

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Who is eligible for school bus transportation?

The South Carolina Department of Education has codified school bus regulations into state law. The law states transportation on general education school bus routes is authorized for public school pupils who live 1.5 miles or greater from their school. Distances are measured from the home address to the school address via surface streets. Public school pupils include pre-kindergarten through twelfth-grade students. Parents of students attending schools with special permission from outside the attendance zone are responsible for providing the student's transportation.

## Can a student be picked up or dropped off at an alternate address, including daycare centers on a recurring basis?

Yes. Parents/guardians may request this service during registration and supply the pertinent at that time. During the school year, parents/guardians must request permission for the student to be delivered to the alternate address from the school principal, regardless of temporary or permanent request. In either case, the school will complete an Official Bus Rider Verification Form with the required information including the alternate address and duration of the alternate arrangement. To be considered, (1) students must be eligible for school bus service and (2) the alternate address must be within the school's attendance zone. This is a space available service with priority given to students assigned to the specific bus serving their home neighborhoods.

## How are bus stops established, eliminated, or changed?

In accordance with state law, students may be required to walk up to a three tenths (0.3) of a mile to the nearest bus stop. For students whose walking distance to the bus stop is greater than 0.3 miles, additional stops will be added in accordance with state regulations. Distances are measured from the home entrance via surface streets to the bus stop. Parents/guardians requesting additional or changed bus stop locations may contact the Transportation Department for consideration.

Safe bus stops on each route may not be closer than two tenths of a mile to one another. Bus stops must have a clear visibility of 600 feet in each direction or a "School Bus Stop Ahead" sign must be located at a point 600 feet in each direction from a designated stop. Examples of unsafe stop locations are blind curves, steep grades, near crests of hills or other locations with hazardous traffic conditions. There are certain locations where a bus turnabout (a backing turn, followed by reversal of travel direction) is required. However, this should be the last options. Backing a school bus should be avoided unless no other safe option exists.

### **🌀 Why can't the school bus come down my road? Are buses permitted to travel on private roads?**

In addition to student eligibility rules, school buses are only allowed to travel on roadways that assure the safe transport of students. Safety is determined by the ability of the school bus to meet and pass another vehicle of equal size, and the roadway must be constructed sufficiently to avoid damaging the school bus or creating the potential for an accident. The quality of the roadway during bad weather also must be taken into consideration. The safety of the students must receive the top priority. South Carolina school buses are intended for use on public roadways only. However, if a request is made to enter onto a private roadway, (1) the Transportation Department must determine the safety and maneuverability of the bus entering the area and (2) the owner of the private roadway must provide written authorization for use and complete a notarized "Release of Liability."

### **🌀 What is the district's bus stop safety protocol for Primary students?**

Effective October 4, 2021, all Barnwell Primary students are required to have a babysitter or guardian present at their bus drop off location in the afternoons. This procedure also applies to all daycares. If the babysitter or guardian is not present at the bus drop off location, the students' will be taken to the transportation office at the end of the bus route. A parent will be required to pick up their child at the transportation office.

### **🌀 When are emergency evacuation drills conducted? Who must participate?**

Federal law requires them at least twice during the school year for each student who is transported in a school bus. Instruction must include safe riding practices and participation in Emergency Evacuation Drills. Drills should be conducted within the first two months of school for the first semester and before Spring Break during the second semester. Pre-K - 1st grade students should receive "hands-on" safety training to include evacuation drills within the first weeks of the school year.

### **🌀 Can students be required to sit in a designated school bus seat?**

Yes. Assigned seats are mandatory in Barnwell School District 45 and have been mandated by the South Carolina Department of Education for the 21-22 school year.

### **🌀 Why can't I get on the bus to talk to the bus driver?**

State law does not allow parents or other adults to board a school bus or impede its progress in any way. This law protects the safety of students and helps assure that routes run on time. If a parent has a concern, the parent should communicate with the Transportation Department.

**🔥 Can a bus driver suspend a student from the bus?**

No. School bus drivers are responsible for maintaining order in accordance with the District's Discipline Code. The safety and well-being of each student depend on following the standards of discipline outlined by the District. School bus drivers must be able to concentrate on driving at all times. Even momentary distraction can lead to a serious accident. State law requires the driver to report discipline and safety infractions to the school principal. The reports are referred to school administrators for appropriate action, including suspensions for misbehavior and safety infractions or termination of school bus privileges for repeated or severe infractions.

**🔥 Are there any delays in students returning home on buses?**

Because of the shortage in bus drivers, some buses may be double routed, causing students to get home later than normal. Our school bus drivers are always striving to get students home on time, but most importantly safe.