

St Johns Public Schools Transportation Department



Parent/Student Handbook

**807 W. State St
St. Johns, MI 48879**

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a reference tool that can be utilized by students, parents, schools and transportation staff to communicate policy, procedures and general transportation information. It is our belief that this is an important step toward improving our transportation services.

The policies and procedures set forth in this document are subject to change without notice.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Office Location: The Transportation Services Department is located at 807 W State St.

Mailing Address: 501 W. Sickles St, St. Johns, MI 48879 Attn: Transportation Dept.

Office Hours: 7:30 AM – 12:00 Noon & 1:00PM-4:30PM

Dispatch Hours: 6:30 AM – 5:30 PM

Phone Number: (989) 227-5330

Late Bus Line: (989) 227-5330 Option Four (4)

Fax Number: (989) 227-5349

Web Page: www.stjohns.edzone.net Transportation

Transportation Administration: Director of Transportation: Janet Kayser

Fleet Manager: Wayne Hettler

Transportation Secretary: Pam Boak

TRANSPORTATION BOARD POLICY

General Conditions

It shall be the policy of the St. Johns Public Schools Board of Education to provide safe, cost efficient and timely transportation services for eligible pupils within the financial resources of the district.

In organizing the operation of the transportation system, all applicable statutes, rules, and regulations of the State of Michigan, or its agencies, shall be strictly adhered to and all recommendations and suggestions shall be carefully considered.

The contents of this handbook are subject to change without notice. For additional information regarding the laws in respect to school bus operations and school bus stops please see <http://www.michiganlegislature.org>. In the Full Text Search area, type School Bus. The top link selected will be PA 187 of 1990, commonly referred to as the Pupil Transportation Act.

TRANSPORTATION ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBLE FOR TRANSPORTATION

Elementary Students: Students who reside or attend daycare within their school attendance area and are not residing or attending daycare within the designated walk zone are eligible for transportation.

Middle School and Secondary Students: Students residing or attending daycare outside the designated walk zone are eligible for transportation.

Special Needs: A person identified by an Individualized Educational Planning Committee to be “disabled” in accordance with the State School Code, are eligible for Transportation to the school they are assigned to according to the IEP.

School of Choice: Transportation is a key issue in the district’s schools of choice program. It is the sole responsibility of the parents to transport their children to and from the choice school. The following is a list of the transportation guidelines for the district’s schools of choice program:

1. Parents will be responsible for transporting students to and from school in the district’s schools of choice program.
2. Parents may have the option to drive their child to a pre-approved bus stop in the school district of choice, if the Transportation Department has determined that space is available on that bus. Once the child is transported from school to the bus stop, it is the responsibility of the parent, legal guardian, or person in loco parentis, to provide transportation home for the child. Parents should also be aware that on those rare occasions when school closes early due to weather, etc., it is also their responsibility to provide transportation home for a child.
3. Parents will assume the responsibility for the safety of the child at the bus stop.
4. Students participating in the district’s schools of choice program, who are eligible to ride a school bus, are required to follow the rules, regulations and bus discipline policy of the district.

Non-Resident Students: Transportation will not be guaranteed to non-resident students. Each request will be determined on an individual basis. Requests may be submitted to the Transportation Office for consideration. Stipulations for using existing stops will apply for all non resident students. Property owners of rural bus stops must approve non resident students using their bus stop. School locations may be used as bus stops.

TRANSPORTATION ROUTING

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Bus routes are planned to achieve safety of students and responsible economy of operation.

School bus riders may find it necessary to walk some distance to a designated bus stop. **It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to assure student safety while arriving and waiting at the bus stop and while returning home from the bus stop after drop off.**

In establishing bus schedules, it is the district's objective that buses arrive at school with sufficient time to allow students time to arrive at their first scheduled class.

