



NEWS RELEASE

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Back to School 2020:

Gwinnett school buses prepare to hit the road

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS)' framework for implementing parents' choice of in-person instruction for students calls for a limited number of grade levels to begin the transition to attending school in-person beginning August 26. That plan includes school bus service to and from schools for those students.

In preparation to provide that service, the GCPS Transportation Department has serviced buses and is conducting driver training. All GCPS school buses will be cleaned, following the disinfecting practices recommended by the CDC and county health department, before drivers hit the road. (In addition, buses will be cleaned/disinfected after morning and afternoon routes each day.)

Gwinnett County students and parents will start noticing school buses driving routes in their neighborhoods starting **Wednesday, August 19. All GCPS bus drivers will run their assigned routes during actual drive times in the mornings and afternoons, beginning Wednesday, August 19, through Tuesday, August 25.** Parents and students should look for their school's name, which will be displayed on a card in the bus window to help parents identify their child's bus.

Fast facts about GCPS transportation services ...

*(*These facts are based on the 2019-2020 school year)*

- Gwinnett transports more than 133,744 students twice a day and is the 3rd largest transporter of students in the country
- Operates more than 1,980 school buses
- Drives 8,167 runs per day
- Has 45,076 bus stops
- Drives more than 131,000 miles per day (more than 30 round trips to Los Angeles per day)
- Drives nearly 24 million miles per year
- Also, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)— Students are about 70 times more likely to get to school safely when taking a school bus instead of traveling by car.

Plan for additional time during the first three weeks of school

Once bus transportation begins for students whose families selected the in-person option, Gwinnett school officials ask that those parents have students at the bus stop approximately 15 minutes before their scheduled bus arrival. In addition, they should plan for routes to run a little slower during the time when the

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The Mission of Gwinnett County Public Schools

is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.

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It is the policy of Gwinnett County Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability in any employment practice, educational program, or any other program, activity, or service.

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district transitions more students back to school as drivers will go through additional procedures before releasing students at their bus stops to ensure the safety of students, especially young students who are new bus riders. This means that many buses may run behind schedule, especially on the afternoon routes.

Working together to keep Gwinnett children safe

Riding the school bus is an exciting experience, especially for young, first-time riders. As students begin riding the school bus again this year, GCPS asks parents to review bus stop safety with their children, including these back-to-school safety recommendations:

- **Parents should not send their children to the bus stop and to school if they are not feeling well.**
- **All students are required to wear a mask on the school bus and should wear masks or cloth face coverings while waiting on the bus.**
- **Parents should find the location of their child's bus stop (information is available at the school) and take their child to that bus stop before the student begins in-person instruction.** This will help the student become familiar with the location.
- **Parents should drive their child around the area near the bus stop, ensuring familiarity with the route and recognition of where to get off the bus.** Parents also should point out landmarks that are easily recognized to help the student know which stop is theirs. (Note: On afternoon routes, students are not let off a bus on cul-de-sac streets until the bus has completely turned around and is on its way out of the cul-de-sac.)
- **Parents should make sure their children understand that if they are uncertain about a stop they should not get off the bus.** The child should tell the driver he or she isn't sure. The school bus driver will take the student back to the school and contact the parents. This is particularly important for younger school-aged students (grades K-2) who are more likely to follow the crowd off the bus.
- **Once students begin to attend school in-person, parents should set the child's routine from the very first morning.** If a family has decided a student will ride the school bus, a parent should have them ride the bus that first morning of in-person instruction and not drive them to school. Following the routine from the first day helps the student and the driver become familiar with each other and the bus route.

- **Parents need to plan with a group of other parents and adults to have an adult supervisor present each morning and afternoon at the bus stop.**

When a student recognizes the adult supervisor on duty during the afternoon route, it gives him a sense of reassurance that he has gotten to the correct stop.

Number to call if child doesn't get off bus: If, for some reason, a child does not get off his or her bus at the scheduled bus stop, parents or guardians should call their local school. If they can't reach the school, they may call transportation at 770-513-6686.

Number to call regarding special education transportation questions and services: 770-513-6881.

If parents need assistance in resolving pick up/delivery questions during the school year: Parents should call the school their child attends. Often they will have the needed information. If they do not have the information, the school is best equipped to contact the appropriate transportation staff member for a quick response.

Transportation Alternate Address Form or Transportation Parent Authorization Form needed for service to other addresses

All students will be picked up and dropped off at the bus stop serving their home address. Exceptions are made for those students who have a documented disability that requires a change, or those who have an "*Alternative Address Form*", or a "*Transportation Parent Authorization Form*" on file. These forms identify alternate pickup and/or delivery (within the attending school zone) at an address designated by parents for child-care purposes. Each year a new form has to be filled out. These forms should be filled out annually as they are not carried over from year to year. For questions on these forms, parents or guardians should call 678-226-7036.

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