

Arcadia Unified School District
Transportation Department
School Bus Safety Guide for Parents



Dear Parent/Guardian:

Welcome to the Arcadia Unified School District. As part of the District's transportation safety plan this registration packet is provided for you and your child to review in order for you to become familiar with the District's policies and procedures regarding school bus transportation.

California law does not mandate Home-to-School bus service; however the Arcadia Unified School District does offer transportation to some school sites from designated bus stops where ridership will support service. You may call the Transportation Department at (626) 821-1435 ext. 2002 to inquire about transportation availability for your child.

If Home-to-School transportation is provided for your school, a current list of school bus stops near your home will be available for review at the school site as well as at the Transportation Department the week prior to each school year. Bus stop changes may be made for each new school year.

Enclosed you will find information which explains the following:

- ❖ How routes are designated
- ❖ School bus safety requirements
- ❖ Bus driver training
- ❖ Walking to and from your bus stop

- ❖ Frequently asked questions
- ❖ Bus loading & unloading procedures
- ❖ Emergency evacuation instructions
- ❖ School bus “Danger Zones”
- ❖ School bus conduct & safety rules
- ❖ Parent/Guardian Information : Vehicle Code 22112 (School Bus Signal, School Bus Stops & Vehicle Code 22454 School Bus: Meeting & Passing)

How Routes Are Designated

Routes are designated for safety, efficiency and the conservation of time. They are also designated by ridership on a cost feasibility basis.

School Buses Safety Requirements

The Motor Carrier Division of the California Highway Patrol must certify all school buses owned by the Arcadia Unified School District. Additionally, the terminal is inspected annually by the Motor Carrier Division to ensure that the buses are maintained according to state-established standards.

School Bus Driver Training

All drivers must be certified by the California Highway Patrol. Prior to certification the driver must successfully complete a medical examination, complete twenty hours of classroom training, complete twenty hours of behind-the wheel training, and pass a Department of Justice background check. All drivers must also complete ten hours of in-service training each year. Drivers must renew their licenses and certificates every 5 years.

Drivers are also trained in Child Safety Alert System. Senate Bill - 1072 requires that all school buses be equipped with a child safety alert system, which is a device located inside, at the rear of the bus. Before exiting, the bus driver must manually contact the device to verify that all seats have been visually checked for children still on the bus. Each driver must do these checks at the end of every shift.

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) oversees the safe operation of school buses in the state of California. The District must follow all applicable state regulations when determining the location of school bus stops.



Walking To and From Your Bus Stop

- ❖ Use a safe walking route. Be aware of potential danger spots along the way.
- ❖ Stay on the sidewalks wherever possible.
- ❖ If you must cross streets on your way **to** the bus stop, use crosswalks and/or streets at intersections. **DO NOT JAY WALK!**
- ❖ In the event that a student is late to the bus stop and the bus driver has closed the door and pulled away from the curb, students are to return directly to their home and their parent/guardian is responsible for their transportation to school. Occasionally, school buses are late due to traffic, weather, or emergencies. If the bus is late, remain at the bus stop. After 15 minutes, if the bus has not arrived, a parent or pupil who lives near the stop may call the Transportation Department at 821-1435 ext. 2002. Another bus will be dispatched if the regular bus has been detained. **Parents are requested to discuss with their child what to do if he/she misses the bus.**

Frequently Asked Questions

- Q. What type of communication does the Transportation Department have with the bus drivers?
A. *For the safety of the students, each driver is equipped with a two-way radio and a cell phone to reach Transportation at all times.*
- Q. When I am present at my child's bus stop, may I walk my child across the street without the school bus driver's assistance?
A. *No! California law indicates that their school bus driver must escort all students in grades pre-kindergarten through grade 8 if they need to cross the street, even in the presence of the parent.*

- Q. What happens if there is no one to receive a pre-school , kindergarten or first grade student at the bus stop?
- A. *Students will be returned to the school of attendance (or to the Transportation Office or District Office if the school is closed). It will be the parent's responsibility to then pick the student up. In the event the district has exhausted all efforts to have a student picked up, Arcadia Police Department will be contacted.*

Bus Loading Procedures at the Bus Stop

The school bus driver must follow the procedures outlined in the California Department of Education Instructors Manual for School Bus Drivers Training Course at every bus stop.