BUS STOP STANDARDS

The summary below indicates some of the best practices in locating school bus stops. The transportation department reviews bus stop placement annually. Routes and bus stops are established on the basis of serving the safety and best interests of all eligible students concerned. When practical, the following guidelines should be used when selecting bus stop locations:

- Bus stops will be limited whenever possible; students from several homes shall meet at a central point for group pick up.
- Stops must be at least 200 feet apart.
- The school bus at the stop location should be clearly visible for at least four hundred (400) feet from any direction that a vehicle might approach or 200 feet if the speed limit is 25 MPH or less.
- Students must walk to a location in front of the bus where the driver has clear visibility of the student. Students are instructed to walk at least ten (10) giant steps in front of the bus before crossing the roadway. Students shall cross the roadway only after the bus driver has signaled for them to cross. This signal will consist of a uniform wide sweep of the bus drivers arm.
- Stops are designed to avoid the use of turn a rounds at stop locations whenever possible.
- Hazardous walking conditions will be considered when determining stop locations.
- Conflict between neighbors is not a basis for additional stops or changes.

TIMING OF BUS STOPS

Student Pickup: Students should be at the bus stop ten (10) minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. Children running late to their bus stop experience greater risk of using poor judgment to reach the bus before it leaves. **DO NOT** cross the street behind the bus, enter the danger zone around a school bus, or chase a bus thinking the driver can stop a second time before leaving the area. Please reinforce with your child the need to be at the bus stop before the bus arrives.

Late Buses: Students should remain at a bus stop for fifteen (15) minutes after normal pick up time. If the wait exceeds fifteen (15) minutes beyond the normal arrival time, please call the transportation office late bus line at (989) 227-5330 Option 4, for status of your route. Students should be directed to return home or to a parent-designated location after the designated wait period.

Drivers Cannot Wait at Bus Stops: The bus driver is unable to wait for children to come out of homes, cars, etc. as we have other children waiting for the bus and we must maintain our schedule to arrive at school on time. If our driver does not see students at the bus stop, he/she will not wait for students. Students are required to be at their stop 10 minutes prior to their normal pick up time. **Drivers will not be allowed to go back to a bus stop to pick up late students.**

Removal from the Bus Route: If a student does not ride the bus for twenty consecutive days, the student will be removed from the bus route. Parents must re-apply for transportation privileges if the student needs to be put back on the route. If routing has changed and does not go by the students' bus stop, the Transportation Office will not guarantee the re-routing of the bus to accommodate the removed student back on the route. Transportation will take into consideration if your child is involved in extra curricular activities. Please notify your driver if this is the case of your student not riding.

APPLICATION FOR BUS STOP CHANGE

Change requests will not be taken over the telephone. A Transportation Change Request Form must be filled out by the parent/guardian, signed, and returned to the Transportation Office. Only two pick-up/drop off changes will be honored each school year.

***If the new location is not currently part of an existing route, the student(s) may be required to walk/ parent transport to the nearest bus stop.** The assignment of a bus stop will be at the discretion of the Transportation Office. If the change request is the result of a change in home residency, the residency verification affidavit must be updated at District Office and proof of residency is required.

Dual Custody: Parents who share in the custody of their children and need Transportation from two separate households must notify the Transportation Department of this arrangement. These situations will be dealt with individually. Both parents will be required to sign the Eligibility or Change Request Form. Transportation from both households will not be guaranteed.

During the summer months the Transportation Department establishes bus stops for all current and new eligible students. Routes will be adjusted at this time to accommodate new students and new stop locations. Students entering High School and Middle School will be automatically updated along with grade advancement. Information is gathered to create new bus routes for the new school year. Drivers bid their routes based on the information we have two weeks prior to school starting.

If your child needs to be picked up or dropped off in a different location from the previous school year, you will need to send the Transportation Office a Change Request Form. This information should be in our office no later than July 15 to be sure the student is scheduled on a bus route. Transportation Change Request Forms can be obtained on St. Johns Public Schools web page www.stjohns.edzone.net , District Office, Transportation Office, or any school location. Change requests can be faxed to our office at (989) 227-5349 or mailed to 501 W. Sickles St. St. Johns, MI 48879 Attn: Transportation Department. **Change requests received after July 15 will not be guaranteed that your child will be on an established bus route. ***

The transportation department utilizes the first four weeks of school to monitor routes, loads, and make necessary changes to provide safe and timely transportation for all eligible students. Applications for a change in bus stops are of a lower priority at this time. The first review of requests for a bus stop change begins in October. If your change request has been turned in after July 15, parents/guardians must be responsible for their students' transportation needs until the Transportation Office can accommodate their request.

