

School Bus Safety Tips

- Drive your child around the area near the bus stop, ensuring that your student is familiar with the route and knows where to get off the bus. Point out landmarks that are easily recognized to help your student know which stop is his or her stop. (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.)
- Make sure your child understands that he shouldn't get off the bus if he is uncertain about his stop. The child should tell the driver he isn't sure. The school bus 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.
- Is your child a bus rider or a car rider, or does she go to daycare? Routines are important. Following a routine from the first day helps the student and the driver become familiar with each other and the bus route.
- Plan, if possible, with a group of other parents and adults in your neighborhood to have an adult present each morning and afternoon at the bus stop. When your student recognizes the adult “on duty” during the afternoon route, he will have a sense of reassurance that he has gotten to the correct stop.
- Parents, get to know your bus driver.
- Be visible at the bus stop by getting out of your car and standing with your child.
- Be at your bus stop 5 minutes early and only use your child's assigned stop.
- Encourage children to load and unload in an orderly line.
- Make sure hands are free and all your child's belongings are inside her bookbag.
- Teach your child to stay 12 feet from the street and never approach the bus unless it is completely stopped and the door is open.
- Teach your child never to step toward the bus until he looks to be sure all the traffic has stopped in both directions.
- Never assume approaching cars will stop!
- Teach your child to look for traffic before exiting the bus when unloading. She should then proceed in a straight line, in full view of the bus driver, directly to a safe location 12 feet away from the bus and the street.
- If your child must cross the street to load or unload a bus, teach him to always look for moving traffic. Cars may not stop! Your child should always keep eye contact with the bus driver and watch for the driver's signals.
- A child should never cross behind a bus or return to the bus after unloading.
- In the event that a child drops something near a bus advise her to gain the attention of the bus driver by waving her hands above her head from a safe distance, and to never attempt to retrieve the item without the full attention and instruction from the bus driver.
- A blowing bus horn means DANGER. Teach your child to look and find a safe place to go immediately.

In addition to raising awareness regarding bus safety and laws for drivers, GCPS has placed cameras on buses as a deterrent for drivers who illegally pass school buses. When the school bus amber or red lights are flashing, the system automatically detects vehicles passing the stopped school bus, and records the violation. The violator will receive a citation in the mail. The district has approximately 300 buses with cameras this school year.

This past spring, GCPS bus drivers conducted a one-day count of vehicles that passed stopped buses. They counted more than 1,500 violations in that one day.