1.) Students must arrive at the bus stop, on the designated side of the street at **least 5 minutes** before the scheduled pick-up time. If students are late to the bus stop or are on the wrong side of the road when they see the school bus approaching, they must not cross the street until after the bus driver gives them instructions and turns on the flashing red crossover lights. Students in grades Pre-K, Kindergarten, and 1st-8th must wait for the bus driver to physically escort them across the street.

2.) While waiting for the bus, students must respect the property rights of owners near the stop. Vandalism, dangerous play, excessive noise and obscene language may result in disciplinary action being taken. Students should wait for the bus in a safe location, well off the roadway. The bus will stop ten feet before it reaches the students. The students should remain in a single file line and not approach the bus until the bus driver opens the entrance door. Students should load the bus in an orderly fashion, use the handrail with no pushing or shoving and find a seat quickly. Students are to place their backpacks in their laps, and shall use quiet voices on the bus.

Bus Unloading Procedures (determining if student requires an escort)

1.) The bus driver shall stop to load or unload students only at a designated bus stop. (This includes students on field trips and athletic trips).

2.) The route sheet shall designate which stops require students to be escorted. However, prior to releasing any student, the driver shall check with all students at the assigned bus stop in order to see if any student requires an escort.

3.) Prior to any student leaving his/her seat, the bus driver will bring the bus to a complete stop, set the parking brake, ensure that traffic around the bus has cleared, activate the red crossover lights, and then open the door.

When You Live Across the Street From the Bus Stop

California law requires that students in grades Pre-K through 8 be escorted across the street. The driver must use a handheld STOP sign. The students who need to be escorted will follow the bus driver out of the bus and remain out of the roadway until the bus driver instructs the students to cross the street. The students must cross the roadway between the school bus and the bus driver. Students should cross quickly and must never run back across the roadway toward the bus. Students who do not cross the street will exit and move away from the bus.

The bus driver, and or parent/guardian must not alter designated school bus stops.

When parents/guardians arrive at the bus stop and park on the opposite side of the street, the nature of the bus stop is changed, therefore creating a safety hazard. To eliminate the danger and unnecessary crossover situation, please be sure that you park and wait on the same side of the street as the bus stop location. Students are not allowed to cross the street when they are utilizing a stop that has not been designated as an escort RED LIGHT crossing stop. Escort stops are shown on the route sheets as RED LIGHT XX. If a student (pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1 to 8) utilizes an escort stop, the school bus driver will physically escort the student across the roadway.

Emergency Evacuation Instructions

Each school year, students in grades pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 1-8, who receive Home-to-School transportation on a District school bus, shall receive safety instructions. The instruction shall include, but not be limited to:

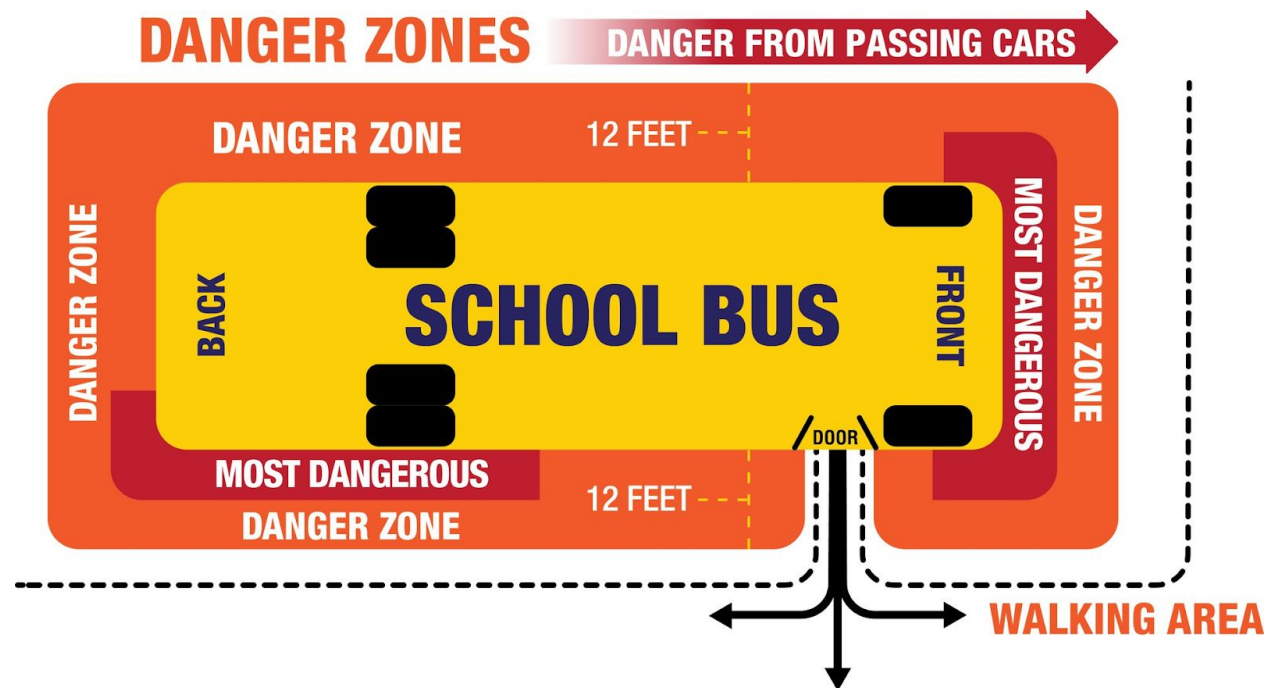
- ❖ proper loading and unloading procedures, including escorting by the driver;
- ❖ proper passenger conduct,
- ❖ bus evacuation,
- ❖ location of emergency equipment.