*St. Johns Board of Education Guidelines

Each request requires review, research and investigation. The normal process after October 1 for a request for a bus stop change takes between five (5) and ten (10) business days, as there are legal requirements that must be met when establishing a bus stop. Often times it is necessary for the Supervisor and/or Assistant to physically visit the area to determine whether or not a bus stop can legally be placed in a specific location. Also, we take into consideration the effect the proposed change may have on other children eligible for transportation in the area. We must meet the guidelines and parameters set forth by the St. Johns Public Schools Board of Education to provide equitable transportation services for all eligible students.

Once the review, assessment, and determination of the disposition are completed, the notification process will begin. If the request is approved, the Transportation Department will notify our staff and parents. If the request is denied, parents will be contacted either by telephone or in writing.

NEW STUDENTS

New students must register at District Office before transportation arrangements can be made. The Office Coordinators process new student records and send the Transportation Eligibility Form to the Transportation Office. The transportation department will schedule transportation for eligible pupils within five (5) days of receiving the application.

NOTIFICATION OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Notification will indicate a pick up time and the designated bus stop. Please understand that this time is an estimate based on the best information we have at that time. It is often necessary to make adjustments on time as we add new students or eliminate unnecessary bus stops based on students not riding the bus*. If minor adjustments are made within the ten-minute window, parents or guardians need to use the consistent time the bus arrives at the pick-up stop. If the change is beyond the ten-minute window, notification will be provided by the transportation department or the bus driver with new bus stop pick up times.

***Please note: Students not using buses will affect bus stop times. If students do not use a bus stop the first two weeks of school, we will eliminate the stop. The bus stop may be reinstated if the eligible student's needs for transportation change during the school year by submitting a Transportation Change Request Form to the Transportation Department.**

SUBSTITUTE BUS DRIVERS/LATE BUSES

The Transportation Department proactively recruits substitute bus drivers to minimize late buses. There are occasions when the transportation department experiences late buses due to situations that are out of our control. Late buses may occur due to mechanical breakdowns, driver

emergency, late returns of a field trip, inclement weather etc. Our department has a pool of substitute bus drivers that we utilize in these situations. At times, we completely exhaust our pool of substitute drivers. Please be advised that pick up and drop off times may vary and that different drivers may be assigned to transport different routes. We regret using this method, as routes running late impact everyone. **Timeliness is important, but timeliness is second to safety.**

LATE BUS LINE

The transportation department's phone system provides a late bus recording by which you may check on the status of your child's bus if there is a delay. This line is updated as events occur. Due to staffing and time constraints, office coordinators and transportation staff cannot make calls to all families affected by these types of events. You may reach the Transportation department late bus line by dialing (989) 227-5330, option four (4). These announcements will also be posted on our website at www.stjohns.edzone.net Transportation

CHILDCARE CONSIDERATIONS / TRANSPORTATION TO DAYCARE FACILITIES

Transportation can be provided to students attending childcare facilities in the student's home school attendance area. Bus stops will be located near the childcare center where the bus can safely receive/discharge students. Transportation can be accommodated for one pick-up location and one drop off location. **If your day care arrangements vary from day to day, it will become the parent's responsibility to provide transportation on those alternating days**

PROGRAMS

SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM

New students must be registered and accepted by the School Readiness program before transportation arrangements can be made. School Readiness students eligible for transportation services follow the same guidelines as other elementary level students regarding bus stop times, routing, and locations. Allow 5-10 business days to process applications. Parents will be responsible for transporting students until the paperwork has been processed. Students will be dropped off at the Wilson Center in the morning. An aid may be required to bring the students to St. Joe in the afternoon to board the proper bus to go home. A parent or guardian must be present at the bus stop to receive the student when they are dropped off in the afternoon.

KINDERGARTEN

The Kindergarten program has two different attendance schedules. Session Red attendance schedule is Monday morning half day, full day Tuesday and Thursday. Session Blue attendance schedule is Monday afternoon half day, full day Wednesday and Friday.

Kindergarten students eligible for transportation services follow the same guidelines as other elementary level students regarding bus stop times, routing and locations. Exceptions will be on the half day Monday route; students will be picked up or dropped off at their home or daycare location. Buses will not pick up or drop off at the regular in town bus stops.

A parent, guardian or designated person **must** be present at the bus stop to receive the student when they are dropped off in the afternoon. If a parent or adult is not at the bus stop to receive the student, the student will be returned to the school and parent/guardian will be responsible to pick their child up.

