Communication with Drivers

Direct phone or radio communication with drivers by anyone other than TRANSPORTATION SERVICE PROVIDER (FIRST STUDENT) managers and staff is not authorized due to safety guidelines, requirements and transportation management policies. It is incumbent on the TRANSPORTATION SERVICE PROVIDER (FIRST STUDENT) to provide a single or direct source of communication at all times while providing student transportation services. It is also incumbent upon drivers to report immediately to this source any occurrences that will create delays or impact student transportation services beyond normal operations. All events impacting student safety and timely transportation service must immediately be communicated to the school DOO or designee for appropriate response per school communication guidelines.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is my student's bus late?
Weather, traffic, driver absenteeism, maintenance difficulties, and unforeseen incidents may be responsible for delays in the arrival of school buses in the morning and afternoon.

The transportation team is doing everything possible to ensure all buses are running on schedule every day. In the event that a bus does not arrive as scheduled, please allow ten to thirty minutes before calling the transportation office or the school. (See below)

What should I do when my student needs to ride a different bus or get off at a different stop?
Contact the school’s administration and ask them to complete a Temporary Student Bus Pass. This form will be provided by the school to the TRANSPORTATION SERVICE PROVIDER (FIRST STUDENT).

Why did you suspend my student from riding the bus?
Behavioral expectations on the school bus are much like those in the classroom. The behavioral expectations on the bus revolve around collective rights of students and the driver as it pertains to SAFETY. Anything that jeopardizes the safety of individuals on the bus is viewed as serious.

Most drivers have bus rules or expectations posted on the bus. When there is an infraction, a referral is submitted to the school administrators, who are responsible for interacting with the student and parent to address the lack of compliance with bus expectations. The school administrator is solely responsible for consequences based on the incident as reported by the driver, the bus monitor or student. Most buses have video cameras which can be used to verify incidents. Our goal is to maintain the safety for all of our students on the bus.

Why can't you call when you know the bus will be late?
There may be up to 50-70 students on each bus. Communicating delays in a short time frame is just not feasible.
Why does my student have a seat assignment?
Seat assignments are a positive way to alleviate potential behavior issues or assist in maintaining safety.

Why can't my student get off wherever they want in the afternoon?
The driver requires a bus pass from the school administrator to alter the destination of students. This allows the drivers to focus on driving and safety instead of having to decide whether the student should be allowed to change their stop and get off with a friend or ride to an entirely different neighborhood. Without a signed note or temporary bus pass, the driver has no other way to verify that the parent has made this decision.

How do you decide when it is too dangerous for school buses to transport students to school due to inclement weather? Who decides? How is the public notified?
KIPP Metro Atlanta’s Executive Director is responsible for the final decision to close schools due to inclement weather. The decision is made with consideration of school district and news agency reports regarding road conditions. Other factors considered are school facility information (heat, water, power), school parking lot conditions, temperature and wind chill, snow and ice buildup on main and secondary roads, and weather forecasts and predictions. A decision will be made and the public will be notified by 5:30 a.m. Schools may provide text messaging alerts or calling posts and alerts on its website. In general, KIPP Metro Atlanta Schools adhere to the decisions their school district.

If schools close during the day, the students will be sent home on their regular bus unless other directions are on file at the student’s school. IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO ACCEPT PHONED IN INSTRUCTIONS THE DAY OF AN INCLEMENT WEATHER EARLY CLOSING. Please ensure you have given your student's school written instructions in advance regarding inclement weather transportation.

Why are there only 30 students riding some buses and my student's bus is crowded?
Distance from school, number of buses and drivers, and grouping of students and neighborhoods are factors considered when developing routes.

What is a zero tolerance policy?
Zero Tolerance means that when a discipline infraction occurs under the policy, the student is subject to a mandated suspension with NO exceptions. Specific zero tolerance infractions include drug, weapons, alcohol, tobacco, fighting and bullying; the suspension designated for each offence is listed in the KIPP Metro Atlanta policy manual. This information is also available in each school’s handbooks, student folders, and the region’s web site at www.kippmetroatlanta.org.

How do I find out my student's bus number?
Contact your school.

How do I find out where the bus stop is and at what time students should be at the bus stop?
Contact your school. Please remember all students should be at their designated bus stop at least ten minutes prior to their pick up time and remain at least ten minutes after their stop time to allow for uncertainty in traffic patterns and any delays.
How do I find out who supervises my student's bus driver's Supervisor?
Contact your school.

