



School Bus Policies & Procedures

Spring Lake Park School #16
 Transportation Department
 1415 81st Ave NE
 Spring Lake Park, MN 55432
 Phone: (763) 785-5512
transportation@district16.org

General Information:

Annual Process:

- It is required that each student have all applicable forms submitted to the transportation office by June 30, but if further changes occur, all changes are due August 1st.

Assigned Bus and Stop:

- Students are assigned to specific buses and stops by the district. Parents or guardians will receive a postcard during the summer that contains transportation information such as pickup and drop off bus, locations, and times.
- Students are only allowed one pickup address and one drop off address. These address locations may be different, but must be consistent everyday of the week.
- Students may only ride buses other than their assigned bus or be dropped off at a stop other than the one to which they are assigned only after approval of the school district. A written request must be submitted by the parent or guardian to the Principal's Office for official approval each time this occurs. The office will issue a Bus Pass to be given to the bus driver.

Bus Routes & Stops:

- The district's goal is to establish bus routes so that no student rides for more than 1 hour. We however can not guarantee this will always hold true for everyone on every route.
- Bus routes are created during the months of July and August. Requested changes to routes will not be accepted between August 15th and September 15th of each year. This will allow time for routes to be finalized, bus drivers to review and practice, and for the district to notify parents or guardians of the student's assigned bus and bus stop.
- Bus stops are established at the discretion of the school district. School bus drivers do not have the authority to change or add a bus stop.
- Please review the Bus Stop Procedures and Routing Criteria on the reverse side of this sheet.

Bus Stop Changes:

- Bus stops are reviewed annually and changed as necessary to meet the needs of the majority of students assigned there.
- Location preference is generally given to K or 1st grade students. Preference is not given to day care providers. It is the day care provider's responsibility to get the students to and from the bus stop.
- The district will process all approved changes within 5 business days, except during the blackout dates of Aug 15-Sept 15. The parent will need to transport until the change is confirmed.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **Who do I call for busing questions, concerns, or changes?**

The District Transportation Dept. is at (763) 785-5512. Call this number for general information and bus routing. ISD # 16 contracts with Lorenz Bus Service (763) 201-8888 for regular education routes and Voigt Bus (763) 571-1241 for special education routes. Call them at if there is a concern about a driver, late bus, or any other question that needs immediate attention.

- **What if I need to have my student take a different bus?**

Call your student's school or send a note with the student requesting a bus pass. This bus pass must be presented to the driver to ensure they know who the student is going home with.

- **Why can I only have one pickup and one drop off location?**

Allowing multiple pickup and drop off locations would require the district to reserve a seat on each bus, leaving seats vacant on the bus that the student isn't riding that day. Our goal is to make the most efficient use of the bus fleet. Also, we feel this is the safest and in the best interest for young children so they have consistency and know where to go each day.

- **Should I call someone if my student doesn't need to be picked up today?**

If your student is picked up at a stop with other students, no phone call is necessary. If your student is the only one at your stop, please call Lorenz or Voigt.

- **What should I do if we move or change day cares?**

If you need to make a change to your transportation information, please contact the Transportation Department. Please call at least 5 days prior and remember to also contact your school. No changes will be made between Aug 15 and Sep 15.

- **How do I find out what bus my child rides?**

In late August the district will send out postcards with the bus number, bus stop location, and times. If the information is incorrect, call transportation.

- **What should I do if my child misses the bus?**

If the child was missed because of an error by the driver, please call the bus company right away to have a bus swing back. If the student missed the bus because they were not out to the stop on-time, then a parent or guardian must transport. All students are required to be out 5 minutes early to the bus stop.

- **How far will my child have to walk to a bus stop?**

Generally, elementary students may be asked to walk up to 1/4 mile. HS/MS may be asked to walk up to 1/2 mile.

- **How do I register or decline my student?**

Only students in grades 9-12 are required to register. Anyone can decline transportation by filling out the forms sent to each home. The forms are due by August 1st each year. Forms are available on the district's website at www.springlakeparkschools.org. Click on Departments, then on Bus Transportation.