SPECIAL NEEDS

New students must register with District Office before transportation arrangements can be made. The Special Ed Director will process the new student records or a change in programs and advise the transportation department. Transportation staff will be in contact with the parent or guardian for additional information to make the necessary transportation arrangements. Within ten (10) days of notification, the transportation department will schedule transportation for eligible pupils. If special equipment is necessary to safely transport a student, additional time may be needed to schedule transportation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

PARENT / GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Transportation shall be considered a privilege to be enjoyed by a student only as long as he/she accepts responsibility for his/her own conduct, he/she follows all rules and regulations, and he/she promptly responds to the directions and requests of the bus driver. Parents or guardians need to accept joint responsibility with school authorities for proper conduct of their child. Parents need to make a reasonable effort to understand and cooperate with those responsible for pupil transportation.

Dropping Off Small Children: Parents/guardian of pre-school, kindergarten or special needs students must be available to meet the child's homebound school bus. We will not drop off small children unattended. If the driver is unable to drop off a child with a responsible adult, he/she will return the child to their school. A school bus driver cannot wait for a parent/guardian to return home. If the school building has been closed, the student will be taken to the Transportation Office.

Neighborhood and Bus Stop Concerns: If parents/guardians or the children are experiencing problems at the bus stop, the transportation department may assist. However, neighborhood problems should be directed to your local police agency. Our responsibility begins when the children board the bus, continues during the bus ride and ends when they depart from the bus.

Appointments Scheduled After School: The transportation department cannot guarantee that students will be dropped off every day at the same time as we are impacted by road construction, traffic conditions, weather, field trips and, at times, the shortage of substitute drivers. Parents may want to pick their child/children up from school to assure that you make your appointment on time.

Parents or Guardians Entering Bus: Parents or guardians should **never** enter the bus to correct a problem between students. Instead, call the transportation department to allow for the proper meetings to be scheduled or concerns addressed.

Concerns about Bus Drivers: Should a parent have a concern regarding the bus driver, please contact the bus driver by using their voice mail or e-mail. This information is listed in the back of this document. If the issue cannot be resolved by direct communication with the driver, please contact the Transportation Office at (989) 227-5330. You may be requested to fill out a form with the issues listed. When communicating with any Transportation Employee, hostility or profanity will not be acceptable and may result in suspension of Transportation Services for your student(s).

House Numbers: Please be sure to have your address properly displayed on your property. The bus driver should be able to see your house number approaching from either direction. This helps contracted drivers as well as substitute drivers know they are picking up a student or dropping off a student at the correct address.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

St. Johns Public Schools provides bus transportation to students who accept responsibility for their own conduct, carefully follow all rules and regulations and promptly respond to the directions and requests of the bus driver.

1. All rules and regulations outlined in each School Student Handbook will be in effect on all buses while students are being transported to and from school as approved by the Board of Education.
2. The driver is in full charge of the bus and students. Students must obey the driver. When on field trips or sporting events, the teacher or coach is expected to share in that responsibility, however, the Bus Driver is responsible for the safety and well being of all passengers. The bus driver shall have the final word when on such trips.
3. Students must be at the designated bus stop ten (10) minutes prior to the arrival of the bus. Students must stand ten (10) feet back from the road.
4. When students must cross a road, students are to wait for the driver's signal before crossing and are to cross the road in front of the bus. The driver signal will be a wide sweep of their arm across the front of the bus to indicate it is safe for them to cross.
5. Students are to enter or leave the bus in an orderly manner, only at the front door and after the bus has come to a complete stop.
6. Students must not tamper with the emergency exits.
7. Students are to remain seated at all times. The driver has the right to assign students to certain seats to promote order on the bus.
8. Students are to keep arms and head inside the bus windows.
9. Students are to keep feet in front of them, not in the aisles.
10. Student's conversation and behavior should not be loud and distracting to the driver. Swearing, vulgar language or gestures are not permitted.
11. No spitting will be allowed on the bus. Spitting is a serious health risk to other students and may be cause for immediate suspension from riding the bus.
12. Possession of tobacco or illegal substances is not permitted.
13. Students should show respect to other students by not kicking, biting, pushing, shoving, hitting, etc.
14. Complete silence must prevail at railroad tracks. No talking or noise is permitted.
15. Students must ride their designated bus at their designated bus stop only. A student may only board another route providing the bus pass procedure was followed.
16. High School students who ride the bus in the afternoon will be allowed to do so only if they board a bus at the High School to shuttle over to the Middle School. Students who walk between the High School and Middle School may be expelled from riding the bus. This is a safety issue for after school release.
17. Recreational items, which are not intended for curriculum or co-curriculum program activities are not allowed on the bus. Examples: radios, walkmans, skateboards, animals, scooters and hockey sticks.
18. Band instruments can be transported if the size of the instrument is such that the student is able to hold the instrument in his/her lap.
19. Students are to sit erect in seats and must face forward at all times. Students must not lie on seats as this reduces the safety of the transportation.
20. Cell phone use on the school bus is not permitted. Cell phones are a distraction to the bus drivers and will not be tolerated. Cell phones must be turned off and put away at all times while on the school bus.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

