

<b>POLICY</b>	<b>BOARD OF EDUCATION OF FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND</b>
<b>TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS</b>	<b>POLICY 441</b>
<b>441.1 Parental Responsibility</b> <b>441.2 Student Eligibility for Bus Transportation</b> <b>441.3 Bus Routing</b> <b>441.4 Disabled Students</b> <b>441.5 School Bus Ridership</b> <b>441.6 Standing on Buses</b> <b>441.7 Transportation of an Out-of-State Student</b> <b>441.8 Transportation of Students Living Within Mileage Limit</b>	

**Purpose:** The Board of Education (Board) values the partnership between the school system and home in getting students to and from school on time and safely. Expectations with regard to transportation services for students are outlined below.

**441.1 Parental Responsibility**

- A. Getting students to and from school safely is a partnership between the home and the school. Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) will provide parents with educational information and resources on pedestrian and bus safety in addition to the training and resources provided to students.
- B. Parents are responsible for the safety and conduct of their children from the time they leave home until they board the school bus or enter school property and from the time they leave the school bus or exit school property at the end of the day.

Although schools have different starting and closing times, it is an expectation that students should not arrive at school more than thirty minutes before instruction begins and should leave the school grounds within thirty minutes after instruction ends, except when the student participates in school-sponsored or teacher-supervised activities.

- C. Parents are expected to have children at the assigned bus stop five (5) minutes before the scheduled arrival time of the bus in the morning.

<b>Legal Reference</b>	§ 7-801 and § 7-805, Education Article <i>Annotated Code of Maryland</i>		
	COMAR 13A.06.07 "Student Transportation"		
	McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)(iii)(II)		
<b>Source Document</b>	FCPS Regulation 200-13 <i>Transportation of Students – Designation of Bus Routes/Bus Capacities</i>		
<b>Policy History</b>	Reviewed: 2017, 2020	Adopted 2/3/09	Revised: 9/9/20

- D. Parents may be held responsible for the reimbursement of damages to the property of other students on the school bus and for damage to equipment on the bus. Parents may also be held responsible for the damage caused by objects thrown from the bus.
- E. Parents are responsible for identifying the appropriate walk route from home to school or the bus stop. FCPS will provide to parents national, state and/or local information and recommendations to assist parents in identifying an appropriate walk route.
- F. It is recommended that parents walk with or make provisions for providing assistance for taking very young children to the bus stop or school in the morning and meeting the bus or students leaving school in the afternoon
- G. In order to determine if schools are closed, delayed, or dismissing early, parents are expected to check local radio and television broadcasts, as well as the FCPS webpage for announcements of the delayed opening or closing of schools.

#### **441.2 Student Eligibility for Bus Transportation**

The Board of Education (Board) is committed to providing safe and efficient transportation for students who are transported. School buses are considered an extension of the school campus and all rules and regulations apply accordingly. Barring extenuating circumstances that prevent safe bus travel, students are eligible for bus transportation based on the following criteria:

##### **A. Elementary**

With the exceptions as outlined in sections D and E, elementary students are not eligible for school bus transportation to school unless the most practical, direct walking route is longer than 1¼ miles. Up to 1/10 of a mile may be added by the Transportation Department so that a street or cul-de-sac is not divided. Walking distances in contiguous areas may be extended at the superintendent's discretion.

##### **B. Secondary**

With the exceptions as outlined in sections D and E, middle and high school students are not eligible for school bus transportation to school unless the most practical, direct walking route is longer than 1¾ miles. Up to 1/10 of a mile may be added by the Transportation Department so that a street or cul-de-sac is not divided. Walking distances in contiguous areas may be extended at the superintendent's discretion.

##### **C. Walking Distance**

The walking distance for both elementary and secondary students shall be measured from the property line of the student's home to the designated school property line as identified by transportation staff.

- D. All students who attend designated primary schools will be provided bus transportation.

E. Transportation will be provided under the following exceptions:

1. When students residing within prescribed walking distances of their assigned school do not have suitable walkway between their homes and their assigned school.

A suitable walkway is defined as a sidewalk or road shoulder with a minimum surface width of three (3) feet over which students may walk without being required to step on the traveled portion of the road surface.