Can my student get off the bus without a parent/guardian/designee there to meet them? What happens if I am not there to meet the bus?
Students in grades K-2 will be brought back to their school in the afternoon if a parent, guardian or designee is not present at the bus stop to receive them or if they otherwise appear to have no appropriate supervision. This is in accordance with the Department of Family and Children Services Guidelines for safety and supervision of children.

Special Needs Transportation
How can I receive transportation for my special needs student?
KIPP Metro Atlanta has limited transportation services and may not be able to accommodate special transportation requests. Please bring any special requests to the attention of your school’s DOO.

Why can't last minute changes be granted?
SAFETY is our main goal and concern. KIPP Metro Atlanta provides limited transportation services and has limited routes and seats available to students. Adding or removing stops or re-routing may impact our ability to provide efficient and timely service for all of our students. Last minute changes are also disruptive to drivers, sub drivers or new drivers which may cause unusual delays in services.

When can I reach someone in the Transportation Department?
Yes, the TRANSPORTATION SERVICE PROVIDER (FIRST STUDENT) Dispatcher is available by phone during the route period and as early as 5:00 AM and as late as 6:30 PM. Please call the office phone number 404-733-1342 or 404-733-1453.
Parents must provide contact information and identification information for any person authorized to pick up their student. Parents/guardians who provide transportation for their children are expected to pick up their children in a timely manner at the end of each school day. Teachers and staff members at KIPP Metro Atlanta commit to work long hours to ensure a helpful, successful school. We appreciate that students not riding a bus are picked up within 10 minutes after school, field trips, extracurricular activities, and other events.

For Grades K-8: Parents must inform the office if a child has permission to walk home. Parents and students will be informed about bus routes and bus stops prior to the start of each school year. Bus routes and stops are subject to change each year. All students are expected to be at their specified stop on time. Buses will not wait for tardy students. Parents/guardians are expected to find an alternate way to transport the student to school. Bus transportation is considered a privilege, and not a right, at KIPP Metro Atlanta. If a student is suspended from the bus for disciplinary reasons, parents are expected to find another source of transportation.

If students remain at school longer than thirty (30) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time without prior arrangements, families will be charged $1 per minute to compensate the staff member who must stay after school and watch over the child. These charges will be based upon the time indicated on the school office clock and are not negotiable. Parents have thirty (30) days to pay any outstanding fees related to tardy pick-ups. Parents with outstanding balances will forfeit their child’s ability to participate in extracurricular activities or field trips for which the school has to pay. Report cards and progress reports will also not be released to students with outstanding fees.

Parents are expected to pick up students remaining after school for detention, tutoring, or special activities. Moreover, parents are also expected to pick up students who miss their bus ride home.

Forgrades K-2: Parents of students will be required, during registration, to indicate who is authorized to pick up their student at the bus stop each day. The driver will not drop off a kindergartner or first grader at a bus stop without an authorized person to pick the student up. In the case where there is not an authorized person to pick up the student, the student will be returned to the school. Parents may incur late arrival fees in such instances.

For grades 9-12: students will utilize public transportation (MARTA) to get to and from school. As the school may provide MARTA passes for students and they will be representing our school, they are expected to maintain scholarly behavior while on the train and/or bus. Students who are identified by MARTA personnel as not behaving appropriately may forfeit their reduced fare passes and be required to provide their own transportation to and from school. Parents must inform the office if a child has permission to walk home only in cases where the student has been dismissed early.
Bus Safety and Conduct Standards for Students

**Bus Safety and Conduct Standards for Students**

KIPP Metro Atlanta's primary goal for operating school bus service is to transport students safely to and from school each day.

KIPP Metro Atlanta provides limited transportation services, and is committed to maintaining a safe environment for all students whether they are inside or outside the school building. Key to that commitment is ensuring that our transportation services adhere to the highest standards of quality and excellence. With parental support, each student is expected to demonstrate acceptable conduct and to be aware of correct safety procedures while traveling on our school buses. This brochure provides general guidelines of acceptable conduct for school bus riders. The student disciplinary policies of KIPP Metro Atlanta govern students and their behavior.