School transportation is not only a privilege but plays an important part of the student's school day. The bus ride to school can set the tone for a student's whole day of success or failure.

The expectation is that all students will behave in such a manner as not to create a dangerous or unsafe situation for themselves, other students and/or the driver or to cause a situation, which distracts the driver. Poor conduct on a school bus warrants the loss of transportation for a student who refuses to behave in an acceptable manner.

Serious Offenses Include (but are not limited to):

- Boarding or leaving the bus without permission
- Disobedience or disrespect of driver's authority
- Forgery of bus pass
- Littering
- Loud and distracting talk or noise
- Moving from seat to seat
- Obscene talk or gestures
- Throwing objects on, from, or at the bus
- Violation of safety procedures
- Horse playing/fighting of any nature
- Inappropriate language
- Possession of a dangerous weapon
- Illegal drugs, substance, or paraphernalia
- Flammable material
- Smoking materials
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Spitting on others

Discipline Action Taken

Step One: If a student is appearing to become a problem, the bus driver should speak with the student, and follow up the conversation with a phone call to the parent/guardian of the student. This follow up must be completed within 24-36 hours of the incident.

Step Two: When a student does not adhere to the bus drivers' rules, another conversation with the student must take place. An assigned seat may be implemented and the driver will contact the parent/guardian by telephone to inform them of the issue and any steps taken to discipline the student.

Step Three: A conduct report will be issued to the student. This report will have all documentation of steps one and two included. The parent will be contacted by a phone call from the driver. The driver will explain to the parent the issues they have been experiencing, and inform the parent that the next incident may result in a two day suspension from the bus. The report will be sent to the parent/guardian, and must be signed and returned to the office within one week of the parents receiving the report.

Step Four: Steps one through three have been completed. At the discretion of the bus driver, a two day suspension may occur. The parent/guardian must be notified and arrangements for suspension dates must be set.

Step Five: A meeting may be set up with the bus driver, parent/guardian, Director of Transportation and/or Building Principal. A discussion will take place regarding the situation and resolution.

Every situation regarding student behavior is unique. These are general guidelines to follow. Each case must be handled on an individual basis. **No student will be suspended from a bus without parent notification and Administrative approval.**

Disciplinary actions do not follow students into the following school year. All students start each school year with no claims against them.

SAFETY

BUS EVACUATION DRILLS

Bus evacuation drills may be conducted more than three times during the school year. Each driver is trained to evacuate a school bus. Students must listen to the driver and follow their instructions during an evacuation drill.

BUS SAFETY

Everyone is expected to use the safety signal for crossing the road to load and/or unload the bus. The safety signal is the driver's hand gesture, which is a wide sweep of the drivers arm, waving the students forward to cross the road in front of the bus after the driver has checked conditions. The rules for using the safety signal are mandatory for all students in high school, middle school and elementary school.

AM Procedures for Loading:

1. All students will be at the bus stop ten (10) minutes before the scheduled arrival of the bus waiting in a single file line, 10 feet off the roadway. No pushing or horseplay is allowed at the bus stop.
2. All students will wait for the bus to come to a complete stop, then:
 - Check for the red alternating lights to be on.
 - Wait until the driver has given the safety signal before moving toward the bus.

