or less from your elementary or middle school, or 1.5 miles or less from your high school. These distances are determined by State Law. Their transportation to and from school is the responsibility of their parents.

### **How are bus stops and routes determined?**

Every MNPS student who is eligible for transportation is assigned a specific bus stop and route number. The Transportation Department uses the latest computer software programs to assist in setting bus stops along with a stop review by the Transportation Supervisor.

### **The bus passes by my house on the way to a stop up the street. Why can't it just stop and pick up my child at home?**

We transport more than 53,000 students every day, so it is impossible to provide door-to-door service to everyone and do it in a timely manner. In most neighborhoods, it is more efficient to pick up several students at a time. Exceptions are made on a case by case basis taking into account high-speed roads, or other conditions that make walking not as safe.

### **I live in an apartment complex. Why does my child have to walk all the way to the main road to catch the bus?**

Apartment and condominium complexes are considered private property; MNPS buses may only travel on public roadways. Also, the roadways through many apartment complexes are too narrow to safely accommodate a large school bus. If you see a bus going up into an apartment or condominium complex, chances are it is a Special Education or Special Services bus. We are required by law to provide home transportation to students receiving these services.

### **How do I find my stop?**

Please click on the link below to find your bus stop. You will need your child's grade, house number, street, and zip code to find your bus stop.



[Find my Bus Stop \(Find my Bus Stop.url\)](#)

### **Who do I contact if I have a question about a bus stop or route?**

Contact our Family Information Center at 259-INFO (4636).

**My child attends a magnet school. Why can't he/she ride the bus there?** MNPS provides transportation only to students attending their school of zone. Since students who attend magnet schools are actually zoned to attend other schools, they do not receive transportation if they choose to go to a different school.

The district does provide free MTA bus passes to qualifying students at several magnet and other schools. To find out if your child qualifies for a free MTA bus pass, call the Family Information Center at 259-4636.

**My child has special needs. Who do I contact to make transportation arrangements?**

If your child is in Special Education, Pre-K, or qualifies for Special Services, transportation arrangements must be made through the office from which your child receives these services. Please contact your Special Ed or Pre-K adviser to make these arrangements. If you do not know who you need to talk to, please contact our Family Information Center at 259-INFO (4636) to be directed to the appropriate person.

**What if the bus doesn't show up on time?**

Mornings: After the first three weeks of school students should be at the bus stop at least 10 minutes before their scheduled pickup time, and wait at least 10 minutes beyond the regularly scheduled time before assuming there is a delay. If a student has waited more than 10 minutes beyond the scheduled pick up time, please contact the Family Information Center at 259-INFO (4636) to request a status.

Afternoon: If it is more than 15 minutes past the scheduled drop-off time, you should contact your child's school to find out if the bus's departure from school was delayed for any reason. If you believed that you may have missed your child's drop-off, please contact the Family Information Center at 259-INFO (4636).

**My child did not get off the bus at his/her stop. What do I do?**

You should contact your child's school immediately. If you do not get an answer at the school contact the Family Information Center at 259-INFO (4636).

**My child is being picked on by another student on the bus. What do I do?**

All school bus discipline problems should be immediately reported to the Principal of your child's school. Students who continue to cause problems can be removed from the bus for a period of one to ten days, or permanently, depending on the nature of the disciplinary problems.

**I saw a bus traveling in an unsafe manner. Who do I call?**

You should call 615-806-6333. Please take note of the bus number if possible, and be prepared to give the exact location of the bus, and the nature of the problem.

### **Why do buses always stop at railroad crossings? Why won't they turn right at stoplights?**

The laws for school buses are different than the laws for regular motorists. School buses are REQUIRED BY LAW to stop at all railroad crossings. They are also prohibited by law from turning right at stoplights unless there is a right-turn lane with a yield sign. Please be patient when following a school bus in traffic. The links below detail what Tennessee State Law says regarding School Bus Transportation, and the responsibility of motorists sharing the road with them: ([https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/safety/documents/DL\\_Manual.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/safety/documents/DL_Manual.pdf) (Pg. 51))

49-6-2101. Power of boards to provide transportation

55-8-147. Certain vehicles must stop at all railroad grade crossings

### **What qualifications do bus drivers have to have?**

In order to qualify to drive a school bus in Metro, a person must be at least 25 years old, possess a valid Tennessee Class B Commercial Driver License (CDL) with Passenger (P), school bus driver (S) and air brake endorsements, and must have a safe driving record. In addition, prospective drivers must pass the State Department of Education approved physical examination from a Metro-approved physician. The driver must pass the medical exam each year in accordance with State guidelines. Drivers must also complete a comprehensive School Bus Driver Training Program provided by MNPS and must complete First Aid and CPR Training and Annual Recertification programs. Bus driver candidates also undergo a thorough criminal background, motor vehicle report checks and random drug screens.