

## ***FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONCERNING PUPIL TRANSPORTATION***

**Below, you will find some common questions concerning the Effingham County Board of Education's transportation and bus routes. Should you have an inquiry that is not addressed below, please contact the Transportation Department @ 912-754-3574 or email at**

**Q1. Do I have to register my student(s) for transportation services before they can ride a bus?**

**A1. Yes**, all students must formally request bus services before riding a school bus.

**Q2. Are there any specific conditions that my student(s) has to meet?**

**A2. Yes**, in order to receive a bus service, a student must live in the attendance zone for the school that they attend. The student must be registered in the school district and enrolled in the proper school. The student's address must be correct in the student information system. If you are not sure of the accuracy of your address, please contact your school or the Central Registration Office for further information. If the student's address is incorrect, his or her bus information will be incorrect. HB251 students can only receive transportation within the district of the attending school zone with an approved caregiver form. If you have questions concerning these designated areas, please contact the Transportation Department.

**Q3. How do I request transportation services?**

**A3. You** may notify your school's data clerk, call the Transportation Department or email the Transportation Department at [bmartin@effingham.k12.ga.us](mailto:bmartin@effingham.k12.ga.us) Whatever method you choose, you will need the following information available:

- Student's name
- The school that your student attends
- Needs for AM service
- Needs for PM service
- The student's current primary address ("where the student actually lives") Remember, this must match what is currently in the student information system). Bus service will be based on the address currently in the student information system. If you have moved and have not changed your address, you will receive an inaccurate bus assignment. This will delay the needed services for your student. Please make sure that you provide the proper proof of residence documentation to your school or the Central Registration Office.
- Note: Once registered for a bus, this information will follow the child throughout their school career unless transportation status is changed by the parent.

**Q4. Can I request services at anytime during the school year?**

**A4. Yes.** A family can request that services start at any time during the operational year. All must simply notify the school front office, or the Transportation Department.

**Q5. Once registered, how do I confirm my student's bus information?**

**A5. There** several different ways to confirm a student's bus assignment. You may go to the district's transportation website. There is a link provided that will provide you with the proper information. You may contact the Transportation Department or your school's front office. Efforts will be made to have this information available at each school's open house at the beginning of each school year as well.

**Q6. If the provided bus information is wrong, what do I do?**

**A6. This** will happen if your student's primary address in the student information is incorrect. It can also happen if the school or Central Registration office incorrectly entered a student's transportation information. In short, it can be a number of reasons. The good news is, it can be resolved quickly. Please call or email the Transportation Department. Keep in mind that no bus information will be available until the student is enrolled in a school. Once a student has formally enrolled in a school, the information should be available within 24 to 48 hours.

**Q7. Where will my student's bus stop be located?**

**A7. That** depends on your place of residence. If you live on a roadway that has been identified as a "walk safe" area, your student will be assigned to a communal stop that serves multiple students in the same area (door to door service is not available in these areas). If you live on a roadway that has been defined as a "Walk Hazard," the stop location will be placed as close as possible to the student's actual address.

**Q8. If my student is assigned to a communal stop, how far will they have to walk to a bus stop?**

**A8. Safe** stop locations will be placed within .25 of a mile (1,320 feet) from every address in "walk safe" areas. Some addresses will obviously be much closer than others but the maximum distance is 1,320 feet. There are exceptions. The Transportation Department is making efforts to remove buses from cul-de-sacs to reduce the need for buses to back up (unsafe procedure when students are in the area).

**Q9. What are the expected responsibilities of a parent or guardian concerning travel to and from a bus stop location?**

**A9. The** district sees parents and guardians as partners when it comes to all elements of student safety. Students who are 8 years old or younger should always be accompanied by an adult to their morning bus stop and someone should meet them at their afternoon bus stop (Parents who

drive should not wait in cars. Please park safely away from the bus stop location and meet your student at the bus door). Parents should also consider the emotional level of some students over 8 years old before allowing them to travel to and from a stop location alone. For older students, parents should know and reinforce safe behavior in and around any roadways regardless of where the student catches the bus. Accompanying an older student on a few trips to the bus stop will help identify any obvious hazards. All bus safety training materials provided in the classroom are also made available to parents and guardians on the district's transportation web site. Please feel free to download and share this material with your children and any others that you feel will benefit from this information. The more our parents and guardians know, the more our students will know. **Parents and guardians are responsible for their child's safety both to and from the student's designated bus stop location.**

**Q10. Can my student use an alternate bus stop location or an alternate bus on a given day or span of days?**

**A10. Yes,** if capacity on an alternate bus allows, the student may obtain a temporary "Bus Pass." This will allow them to use an alternate bus or an alternate bus stop in their school's attendance zone. Keep in mind that they may only use an existing bus stop. A "Bus Pass" cannot be used to establish new stop locations on an existing route. For example: An emergency situation has arisen and a parent needs the student to go to a family member's house. This family member must live in the same attendance zone. The student will be taken to the existing stop that is closest to the family member's house. Temporary bus passes may also be issued by the school for non-emergency situations. This is at the discretion of the principal of the school or their designee.