Students Crossing:

- Look for safety signal from the driver.
- Check for red alternating lights and move to the traffic side of the bus.
- Check left, right, left and "walk" carefully across the road, keeping watch of traffic as they walk.
- Wait in the driveway for the bus to leave the area.
- NEVER run back across the road to pick up something dropped. Never go to the mailbox until the bus has left the area.

PM Procedures for Unloading:

Students Crossing:

- Look for the safety signal from the driver.
- Check for red alternating lights and move to the traffic side of the bus.
- Check left, right, left and then "walk" carefully across the road, keeping watch for traffic as they walk.
- Wait in the driveway for the bus to leave the area.
- NEVER RUN back across the road to pick up something dropped.
- Never go to the mailbox, until the bus has left the area.

- All students staying on the right will move away from the bus until the bus has moved away from the area.

These procedures are to be followed by all students loading/unloading, crossing or staying on the right side of the school bus.

DANGER ZONE

Parents please teach your child the Bus Safety procedures and to stay out of the danger zone. The danger zone around the bus is ten (10) feet on each side and twelve (12) feet in the front and back of the bus.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Please be sure the Transportation Office has updated information regarding your student. Current telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, and an emergency contact person are helpful if we need to reach parents or another contact person for your child. If you feel you need to update your information, please put that information on our “Change Request Form” and return it to the Transportation Office.

ANNUAL SCHOOL BUS INSPECTION

At anytime during the school year, our school bus vehicles are subject to a comprehensive school bus inspection conducted by the Michigan State Police. This annual inspection ensures that school districts maintain their fleet in safe operating condition at all times and that all children are transported to and from school in a safe manner.

In order to pass this inspection, all maintenance and repairs of school bus vehicles must be performed to meet or exceed the applicable Federal Motor Carrier Safety Standards. School bus safety standards exceed the safety standards for passenger cars.

MIDDLE SCHOOL STAGEING AREA/LOADING STUDENTS

Students are to board buses at the Middle School in the afternoon as soon as departing from transfer buses or being released from school. The Middle School Principal shall allow seven (7) minutes after school is released before signaling the lead bus to depart. When the lead bus has been signaled by the principal, the driver shall announce to the other buses that they are leaving. Once this announcement has been made to the other drivers, all buses shall close their doors. Once the first bus is in motion to pull away from the Middle School, students will not be allowed to board any bus. Late students will be instructed to return to the Middle School office to call parents to arrange for a ride home.

This rule is in place for the safety of your child.

MISCELLANEOUS

OCCASIONAL BUS PASS

Bus passes provide a challenge to the transportation department. Our top priority is to ensure students are transported safely to and from school. This includes making sure our bus drivers have a full knowledge of which students will be riding each bus each day. This knowledge allows our drivers to account for all students, particularly the younger students. In order to process bus passes effectively and to ensure appropriate transportation:

- The bus pass is intended for special situations and emergencies only
- Students having friends home for the afternoon or birthday party/group situations will be required to find other means of transportation after school.
- Bus passes are not available for the first two weeks of the school year.
- Route adjustments will not be made to honor a bus pass request
- All bus passes will be issued through your school office
- Parents should send a note to the school to request their child be picked up or dropped off at a different address. They will issue your child a pass for that particular day.
- Each student may use no more than four bus passes per school year
- Permanent changes must be handled through the Transportation Department

SECONDARY/ELEMENTARY BUS ROUTES:

Because of scheduling issues and bus loads, secondary students will not be allowed to ride elementary bus routes. The same applies to elementary students will not be allowed to ride secondary bus routes.

INCLEMENT OR SEVERE WEATHER

Inclement weather, hazardous road conditions, power outages or other incidents may require the closing of school. With student safety as our first priority, every effort is made to avoid school closings when possible. In bad weather, the decision to close school is made after:

- Road conditions are tested by the School District Administration
- Weather conditions are examined (weather advisories, storm patterns, temperature, etc.)

- Clinton County Road Commission's ability to plow area roads is determined
- The condition of school driveways and parking lots are assessed.

The Superintendent closes school based on the severity of these items coupled with our ability to transport students safely.

How do parents know school is closed?

