

Q: How do I arrange bus transportation for my child?

First, you must enroll your child at the school. If you moved but still live within the boundary for the same school, you must give your new address to the school along with proof of residency. Provide the school any other information that has changed for your child, too.

Q: Why is it important to change a student's address at the school?

The student's school is the primary record-keeper for ALL student information, including the address that a student leaves from in the morning to ride the bus. The school electronically conveys your child's address to the Transportation Department, which in turn assigns a bus stop location, bus number and approximate pick-up time. Therefore, any information that has changed for the student must be changed at the school.

Q: How can my child get picked up or dropped off at a childcare provider's location?

To qualify for bus transportation, the childcare provider's address must be within the attendance area of the school and outside the walking area for that school. Parents must complete the Alternate Site Transportation Request form at talbotschools.org.

Q: How is a bus stop established?

Bus stops are established by using several factors, which include walking conditions, walking distance to the stop, and road accessibility.

Q: Why do students have to walk to a bus stop when the bus drives past the house?

In areas where walk conditions are acceptable, students are required to be picked up at centralized stops. Two students can be loaded at one stop faster and at less cost than the bus stopping at two separate stops. We encourage parent supervision at the bus stop.

Q: My child's bus is overcrowded. Can some children be placed on another bus?

Contact the Transportation Department and indicate your concern. A bus that has three elementary students to a seat or two middle or high school students to a seat may seem overcrowded. However, it will not be over capacity. Our goal is to fully utilize all of the space on all the buses in our fleet.

Q: What are acceptable walking conditions?

Please refer to Board of Education policy 5.9 Student Transportation Administrative Regulations.

Q: My Student needs to ride home on a different bus or be dropped off at an alternate location for one day. What do I need to do?

If your student on occasion will be riding home on a bus other than the one to which he/she is assigned (i.e. riding home with a friend to an alternate stop), before boarding the bus the student MUST give the bus driver a signed note from the school administration approving the written request from the parent.

Q: My student is having a problem with the bus driver. Should I go to the bus stop to talk with the driver?

No. Going to the bus stop places everyone in a defensive position and can lead to a confrontation, which is inappropriate for the students to witness. Drivers are trained to avoid confrontations to the point of closing the door and driving away. Federal law prohibits blocking the doorway or interfering with the operation of the bus. If you have a concern with something that happens on the bus, please call or talk with the administrator of your child's school. After gathering the necessary information, he or she will pursue the matter with the transportation manager, who will in turn work with you to resolve it.

Q: Why won't the driver drop off my child (10 years of age or younger)? I gave the school permission to drop off my child with no one outside or visible. I am in the house waiting.

Drivers must comply with the policies and procedures as set forth by the Board of Education and TCPS, as well as Maryland Family Law 5-801.

Q: If I am going to have someone else meet my child at the bus stop, whom should I notify?

Notify the school so the information can be relayed to the bus driver. This is a safety precaution, as we do not want to drop off a student to a person with whom the driver is not familiar.

Q: My student left an item (i.e. coat, glasses, instrument, retainer, books, etc.) on the bus. How does he/she get it back?

Drivers and substitute drivers check their buses after each run. Any items found are returned to the school.

Q: Why did the driver not stop at the bus stop when my student was running late, or not wait for my student to get to the bus stop?

We make a concerted effort to be consistent on the time we start the route. After the first stop, many things can affect the arrival time at subsequent stops, so even the most conscientious driver will vary by a few minutes. If there is a substitute driver, the times may not be consistent with the regular time period. To allow for those variances, students are told to be at the bus stop five minutes prior to normal arrival and to be waiting there when they are visible to the driver as the bus approaches the stop. Drivers are required to activate their yellow lights a minimum of 100 feet prior to stopping and turning on their red lights. If drivers do not see any students present, they are not required to stop. They are also not required to wait for tardy students. Usually, drivers will not leave students if they are close to the stop and making an effort to get there as quickly as they can. The loading and unloading process is the most dangerous part of the bus ride, and students are safest when they are at the stop before the bus arrives, not running for it after it shows up.

Q: The bus did not show up on time for my student. How long should he/she wait at the bus stop?

Wait 15 minutes AFTER the scheduled pick-up time, then contact the Transportation Department.

Q: My student was suspended from the bus, and I have questions about why he/she was suspended. Whom do I contact?

The school administration is responsible for overseeing student bus behavior issues and handling consequences, including additional days of bus suspension. School administration is responsible for investigating the incident, which may include talking with other students on the bus. The Transportation Department is involved when the driver does not follow procedures.

Q: What kind of screening process do drivers go through to make certain they are qualified to be around children?

Briefly, applicants are fingerprinted, criminal background checks are initiated, driving records are reviewed, references are checked, drug/alcohol tests are conducted (including pre-employment and random testing), DOT Physicals are obtained, and new drivers are required to go through 30 plus hours of training.

Q: What should I do if there is a custody situation that prohibits my child's other parent to take him/her?

Please contact the school as soon as possible regarding any custody issues. The school will, in turn, contact the Transportation Department to relay the information to the bus driver.

Q: I have some other transportation questions; how do I contact Transportation?

Send us an email or contact us at 410 822-9535.

Q: Whom should I call if I don't like the location of a bus stop?

You can contact the Transportation Department, and the placement of the stop will be reviewed. A designated bus stop will not always seem ideal to everyone assigned to it. There are numerous issues to be considered in relocation a stop, and we may not be successful in meeting everyone's expectations. Some students will have to walk to the bus stop. In some cases, the stop may not be in direct line of sight from your residence. We encourage parental supervision at the bus stop.

Q: Whom do I contact when there is a problem at the bus stop?

Talbot County Public Schools is not responsible for student behavior at the bus stop. Our responsibility begins when students board the bus and ends when they exit the bus. If there is a problem at the bus stop that cannot be resolved amongst the students and families, contact your local law enforcement agency.

How Talbot County Public Schools Decides to Cancel or Delay School During Bad Weather

Closing or delaying schools is a serious responsibility. A change in a school schedule can create inconveniences and difficulties for many families. Talbot County Public Schools is committed to making the best and most informed decisions we can and also communicating decisions as quickly and reliably as we can.

We evaluate many factors and sources of information as we work to make the most responsible decisions for our students and employees. Our main focus is always the safety of our students and employees.

Here is the process we follow to decide on weather delays and closings:

Our Transportation Department receives regular updates from several sources including weather forecasts from the Mount Holly, NJ and local 911 weather services the night before, in the morning, as well as during the day, to stay ahead of developing weather. We also talk to neighboring school districts about the conditions they are seeing.

On mornings when we have bad weather, Transportation employees fan out throughout the county by 4 a.m. to assess roads and sidewalks. At the same time, we contact county and state highway departments to hear their plans to clear roads.

Easton airport is contacted regarding visibility and eight spotters from various locations in the county call the Transportation Department to report on conditions in their area. (Note: All standardized reflective markers are set at 750 feet from the spotter's viewpoint.)

County Emergency Management and County and State Roads are contacted for road and weather conditions.

Maryland State Police, Talbot County Sheriff's Department and Easton Police Department are contacted for road conditions and snow emergency phases.

The Superintendent evaluates all this information. The Superintendent decides – by 5 a.m. – if and when we can safely open schools and transport students.

This decision is communicated through an auto dialer to parents and staff. The announcement is also conveyed via email, twitter and posted on talbotschools.org. Phone calls are also made to regional radio and television stations with the announcement, as well as the County Emergency Management Agency.

These decisions are made carefully and student safety is our number one concern in making the best decisions with the information available at the time.