

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **How do I contact STA?**

Phone: (573) 214-3860  
 Email: [cpstransportation@cpsk12.org](mailto:cpstransportation@cpsk12.org)  
 Mail: 3511 Clark Ln, Columbia Mo 65202

## **How do we establish routes?**

Routes are established based on regulations from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) as well as our school district Board of Education policies. Regular Education buses are not to enter cul-de-sacs, dead end and closed loop streets and typically only travel along main thorough-fares.

For the ten (10) school years the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has **reduced** student transportation funding by over 69%. This results in classroom funds being diverted to cover transportation costs no longer covered by DESE. In order to continue providing transportation free of charge, each bus must be filled as close to capacity as possible. To do this, routes have to be structured to pick up as many students as possible in the shortest amount of time. To accomplish this the following routing guidelines are in place:

- Stops will be spaced:
  - Elementary – minimum of 500'
  - Secondary – minimum of 1,200'
- Buses will travel along main roads when possible and avoid entering cul-de-sac, dead end and closed loop streets
- Stops will be placed at intersections and other easily identifiable locations when possible

We appreciate your patience, flexibility and understanding as bus stops may not be as convenient as in the past as we strive to minimize transportation costs to focus more funding into the classroom.

## **How far are students expected to walk to a stop?**

The Columbia School District in accordance with state regulation has a school walk-zone of:

- 1 mile for K-8<sup>th</sup> grade
- 2 miles for 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade

Based on the above the district applies the same principal for maximum walk distance to a bus stop. In most situations the walk distance to a stop is considerably less.

## **What time will the bus pick up and drop off my child?**

Due to the bus operating in conditions beyond our control such as weather, traffic congestion, road blockages, and mechanical issues we ask parents:

- Morning Pick Up
  - Regular Education: Have their child at the bus stop 5 minutes prior to the scheduled time and stay until 5 minutes after the scheduled time.
  - Special Needs, Early Childhood, Lottery and other Districtwide Programs: to have their child at the bus stop 10 minutes prior to the scheduled time and stay until 10 minutes after the scheduled time.
- Afternoon Drop Off
  - We do not post drop off times for the same reasons as stated above and due to various reasons the buses may leave the schools at inconsistent times.
  - We request parents to be ready for the child at school dismissal time. As the year goes on times will become more consistent.

**Can my child ride the bus to his or her daycare/sitter a couple of days a week and then to my home the other days?**

The district does permit one (1) alternate address for transportation. Parents need to be aware the alternate address will override the home address for the portion selected (AM, PM or Both). This will result in the home address not being permitted for transportation

**The bus drives right past my house. Why can't the bus stop to pick up/drop off my child?**

If the bus stopped at every home that it drives past the has students riding the buses would never get to school in the time allowed. In addition, every stop location has been reviewed to ensure it is as safe as possible for the students who utilize the location. There are several factors that are considered when establishing a stop such as; Is the street safe for students to cross with good visibility in both directions? Do buses and motorists have a good view of the stop from both directions?

**Why doesn't the bus come into my closed loop, Dead-End Street or Cul-Da-Sac?**

This is one of the recommendations from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. These areas are dangerous because of the large number of small children that play in them, the confined space and blocked turn rounds. If basketball goals or vehicles are parked in the courts, there may not be enough room for the bus to successfully turn around without having to back up. Backing up can be dangerous in a school bus, especially if a small child were to run into the street. Backing up often results in accidents causing damage to the bus, personal vehicles, mailboxes and results in delays for other students.

**When does the district change bus stops?**

Bus stops are changed regularly to provide the most efficient routes possible. Major changes are implemented during the summer. However, if a problem or safety issue arises during the school year, immediate changes may be necessary. Typically no route/stop change requests are processed the first 15 days of school to allow time for route and ridership data to be reviewed.

**I live in a new subdivision, when will transportation come into my subdivision?**

Buses will not enter new construction areas until the construction has progressed enough to allow the buses to travel safely, consistently through the streets without blockage or having to maneuver through large construction equipment or tight spaces.

**My child says he can't eat/drink on the bus. Why?**

Eating or drinking is not permitted for safety reasons. Eating on the bus creates a choking hazard for students. When a driver is focused on the road appropriately, it would be very difficult to notice if a child was choking in their seat. The second reason is that some students have very severe food allergies and we would not want to compromise their safety. Many drinks contain ingredients that attract bees and other insects which can be dangerous and of the liquid spills it could cause other students issues.

**How do I appeal my bus stop location?**

a Stop Change Request form is provided for parents/guardians who would like to request a change in their child's bus stop for safety reasons. Parents/guardians are responsible for their child's supervision to and from the stop. Requests are reviewed by the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC are trained and is knowledgeable of State and District guidelines and policies that govern bus stop locations.

**Can my student be dropped from the school bus roster?**

Yes, in accordance with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) all school districts must maintain accurate, active ridership rosters. DESE defines an active rider as a student that rides at least one time a week. Based on this the district is required to remove students that are not active riders. When this occurs parents are notified as well as the school. If your student will start riding consistently please contact your school to have them changed from "In-Active" to "Active".

**I would like to leave my student on the bus roster just in case they need a ride, can I do this?**

No, as outlined above the district is required to maintain accurate bus ridership rosters and will need to remove students that do not ride consistently.

**My student only needs to ride the bus a few times a year or when their car breaks down?**

For these cases, the schools may be able to issue a "One-Day Ride Pass" to accommodate them. Please be sure to send notification of this with your student and have them take it to the front office before **noon** so there is time to process and issue the pass. In some cases a "One-Day Ride Pass" may not be available due to, location requested not currently being serviced, bus is at capacity, etc. Please call your school for more details. In some cases, it may take 48-72 business hours to make arrangements.

**We have a family emergency and I need to drop off my students with a friend in the morning. They need to ride with their children in the morning. Is this possible?**

Yes, the District realizes family situations will occur and for this reason drivers are instructed to pick up all age appropriate students on the morning routes. Students typically will be asked to sit in the front and the driver will need their information (name, grade). Please be sure to send a note with your student if they will need to ride to the friend's home that afternoon. Student should take the note to the school's office before noon to get a "One-Day Ride Pass"