When the District closes school or releases students early, we notify the local TV news stations and radio stations. The following radio/TV stations will broadcast such closings:

- WJIM 1240 AM/97.5 FM
- WFMK 99.1 FM
- WITL 1010 AM/100.7 FM
- WLNS TV Channel 6
- WILX TV Channel 10
- WSYN TV Channel 47
- **You can also check online via our District web site:**
www.stjohns.edzone.net Transportation
- **Transportation Late Bus Line at 989.227.5330, option four.**

Please do not call the Transportation Department.

Power outages, gas leaks and even storms may require evacuation during the school day to ensure the safety of your children. An evacuation may involve moving students to another building. Under these conditions, **St. Johns Board of Education authorizes Administration to move students without parental consent due to an emergency or crisis.** Elementary, Middle School and High School students will be transported by St. Johns Public Schools bus drivers to an alternate location with their teachers.

- If possible, students will be transported back to their school for instruction for the remainder of the day and regular dismissal
- If students cannot be returned to the building, their regular scheduled bus will pick the students up at the location they were transported to and taken home on their regular bus route.
- Parents who choose to pick up their student(s) must come to the alternate location to pick them up.
- If safe to do so, walkers will be transported back to their school to walk home at the end of the day or parents may pick them up at the new location.

For specific building evacuation procedures and additional information regarding evacuation procedures, please contact your building principal

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Are the bus stops the same every year?

While stops are fairly consistent from year to year, changes are made based on the location of students, safety, etc.

I cannot see my child's bus stop from my house. How can I get the bus stop moved closer?

Bus stops are placed at centralized locations that can be safely accessed by a significant number of students to minimize the length of time and mileage of the run. If you have concerns about your child's safety you are encouraged to accompany your child to the bus stop or arrange a neighborhood buddy to walk with your child.

We live within the walking boundary but very close to a bus stop for my child's school. Can my child ride the bus from that stop?

Students who reside in a designated walk area are not eligible for transportation.

My child left her coat on the bus. How does she get it back?

Drivers check their buses after every run. Unidentified items left by students are held by the driver for several days and may be claimed on the bus by the child. Fragile items are often taken out of the buses in the evening for their protection, but will be available the next morning. After several days the driver will make an effort to locate the owner. Unclaimed and unlabeled items are donated to charity. You can help by labeling all of your child's school belongings with the child's name and school.

Isn't the school district required to transport my child?

School districts are NOT required by law to transport regular education children. Michigan Compiled Law (MCL) 380.1321 outlines the obligations of the school district IF their board of education elects to provide transportation. Under Article 3 of the Revised School Code, the school district is obligated to provide for the transportation of a special education student if the Individualized Educational Planning Committee (IEPC) has determined that the transportation is a specialized service which is included within and necessary to carry out the student's IEP.

My child is starting kindergarten. Will the bus pick my child up in front of my house?

There are no special laws or regulations for transporting regular education students enrolled in kindergarten. If your district provides transportation, it will be provided in accordance with the requirements of MCL 380.1321, Section 55 of the Pupil Transportation Act, and local district policy with regard to the placement of the bus stop.

Is there a specified distance that must exist between school bus stops?

The lights on a school bus which are used to notify other traffic of an upcoming stop must, by law, be activated 200 feet from the stop. Thus, bus stops must be at least 200 feet apart.

121• What other factors are involved in establishing where the school bus stops?

There are many factors which should be taken into consideration when school administrators establish the placement of school bus stops. The basic legal factors are spelled out in MCL 257.1855, but the primary concern is visibility of the bus to other traffic and the consideration of stopping distances necessary for other motor vehicles in order to accomplish safe loading and unloading of the children. In general, state law requires 400 feet of clear and continuous visibility on a highway or roadway where the speed limit is more than 35 miles per hour, and 200 feet where the speed limit is less than 35 miles per hour. There is no state law which specifies a maximum distance between stops.

What about the safety of my child getting to and from the bus stop? There are no sidewalks where we live and it's not very safe walking on the busy road we live on.

It is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian to see that a child gets safely to and from the bus stop. The school district provides transportation as a non-mandated service, and establishes placement of the bus stops in accordance with the requirements of the law.

My child spends over two hours a day just riding the bus to and from school. Is there a maximum riding time in the law?

There is no maximum riding time in the law for children in kindergarten through grade twelve. Child care licensing regulations establish a maximum riding time of 60 continuous minutes for the transportation of preschool children