

FREQUENTLY ASKED TRANSPORTATION QUESTIONS

W.L. Roenigk, Inc. provides contracted transportation services for non-public and special education students in the Deer Lakes School District.

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Beginning of School Year Questions

Bus stop change/addition requests should be made using the on-line [“Bus Stop Change/Addition”](#) request form. This form collects the necessary information to review requests. Other concerns and questions are best submitted using the on-line [“Contact Us”](#) form. Many frequently asked questions are addressed on the web page.

If you experience trouble with the form or need immediate attention, please call the Transportation Department, at 724-265-5300.

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Non-Public and Private Schools

[Will the District transport my K-12 child to a non-public or private school?](#) Yes, if the school is state licensed with non-profit status and is not beyond 10 miles.

[What if the school district has a bad weather delay or cancellation?](#) Bus transportation follows the Deer Lakes School District Schedule. Please check the Deer Lakes web site at www.deerlakes.net

[What about when the non-public or private school has an early dismissal?](#) The District coordinates calendars with non-public and private schools. There may be days when transportation is not provided for non-public and private school early dismissals. Please contact your child's school with calendar questions.

[What about when the non-public or private school announces a weather delay and the school district does not?](#) **In this case, the transportation runs on the Deer Lakes regular schedule.**

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Kindergarten programs

What is the kindergarten schedule? District kindergarten programs are full-day programs. Transportation is provided in the morning and afternoon.

My child is starting kindergarten; will the bus pick my child up in front of the house? There are no special laws or requirements for transporting students enrolled in kindergarten.

Am I required to be at my kindergartener's assigned bus stop for discharge? Yes, if no adult is present the bus driver may return the student to the child's school and the parents will be contacted to pick up their child.

If am required to be at my kindergartener's assigned bus stop for discharge, what if I am late or unable to be at the stop at the designated time? The bus driver is not permitted to discharge kindergarten students unless an adult is at the stop to receive the student. If no adult is present the bus driver may return the student to the child's school and the parents will be contacted to pick up their child. Habitual lateness may result in loss of transportation service.

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Special Education Student Transportation

I have a question about my child's transportation, who should I contact? If special transportation is required, the Director of Special Education will contact the District's Transportation Department.

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Daycare and Special Situations

Can my child be picked up in the morning or dropped off in the afternoon at a daycare? **The District will provide one morning and one afternoon "rostered" stop.** The AM stop may be different from the PM stop, but they must be the same stops everyday of the week. If your child's daycare is everyday and on an existing bus route, the District will provide transportation as a courtesy. School districts are not required to provide this service. This rule also applies for students with divorced parents. If there is a court order for custody, you must submit the court document to the Transportation Department to get this request approved.

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Bus Stop Change/Addition Requests

Very few bus stop changes or additions are made after the schedule is developed. The schedule is based on considerations of safety and efficiency.

Each year, parents ask the following questions:

I think my child has too far to walk to the bus stop, can the stop be moved closer to my house? Bus stops and schedules are not changed for this reason. Pennsylvania State Law allows a district to ask a child, regardless of age, to walk up to a mile and a half to a bus stop. The average walking distance to a school bus stop for Deer Lakes is between 1/8 and 1/2 of a mile. No children in the Deer Lakes School District have to walk 1 1/2 miles.

There is a bus stop for elementary students near my house, why doesn't the middle school/high school bus stop at this stop? The Transportation Department runs 2 bus schedules, elementary and secondary. The schedules and stops are designed based on ridership, safety and efficiency for each schedule. Additional stops will not be added for this reason.

I think my child's ride is too long; can the bus schedule be changed? Bus stops and schedules are not changed for this reason. Transporting nearly 2000 students over a large area will require some students to be first on the bus in the morning and last off the bus in the afternoon, i.e., some will have a longer ride. Routes are based on population distribution, efficiency and safety. There are no time limits set by the Pennsylvania State law or regulations.