As part of the evacuation, students shall evacuate the school bus through the side emergency exit door.

All students riding on a school bus or student activity bus shall receive safety instructions prior to departure. The instructions shall include, but will not be limited to: passenger safety, and location and use of emergency exits and equipment.

“Danger Zone”

Students are to stay out of the school bus “Danger Zone”. The “Danger Zone” is a 12 foot space all around the school bus. The school bus driver cannot easily see students in this zone. Students are to move away from the bus door quickly and stay clear of the wheels.



Arcadia Unified School District Bus Conduct and Safety

The State Board of Education Regulations Section 14236 governing transportation states:

“Pupils transported in a school bus shall be under the authority of and responsible directly to the driver of the bus, and the driver shall be held responsible for the orderly conduct of the pupils while they are on the bus or being escorted across a street, highway or road. Continued disorderly conduct or persistent refusal to submit to the authority of the driver shall be sufficient reason for a pupil to be denied transportation in accordance with regulations of the Governing Board of the District.”

School bus rules of conduct are established first and foremost to ensure that the student has a safe ride to and from home. The school bus is an extension of the classroom, and appropriate behavior is expected at all times. For those who are unable to follow the established rules, a series of sanctions maybe applied that are appropriate to the offense.

Safety Rules on the Bus

- 1.) Bus passes must be displayed each time student enters the bus
- 2.) Students may talk quietly with the person seated next to them. Orderly behavior is required while aboard the bus.
- 3.) Students are to keep all parts of their body inside the bus at all times.
- 4.) No profane language, shouting, pushing, abusive body contact, horseplay, spitting, obscene gestures, hitting or any unnecessary noise that may distract the attention of the driver is allowed.
- 5.) No eating, drinking, gum chewing or smoking allowed at any time on the bus.
- 6.) Animals, (i.e.: birds, fish, reptiles, insects), breakable containers, skateboards, weapons, or any object that could be hazardous will not be transported.
- 7.) No spike or cleat shoes shall be worn in the school bus.
- 8.) California law requires a school bus with passengers aboard to stop at all railroad crossings. Students must maintain absolute silence when approaching and while stopped at the crossing so the driver can look and listen for approaching trains.
- 9.) Students must never open, close, or tamper with any parts of the bus equipment or emergency exit levers.

Failure to abide by one or more of these rules may result in the loss of bus riding privileges.

Parent / Guardian Information

Vehicle Code Section 22112 addresses the requirements of School Bus Signal and School Bus Stops, and essentially states that school bus drivers shall only stop at school bus stops which have been approved by the District Superintendent, or authorized by the Superintendent for school activity trips.

School bus drivers will activate the flashing amber light warning system, if the school bus is so equipped, beginning 200 feet before the bus stop. The driver will then activate the flashing red signal lights and signal arm. There will be no exceptions to the use of the amber lights, flashing red signal light and signal arm being activated at designated escort stops, where pupils are loading or unloading from the school bus and must cross the roadway upon which the bus is stopped.