**Q11. Can my student be permanently assigned to a different bus stop?**

**A11. Yes,** the Transportation Department will allow students to choose one alternate address for bus service. The district recognizes the need for some students to use an alternate address in the morning, the afternoon, or both, due to parent's work schedules. The alternate address must be in the school's attendance zone. The chosen alternate address will be used five days per week. Only one alternate address may be used. The alternate address may be designated for just AM service, just PM service, or both. Students may not use multiple alternate addresses based on a given day of the week. All scheduled bus service will be based on a five-day schedule. Stop locations to and from an alternate address will be assigned in the same manner as all bus stops (students may be assigned to a communal stop). Alternate bus service will not be provided to commercial addresses if the Transportation Coordinator deems it an unsafe location.

**Q12. Can my student simply choose to use another AM or PM stop location as long as it is on the same bus route?**

**A12. No,** the district requires that all students utilize their permanently assigned bus stop unless they have received a temporary "Bus Pass" from their school. Allowing students to choose bus

stops can compromise the capacity levels on given buses. It also frequently results in lost students. The district is dedicated to providing service to and from the student's designated permanent stop. This ensures that both parents and school officials know when and where a student boarded or exited a bus. This is a safety issue and is designed to ensure that all students are dropped at the proper locations.

**Q13. If I have changed addresses, can I transport my student to another bus stop or attendance zone and continue to place them on a school bus?**

**A13. No**, it is important that every parent or guardian provide accurate student information to the school or the Central Registration Office, regardless if the move requires the student to change schools. Remember, a proper bus assignment depends on an accurate primary address. Please avoid driving students to bus stops outside of their attendance zone or neighborhood. This can easily result in students being left in areas that are not familiar.

**Q14. What do I do if my student misses the bus in the morning?**

**A14. Occasionally**, a student may run late and the bus has already passed. The district is also aware that a driver may unintentionally miss a bus stop or possibly run early or late. It is our intent to arrive at our scheduled stops within a 5-minute range each and every day. However, unexpected conditions may arise that affect a given bus schedule. If a student misses the bus, they should return home and call the school or the Transportation Department immediately. They should never attempt to run or travel in any way to another bus stop. Parents should never place the student in a car and attempt to chase or find the school bus. If operational conditions result in a student missing the bus, the transportation department will make arrangements to return to the stop location. If the bus was on schedule and the student simply missed the bus, it will be the responsibility of the parent to transport the student to school. Dispatching buses based on late students only compromises the arrival schedule for other students. We ask that all students be at their bus stop location 5 to 7 minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time.

**Q15. What happens when it is raining? Can the bus drop my student at the driveway to keep them from getting wet?**

**A15. Unfortunately** no, in the event that in-climate weather is in the area all bus routes will remain the same. Bus routes should never divert from their scheduled path or perform bus stops that are not previously scheduled. Stops are placed to meet specific Department of Education guidelines and best practices. Keep an eye on the local forecast if rain is in the plan. Please ensure that your student is prepared with an umbrella or the proper garments (raincoat).

**Q16. If extreme weather is forecasted (example: ice or snow), how do I know if the bus will run?**

**A16. The** Transportation Department is deeply involved in all decisions to either close school or delay start times in the event of extreme weather conditions. When a decision is made, district wide automated calls will go out to all households. Please make sure that your phone number is up to date. It is also wise to watch or listen to your chosen local news source. All school closings or delays will be made available to all available media outlets. If school remains open during these weather events, it usually slows down the bus schedules because of unpredictable traffic conditions. If your bus is a little late, please be patient. Again, we can expect schedules to be affected in these conditions. If school openings are delayed for a designated time period, students should simply add the additional time to their normal bus schedule. For example: If your morning bus schedule is 6:30 AM and school openings are delayed two hours, your scheduled pick up time will be 8:30 AM.

**Q17. How do I express concerns or get information about my student’s transportation services?**

**A17. The** Transportation Department is here to address any concerns and answer all questions that parents or guardians may have. You may simply call or email the transportation department. The phone number and email addresses can be found on the school website at [www.effinghamschools.com](http://www.effinghamschools.com) and click on the transportation tab.

**Q18. Due to behavior problems, my student has been suspended or expelled from the school bus. Who should I call concerning the events?**

**A18. Just** like the classroom, the district has designed a discipline matrix for school bus behavior problems. Schools use this to assess each individual situation, and the principal or their designee assigns a particular level of discipline according to the level of behavior and the number of offenses. The driver and the Transportation Department are responsible for reporting non-compliant and un-safe behavior. We provide any available evidence to the principals or their designee. The transportation department will not reverse or reinstitute services once a principal has identified the appropriate level of disciplinary action.

**Q19. How can I find out which school serves my home address?**

**A19. Go** to the Transportation website. On the left, you will see a link that says “Look up school zones by address.” Choose this link and follow the instructions.

**Contact Information:**

- 1) Transportation (Phone) – 912-754-3574
- 2) Transportation Department (Fax) – 912-754-3514
- 3) Transportation Department (Email) – [bmartin@effingham.k12.ga.us](mailto:bmartin@effingham.k12.ga.us)
- 4) Transportation Department (Web Site) - <https://www.effinghamschools.com/domain/65>
- 5) District Website - <https://www.effinghamschools.com/Page/1>