Bus Stop Procedures and Routing Criteria

The Spring Lake Park School District serves over 1000 bus stop locations within our 19 square mile community each day. Bus stops and routes are designed with consideration of **safety, efficiency, least cost and shortest over-all ride times.**

How are bus stops determined?

Bus routes are designed with buses traveling main roads through neighborhoods and with students picked up and dropped off at **central locations.** Bus stops are located at **corners or intersections** whenever possible and are usually central to where students are coming from. Some house stops are made on very busy roads or mid-way on long streets. Bus stops will generally be closer to student's houses for younger students. Older students are expected to be able to walk farther to bus stops.

Why are bus stops usually established at corners or intersections?

Safety:

- Students are generally taught to cross at corners rather than in the middle of the street.
- Traffic controls, such as stoplights or signs are located at corners. This tends to slow down motorists at corners and they tend to be more cautious as they approach intersections. The motoring public generally expects school buses to be stopping at corners rather than individual houses. Impatient motorists are also less likely to pass buses at corners than along a street. Cars passing school buses create the greatest risk to students who are getting on or off the bus.
- In the winter, salting and sanding is usually done at corners, providing safer stopping for buses and cars.
- Buses use their eight-way light system and stop arm when picking up and dropping off students. Corner stops allow ample time for the driver to activate the yellow warning lights before getting to the stop.
- Bus drivers, especially substitutes, can see corner stops much more easily than house numbers so they can keep their focus on their driving. House numbers are located in a variety of places on houses and are often not easily visible from the street, especially in bad weather and before dawn or after dusk.

Efficiency:

- Ride times for students are shorter if buses are kept on main roads and are not sent down every street. Route changes for new students can be more easily accommodated when stops are at corners. Minimizing stops also reduces costs for fuel as well as wear and tear on the buses.

Other bus stop considerations:

Combinations of the following criteria are also considered when establishing bus stops:

- Length of walk to the stop.
- Time of day students are at the stop. Is there rush hour traffic? Volume of traffic on the road. Is the stop on a residential street or a main arterial road?
- If the street is busy, are there sidewalks to walk on?
- Does the child have to cross a busy street to get to the stop?
- What is the age of the student?
- Does the route require that the bus do a turn-around at the stop location?

Criteria that are not considered requirements for adding a stop or making a house stop:

- It is not possible to provide bus stops that are within sight of all student's homes or daycares unless house stops are made for all students. Most families that live even one house from the corner cannot see the corner bus stop without coming out of the house. We do encourage parents to be out at bus stops to promote proper pedestrian and bus stop behavior.
- A house stop would not necessarily be made only because the bus goes past a student's house. Many routes travel past student's houses on the way to or from school. The higher frequency of stops made by the bus make the motoring public impatient and cause drivers to drive around the bus causing a greater safety concern than the distance a student must walk to the bus stop.

- Likewise, a house stop would not necessarily be made because there is only one student at the stop. Other students may be assigned to the stop, but ride infrequently. Also, stops are made at corners for efficiency and to accommodate other students who may move into the neighborhood.
- Except for special needs transportation, a bus stop will not be made within a cul de sac. A school bus requires 115 feet to safely turn and cul de sacs usually do not have enough room for safe access; particularly in the winter and when other vehicles are parked in the cul de sac. Going into a cul de sac forces the bus to have to backup and this is an extremely dangerous maneuver we want to avoid.

Weather conditions are not part of the criteria for a bus stop change.

Other routing considerations:

- The order of pickup and drop-offs of students is designed to be the most efficient and within the shortest possible time. Students who are first on in the morning will not necessarily be the first off in the afternoon if it is a less efficient way to run the route. In general, the farther students live from school, the longer their bus ride will be. The length of the bus ride is determined by both the distance from school and the number of stops made. It takes a considerable amount of time to make thirty stops for 50-60 students for example. For this reason, we are making every attempt to minimize the number of bus stops and to keep them at corners or group locations.

It is a privilege, not a right, to ride the school bus.

Please reference our other brochures:

- SLP District 16 School Bus Rules & Safety
- SLP District 16 School Bus Prohibited Objects & Discipline Policy