2. When students are required to walk across a roadway involving an unusual safety hazard.
3. When students are required to walk across an active, at-grade railroad crossing; a railroad bridge; or a railroad overpass/underpass having inadequate walkways.
4. When defined and authorized as an emergency exceptional condition by the superintendent of schools or designated representative.
5. When secondary students would have to cross a road where the speed limit is 35 miles per hour or greater **and** the intersection:
  - a. is not controlled by a traffic light, or
  - b. is not controlled by a stop sign, or
  - c. is not controlled by a crossing guard, or
  - d. does not have a marked cross walk.
6. Transportation will be provided for elementary students if they must cross a road with a speed limit of 35 miles per hour or greater **and** the intersection is not controlled by a:
  - a. traffic light, or
  - b. crossing guard.

F. Criteria for Establishing Walking Paths between Home and School

1. Elementary
  - a. With the exception of residential areas as outlined in section b., elementary students are not to walk on the traveled portion of the road.
  - b. On residential-area roads without through-traffic, elementary students are not to walk farther than 25 feet at any one point on the traveled portion of the road.
2. Secondary
  - a. On a road with through-traffic, secondary students are not to walk at any one point on the traveled portion of the road that is farther than:
    - (1) 25 feet on a road where the speed limit is greater than 35 miles per hour.

- (2) 50 feet on a road where the speed limit is 35 miles per hour or less.
- b. On a road without through-traffic, secondary students are not to walk at any one point on the traveled portion of the road that is farther than:
  - (1) 50 feet on a road where the speed limit is greater than 35 miles per hour.
  - (2) 200 feet on a road where the speed limit is 35 miles per hour or less.
- G. The Superintendent has authority to allow exceptions to the above conditions.

### **441.3 Bus Routing**

- A. The Board will endeavor to route buses so that students will have a maximum of ½ of a mile to walk to a bus stop, exclusive of private driveways and roadways.
- B. The Board will endeavor to route buses so that students will have no more than a one (1) hour scheduled ride each way.
- C. The Board will endeavor to drop off students no more than ½ hour prior to the start of school and to pick up students within ½ hour of dismissal.

### **441.4 Disabled Students**

- A. Disabled students attending a Maryland State Department of Education approved school during the regular school year may be provided daily transportation if they live within 50 miles of the school.
- B. Disabled students living beyond the 50-mile limit established above shall be eligible for two (2) round trips each school year.
- C. Certain resident disabled students attending Maryland State Department of Education approved public or nonpublic schools shall have transportation available to and from their home areas on weekends.

### **441.5 School Bus Ridership**

- A. As provided in regulations of the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration, the driver of a school bus shall be in full charge of the bus and students, except in the presence of a teacher.
- B. A school bus driver shall not permit or allow children not enrolled in a school program or any unauthorized adult on any school bus.
- C. Except for regular routes to and from school during the school year, utilization of county-owned buses will be limited to trips sponsored by the public schools of Frederick County for approved school activities. An exception will be made for official business trips sponsored by the County Council for Frederick County, Maryland. School buses involved in field trips will be driven only by approved and certified board school bus drivers.

#### **441.6 Standing on Buses**

In accordance with Maryland law, school vehicles shall be routed so that all students are seated and loads do not exceed the rated capacity. If extenuating circumstances create an overload, i.e., unanticipated ridership at the beginning of the school year or an emergency, a corrective plan will be immediately identified and remedied as soon as possible but no later than five (5) student days after notification of the overload condition.

#### **441.7 Transportation of an Out-of-State Student**

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act, a homeless student may reside temporarily outside of a Frederick County school of origin. In such case, Frederick County and the county in which the student is residing shall determine how to divide the responsibility and cost of providing transportation, or they may share the responsibility and cost equally.

#### **441.8 Transportation of Students Living Within Mileage Limit**

A school bus may be used to transport any student who lives within the mileage limit, if a mileage limit has been established by the local Board of Education, and if:

- A. The school bus is not filled to capacity;
- B. No additional bus stop is added to the route to transport the student; and
- C. The Director of Transportation has identified a specific existing hardship that would justify allowing the student to be transported.