My child has to walk up a steep hill; can the bus stop be moved closer to my house? Bus stop locations are based on analysis of both safety and efficiency. If possible, bus stops are not located on steep hills when it may be difficult for the bus to stop or start.

My child is the only student at the stop this year, why can't the stop be moved closer to my house? Stops are evaluated each year. Once stops are established, stops are not changed for the convenience of an individual or a small number of students or families. Although stops are reviewed each year, it is important for reasons of safety and efficiency to maintain as much consistency as possible from year to year.

I have younger children at home, can the bus stop be moved to our driveway so I don't have to take them to the bus stop? Bus stops are not changed for this reason. Pennsylvania School Law permits student walking distance up to 1 1/2 miles. It is the parents/guardians responsibility for making arrangements on how they handle the supervision of their children at home and at the bus stop.

I have to care for an ill family member all year and cannot go to the bus stop with my child. Can my bus stop be moved to my house? Bus stops and schedules are not changed for this reason. Deer Lakes School District transports nearly 2,000 students. We cannot make special accommodations for every family's special circumstances. It is the parents/guardians responsibility to make arrangements on how they handle the supervision of their children getting to and from the bus stop.

My child's caregiver has a medical condition and cannot accompany them to the bus stop. Can you add a stop at the house? Bus stops and schedules are not changed for this reason. Deer Lakes School District transports nearly 2,000 students. We cannot make special accommodations for every family's special circumstances. It is the parents/guardians responsibility to make arrangements on how they handle the supervision of their children getting to and from the bus stop.

I can't see my child while walking to the bus stop; can the bus stop be moved closer to my house? Bus stops are not changed for this reason. Pennsylvania School Law permits student walking distance up to 1 1/2 miles.

My child has to cross the street to the bus stop; can the bus stop be changed to my side of the street? Some students will have to cross streets and roads to a bus stop. Children should wait to cross the road to board the bus until the bus is at a complete stop with red lights activated.

We had a bus stop closer to our home last year, why was the stop changed? Stops will change year to year depending on the number of students in each residential area and grade levels.

Our neighborhood has no sidewalks; can we have an additional bus stop so our children do not have to walk to the existing stop? With the large number of streets and roads in the Deer Lakes School District, it is necessary for some students to walk on streets or roads in neighborhoods with no sidewalks.

What if I think that my child's walk to the bus stop is unsafe? The Director of Transportation will review safety concerns. This review may involve a site visit. Based on a review of conditions, the stop may be kept or a new stop location created.

How do I contact the District Transportation Department? A bus stop change/addition request should be made using the on-line ["Bus Stop Change/Addition"](#) request form. Other concerns and questions should be submitted using the on-line ["Contact Us"](#) form. Allow a minimum of five (5) school days for a response. During this time, parents/guardians may have to provide transportation.

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School Delays/Cancellations/Late Buses

Bus schedules for non-public, private schools and the A.W. Beattie Technical School follow the Deer Lakes Schedule.

For example, if Deer Lakes District is delayed two hours, the bus schedule for these schools will be delayed by two hours, except for A.W. Beattie, on two hour delays we do not transport to A.W. Beattie.

Why was my child's bus late? On occasion, a bus might be late picking up students due to traffic congestion/accidents, weather conditions or a substitute driver. Please know that we do everything possible to have all buses running on schedule each and every day. In the event that your bus does not arrive as scheduled, contact the Deer Lakes Transportation Department at 724-265-5300. Please allow 10-15 minutes before calling.

Will I receive a call if a bus is going to be late? No, there are many students on each bus. It would be impossible to contact everyone in such a short time frame.

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Pennsylvania Law – Frequently Asked Questions

The school district is often asked questions that relate to the Pennsylvania Law. Many of these questions are answered on the [Pennsylvania Department of Education's FAQ web page](#).