**Students are expected to:**

1. Acknowledge that the driver governs the bus and follow instructions the first time that they are given.
2. Follow bus safety rules.
3. Refrain from bringing sharp objects, alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco onto the school bus.
4. Board and exit the bus at their assigned stop.
5. Arrive at the bus stop at least ten minutes before the scheduled time of the bus arrival and remain there ten minutes afterwards.
6. Wait for the bus in an ample place away from the roadway.
7. Respect the property, and privacy of others while on the bus.
8. Avoid traffic dangers and remain a safe distance from the approaching bus until it comes to a complete stop.
9. Promptly board the bus in an orderly manner.
10. Avoid crowding or pushing while boarding or exiting the bus.
11. Use the stair rail while going up or down the steps of the bus.
12. Avoid boarding or exiting the bus from the rear emergency door unless instructed to do so by the driver.
13. Go silently to a seat and remain seated while the bus is moving.
14. Talk quietly, without making loud noises.
15. Keep feet and legs out of the aisle and refrain from placing arms or heads out of the window.
16. Avoid playing with school bus equipment.
17. Refrain from throwing objects at, or from the school bus.
18. Never do anything that could distract the driver or other students.
19. Refrain from fighting, anywhere, including on the school bus.
20. Avoid playing and chasing other students or hanging onto school buses. Students should remain cautious at all times when traveling on or standing near school buses to avoid the possibility of being caught under the wheels of the bus and seriously injured.
21. Never crawl or enter underneath the wheels of the bus.
22. Provide the driver a written note signed by a parent, guardian, and principal before he/she is allowed to ride a different bus or to go home with another student.
23. Enter or exit the bus stopping only when it is safe, cross roadways, at intersections or crosswalk only when it is safe, and look both ways while crossing. Always assume that cars will not stop for you.
24. Go directly home or to the place parents have designated, when exiting the school bus.
25. Never behave in an unsafe manner on or around the bus.

**School bus drivers are expected to:**

1. Operate buses safely and in accordance with all laws, rules, regulations, and guidelines.
2. Travel only assigned and scheduled routes.
3. Inform supervision and school principals of unsafe bus stop locations or conditions.
4. Maintain order on the bus and report safety and conduct violations to the school principal for corrective action.
5. Assist and support the principal and other administrators in all disciplinary actions.
6. Remind students about safety on a regular basis.
7. Operate under the direction of the principal to ensure the safe transportation of students.
8. Maintain a professional demeanor at all times while operating the bus.
9. Maintain order on the bus and report safety and conduct violations to the school principal for corrective action.
10. Cooperate with the bus driver and school to maintain discipline and safety on the bus.
11. Always be appropriate, adult supervision is always required on the bus.
12. Ensure that students board and exit the school bus properly.

**School Leaders are expected to:**

1. Promote safety and proper conduct on board and reserve the right to suspend bus privileges for students whose safety of misconduct or committing unaccepted acts.
3. Serve school buses each morning and afternoon to supervise school loading zones.
4. Assist the transportation department to ensure that safe and timely school transportation is provided for students.
5. Educate students about school bus safety.

**Parents are responsible for:**

1. The discipline and conduct of their children when they are on route to the bus stop, waiting for the bus, to board the bus, to get off the bus, and when leaving the school bus stops.
2. Assisting the school in teaching their children to observe safety rules while riding the bus.
3. Making sure that their children board the bus only at the designated stop.
4. Cooperating with the bus driver and school to maintain discipline and safety on the bus.
5. Always appropriate, adult supervision is always required on the bus.

**Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment**

I have read and understand the bus safety guidelines for students and agree to assume responsibility for my child's conduct on KIPP Metro Atlanta school buses.

**Print child's name:**

**Grade:**

**School:**

**Route number:**

**Parent Signature:**

**Date:**

Please detach and return this signed copy to the school.
Parent Acknowledgement of KIPP Metro Atlanta Transportation Policies and Procedures

Initial

I have read and understand KIPP Metro Atlanta’s polices and procedures in the Parent Transportation Handbook. I understand it is my responsibility to abide by the procedures and communicate any concerns I may have directly to the school.

I understand KIPP Metro Atlanta’s Transportation services is a convenience and privilege and is not required of KIPP Metro Atlanta’s schools. As such I understand KIPP Metro Atlanta’s transportation services are limited and not guaranteed.

I understand my child’s routes and stop times may change from year to year, or throughout the year, based upon student rider counts and demographics and/or other occurrences that seek to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of transportation services.

I understand my child is not guaranteed to receive a spot on the bus.

I understand it is the parent or guardian’s responsibility to ensure the safety of their child(s) to, from and at their designated stop. I also understand it is the parent or guardians responsibility to ensure the safety of their child within the community. KIPP Metro Atlanta and First Student are responsible for the safe transportation of students while on the bus.

I understand the parent or guardian is responsible for getting their child to and from the designated stop and that stops may not be within walking distances of home.

I understand I am responsible for informing any person authorized to pick up or receive my student of these policies and procedures.

_________________________       _____       ___________________________      Grade_____
Parent or guardian signature   Date       ___________________________      Grade_____

_________________________      ___________________________      Grade_____
Printed Name                Student Name and Grade