



Service Center
15111 Garfield, Redford, Michigan 48239
Telephone (313) 242-4400
Fax (313) 242-4405

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What training and qualifications do the drivers have to complete before becoming a Redford Union Schools bus driver?
 - A. Our drivers must obtain a commercial driver's license (CDL) with an appropriate "S" endorsement before they are permitted to drive a school bus. Drivers pass written and behind-the-wheel examinations, pass a background check and also must pass a drug and alcohol screening prior to receiving positions as bus drivers for Redford Union Schools. Through this process, drivers receive approximately 50 – 60 hours of classroom and on-the-road training prior to obtaining their license. In addition, our department runs random drug screening on a quarterly basis testing at least 25% of our staff. The District has a zero-tolerance policy for alcohol and controlled substances. Ongoing training and continuing education is scheduled for all drivers. By State law, drivers must attend recertification classes on a bi-annual basis to retain their school bus driver's license.

2. Why does my neighbor's child receive school transportation when my child is not eligible?
 - A. The District and department have eligibility guidelines for determining which students to transport. Many factors are considered including boundaries, distance, and possible hazardous conditions along the school bus route. Pre-K and Kindergarten students who live more than one (1) mile from their school receive District transportation, 1st grade through 12th grade students who live more than one and one half (1.5) miles from their school receive District transportation. Unfortunately, there are occasions when the border is determined to be only feet from a residence and a family is determined to be ineligible. Some students have special needs that have been determined and documented by physicians or our District Special Education team. We are not at liberty to discuss personal circumstances.

3. Why aren't there seat belts on the school bus?
 - A. School buses have a passive restraint system. The Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards are very stringent concerning school buses. Engineers use "compartmentalization" in designing the interiors of school buses to create a safety system through high seat backs, close quarters, an increased amount of padding around the seating areas and more. As long as a child is sitting properly in the bus seat (bottom to bottom and back to back), he or she is safe on a bus. In catastrophic accidents with trains, very large vehicles or over deep embankments, no type of seat restraint system is foolproof.

4. The bus passes right by my house. Why can't you just stop in front and get my child?
 - A. All Redford Union Schools bus stop locations are determined according to our overall District needs and are set and subject to State laws. For example, by law, school bus stops must be located at least two hundred (200) feet apart. Hundreds of children embark and disembark our school buses over the course of a regular school day. Unfortunately, we cannot make special accommodations for families because department safety and overall efficient operations must remain a priority.

5. What do I do when my child's bus is late?
 - A. After the first few weeks of each school year, our buses establish standard routes and times. Unfortunately, many factors affect our operations including traffic congestion, weather, blocked side streets, other students running late, etc. We make every possible attempt to stay on schedule and always maintain safety as a priority. Our drivers will not speed to make up time lost on a route. Please become familiar with the regular routine and, in cases, where our bus is running fifteen (15) minutes later than normal, feel free to call our office at 313-242-4400 to check on the status of the run. We also ask that all families do their best to follow schedules and be on time to avoid inconveniencing other students. Please have your child ready at the bus stop ten (10) minutes before the scheduled pick up time. Our drivers are not able to wait more than three (3) full minutes at a stop for a late student. If it is necessary for your child to be home alone in the mornings, please discuss several "what if" scenarios with your child in the event of a late bus or other change in routine.

6. I had an emergency, late meeting, etc. and was not able to meet my child at their drop off stop. What do I do?
 - A. In circumstances where you know this will occur, please try to call ahead to your school office to make arrangements for your child. You may also try our office at 313-242-4400 and we will make an effort to problem solve with you. Please know that our drivers do take care and know which students should get on and off the bus at each stop. We will not leave a kindergarten or first grade student unattended if no one is there to greet them at their drop off location. In our "safety net" program, your kindergarten or first grade child will remain on the bus and our driver will make a second attempt to drop the child after all other stops are made. If there is still no one available to greet your child at the designated stop, we will return your child to MacGowan Elementary. The safety net program at MacGowan Elementary will accept students at no charge for the first incident. The MacGowan Childcare phone number is 313-242-3841. Safety net charges on a second incident are ten dollars (\$10.00) per half hour. The third safety net incident will result in a loss of school transportation privileges for the child/family for the year. Unfortunately, we are not staffed to retain students in second grade or higher in our safety net program and those students will be dropped at their designated stop. We strongly urge you to speak to your child and have them prepared for unexpected emergencies.

7. My child is apprehensive about the school bus. May I ride the bus with my child?
 - A. We discourage this practice for a number of reasons including overcrowding, safety, and liabilities. However, parents of MacGowan Elementary students have the opportunity to ride the bus with their child on the very first day of school. As a District, we do share safety information with all students and have school bus rules that will, when followed, help your child adjust and remain safe. If you have extenuating circumstances, you may appeal in writing to the Director of Transportation, 15111 Garfield, Redford, MI, 48239.
8. My child wants to ride home with a friend or bring a friend home on the bus. Is this allowed?
 - A. Again, for safety, overcrowding, and tracking issues, we discourage this practice. Our drivers do keep track of the students assigned to each stop. We do not feel comfortable leaving a minor at a location that is not very close to home. If it is absolutely necessary for a classmate to come home with your child, please send a note with the children and have the principal sign the note to authorize the ride. The note must be given to the driver at the beginning of the run.
9. Why can't my child bring his large band instrument or sporting equipment on the bus?
 - A. Michigan State law requires all instruments and equipment to be held on a student's lap. We are not allowed to store items in the aisle ways or empty seats due to safety and problems that may occur in the event of an accident or emergency. If your child's item cannot be safely held and retained by the student, we cannot transport it.
10. When MUST motorists STOP for the school bus?
 - A. In preparation for a school bus stop, the bus driver will activate YELLOW flashing lights approximately 200 feet before the stop. This is the indicator for motorists to slow and proceed for caution in preparation for the stop ahead. When the bus comes to a complete stop and opens the door, the RED flashing lights are activated. When the RED flashing lights (and extended STOP arm) are seen on a school bus, motorists MUST stop. This is the signal that the bus is stopped to load or unload students. Motorists must wait until the RED flashing lights are turned off before they can resume driving. The exception to this rule is when the bus is on a roadway that is separated by a median – in those instances, only the motorists following the bus must stop. An example could be Telegraph Road.
11. If my child is absent from school, do I need to notify transportation?
 - A. Our buses follow their regular routes on a daily basis with the expectation that some students will miss school occasionally. Our office is not staffed to take such calls but if your child is transported by a special needs bus and is the only child at the stop, notification would be appreciated. Our number is 313-242-4400.