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New to District

We're new to the District, what do we do to arrange bus transportation? The first step is to contact the school office and enroll your child. The school office will notify the Transportation Department. A District representative will contact you once transportation is set up with the information. Expect a minimum of five school days. If your move in date is weeks away, please call the Transportation Department two weeks before your move in date to verify transportation services.

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Bus Safety

What are some safety "rules" to teach your child?

Students, parents, teachers, administrators, transportation personnel and the motoring public all play important roles in keeping our children safe while on or around the school bus:

Please take a moment to review the following safety tips to help ensure our children arrive to and from school safely each day:

- Get to the school bus stop ten minutes early, so you won't have to run across the road to catch the bus.
- When waiting for the bus, stay away from traffic. Line up at least five giant steps away from the curb or the roadway to wait for the bus.
- Never run after the school bus if it has already left the bus stop.
- Never push when getting on or off of the school bus.
- Always walk at least 10 feet in front of the bus when crossing so that the school bus driver can see you.
- If crossing a road or street, wait until the bus has the red flashing lights on and all traffic has stopped before crossing.
- When the school bus is moving, always stay in your seat. Never put your head, arms or hands out of the window.
- Talk quietly; do not distract your school bus driver.
- If your school bus crosses railroad tracks, be calm and quiet so that your driver can listen for a train. Always obey your school bus driver's instructions, so that he or she can make safe decisions.
- Never play with the emergency exits. Backpacks, band instruments, or sports equipment may not block the aisle or emergency exits. If there is an emergency, listen to the driver and follow instructions.
- When getting off of the school bus, make sure that all drawstrings and other loose objects are secure so that they don't get caught on the handrail or the door.
- Never cross the street behind the school bus. Do not walk along side a moving bus.
- If you leave something on the bus or drop something outside of the bus, never go back for it. The driver may not see you and begin moving the bus.
- Never speak to strangers at the bus stop and never get into the car with a stranger.

What if the bus breaks down? Do not drive to pick up your child. A bus will be sent.

Why does the Transportation Department try to avoid bus stops in cul-de-sacs? Except for special education circumstances, buses are generally not routed into a cul-de-sac. Cul-de-sac stops are considered unwise, because cul-de-sac stops create blind spots often causing students to enter or exit in a danger zone around the bus (at a corner stop or street curb stop, the enter/exit outside the danger zone). Different styles, sizes of buses and sizes of cul-de-sacs make maneuvering difficult. In addition, parked cars and other obstacles create road hazards that may not be seen until entering the cul-de-sac and backing up a bus is dangerous.

What if I have a concern about a bus driver? If you have a concern about a bus driver, contact the Deer Lakes Transportation Department at 724-265-5300 or use the on-line ["Contact Us"](#) form. The form is electronically routed to the Transportation Department.

Can I get on the bus to talk to the driver? Due to safety and efficiency reasons this is strongly discouraged. Parents are not permitted by Pennsylvania State Law to get on a school bus. Violation of this law is a Class 1 misdemeanor.

Can a child be suspended from riding the bus? **Yes, transportation is a privilege, not a right.**
Discipline is handled by the school principal.

Can my child be required to sit in a designated school bus seat? Yes, students can be assigned to a seat. This is a practice used by many school districts to control behavior or maximize utilization of bus capacity.

Why don't the buses have seat belts? Buses are constructed for safe transportation of children. The seating is compartmentalized and padded to provide a seated child with a safe area in the event of an impact. The height of the vehicle places the seating above impact zones providing extra safety for the riders.

There is no room for my child to stand at the bus stop, is it legal for cars to park at the bus stop? Cars should not park in the area where children can stand. The Pennsylvania Vehicle Code addresses vehicles parking near an intersection with a stop sign or other traffic signal.

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Other Questions

My child left an item (e.g., coat) on the bus. How do I get it back? Personal items will be left on the bus for two days or returned to the bus garage. The school district is not responsible for lost or misplaced items.

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