

TCAPS TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When will I know what bus route and bus stop my child will be assigned to use?

A: If transportation services were requested, bus stop information, including location and approximate pickup/drop off time, will be emailed to parents/guardians at least one week prior to the start of school. An email must be on file with the school in order for parents to receive this notification.

Route information can also be viewed throughout the year through the [PowerSchool Parent Portal](#). Select Forms on the left. Scroll down to the Transportation section, click on the [TCAPS] Transportation Bus Route Information form. For questions about the parent portal or if you have not yet activated your account, please [click here for more information](#).

Q: Will my child's bus route and bus stop stay the same throughout the year?

A: Not necessarily. Adjustments to a student's bus route or stop, including their scheduled pickup/dropoff time, may occur throughout the school year for reasons such as, but not limited to: new students being added to a route, overcrowding, route efficiencies, bus driver shortages. Parents are encouraged to check their [PowerSchool Parent Portal](#) for updated information on a regular basis.

Q: My child attends a parochial school or is a non-public student. Will my child have a bus stop?

A: Transportation shall be provided for each resident student attending a State-approved parochial school or non-public school within the district boundaries. Transportation zones shall be established for each eligible parochial or non-public school in accordance with the TCAPS' transportation policy. Transportation services must officially be requested by submitting a Transportation Request Form through your school office. Eligible students will be assigned a bus route/stop within three (3) business days of the district receiving the request from the school.

Q: My child is an open-enrolled or schools of choice student. Will my child have a bus stop?

A: Transportation is available for open-enrolled and schools of choice students on a bus that stops at an already-established bus stop for which other students for that school's boundary are picked up. Transportation services must officially be requested by submitting a Transportation Request Form online through the [PowerSchool Parent Portal](#) or through your school office. Eligible students will be assigned a bus route/stop within three (3) business days of the district receiving the request.

Q: What is a courtesy seat?

A: An example of a courtesy seat would be if a student lives within a non-transport zone but the parent wants to drive them to an existing bus stop outside the non-transport zone. A Transportation Request Form must be submitted and a stop must be assigned before transportation services can begin. A courtesy seat will be granted only if, in the judgment of Traverse City Area Public Schools, no additional costs will be incurred and all other criteria described in the [TCAPS transportation policy](#) are met.

Q: Can my kindergartner, preschooler, Junior Kindergarten, or GSRP student ride the bus?

A: Yes. For safety reasons, all students enrolled in kindergarten, preschool, Junior Kindergarten, and the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) must be accompanied to/from the bus stop by a designated adult or sibling. Other authorization may be designated by the parent/guardian but must be received in writing.

Q: What if an adult or older sibling is not at the bus stop when my kindergartner, preschooler, Junior Kindergarten, or GSRP student gets to the stop?

A: A phone call will be made to try and contact the parent/guardian. If contact cannot be made, the student will remain on the bus for the remainder of the route. If by the end of the route contact still has not been made, the student will be transported back to the transportation department (1180 Cass Rd.) where the parent/guardian will have to pick up the student.

Q: How will the transportation department contact me if there is an issue with my child on the bus or if there is a problem with the bus?

A: As long as the emergency contact form is filled out at the school and is kept updated, the transportation department will use those numbers to contact you in the case of an emergency. In some circumstances, a BrightArrow email, phone call, or text message (for those who have opted in) may also be used to get information out quickly.

Q: Will kindergarten through 12th grade students be riding together on one bus?

A: The transportation department shall group together any combination of grades on one bus to assure the most efficient and cost effective service. Younger children will be asked to sit towards the front of the bus.

Q: Can my child get a bus pass to go to another stop?

A: The first priority is to ensure students are transported safely to and from school. This includes making sure bus drivers have full knowledge of which students will be riding each bus each day. This knowledge allows drivers to account for all students and verify available room on the bus. When these criteria are met, permission to ride a bus on a pre-approved and occasional basis may be granted through the issue of an authorized bus pass. In order to process bus passes effectively and to ensure appropriate transportation, all bus passes will be initiated at the school office and approved by the transportation department.

Q: How do I know if I am in a non-transportation zone (walk zone)?

A: Students attending TCAPS Montessori are not eligible for transportation services. For all other schools, transportation services shall not be provided outside the attendance boundary or within a designated minimum area surrounding the school location. State law and issues of safety and hazardous travel conditions shall be considered when establishing these zones. To determine if you are in a non-transport zone, please contact the transportation department at 231.933.1933.

Q: Will my child automatically have the same bus route/stop next year?

A: No. To continue to develop the most efficient and safe bus routes possible, parents/guardians must request transportation services on an annual basis. During the spring, parents/guardians who have an email on file with the school will receive instructions on how to sign up for bus services for the following school year. This information will be used in creating the routes and specific bus stops for the next school year. If a request for services has not been received, students will not be assigned a bus route/stop for the new school year and will not be able to ride the bus.

Q: Where can I view the TCAPS transportation policy?

A: Read the full [transportation policy](#) and all other board policies at www.tcaps.net/board.