

1. How are transportation eligibility and bus stops determined? How far can a bus stop be from a student's home? I've been told that we live too close to the school to qualify for busing. What are the rules for who gets transported and who does not? How is that distance from school to the house measured?

In accordance with State of Wisconsin and District policy, all school students who live two (2) miles or more from their school are entitled to transportation. In addition, any student classified with special needs for whom transportation is required in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be transported.

To determine the distance from a house to the school, a measurement is made by the shortest distance along public roadways or walkways between the entrance to the student's home and the nearest public entrance of the school building. This measurement is for eligibility purposes only and is not necessarily the travel path the parent might choose for their child to or from school. This provides for a system that is equitable to all our students.

To determine if the distance from house to school is two (2) miles or more, RUSD uses its transportation software, Google Maps, and MapQuest. It is important when using Google Maps or MapQuest to ensure they are in the walking path mode as the driving path mode is not used for distance determinations. The difference between walking and driving path may be different due to a pedestrian walk route doesn't adhere to specific driving route requirements. Examples might include, but are not limited to one-way streets, turn lanes, ability to be on either side of the street. If a student is found not to meet the transportation eligibility guidelines, the parents/guardians are solely responsible for their child(ren) getting to/from school safely. Within this parent responsibility zone, it is important that parents monitor their child's behavior and ensure that their child(ren) take a safe path to/from school. Transportation eligibility does not change due to family status, working conditions, or other personal circumstances. Optional transportation (see that question/answer) might be available for a fee and space considerations.

If a student meets transportation eligibility guidelines, walking distance policies are in place for to/from bus stops. For students in grades 1-12, bus stops will never be more than .5 miles away from the student's home. Bus stops for students in 4K and kindergarten will never be more than .25 miles away from their home. In most cases, school bus stops are centrally located for all potential riders. Parents/guardians are solely responsible for their child(ren) getting to and from the school bus stops safely. It is important that parents monitor their child's behavior and ensure that their child(ren) take a safe path to the bus stop and wait for the school bus in a safe location away from the road.

RUSD may at our discretion utilize the City of Racine (RYDE) to transport student's 6th grade through 12th grade to and from school. If a student in the given grade level resides within a half mile of an existing RYDE bus line and lives 2 miles or over from their attendance boundary area school, they will be assigned to and given a city bus pass from the school district to ride the bus to their school and back. When assigned, for specific RYDE route information, please contact RYDE directly at: 262-637-9000 or visit <https://cityofracine.org/Racine-Transit/>

2. If I do not meet eligibility for transportation, what are other transportation options?

Optional Transportation Form: Gives the parents an option to still be able to use the bus. You must use an existing stop on a regular yellow bus, and you must pay the \$300 yearly fee. Approval is depending on the capacity of the bus and location of the stop. It may take up to 3 weeks after the start of the school year to determine if space is available on a bus. Optional Transportation forms may be submitted via email at: transportation.department@rusd.org or in person at the RUSD office.

Racine Public Transportation RYDE: Many bus routes are available that may meet your transportation needs. Visit: <https://cityofracine.org/Racine-Transit/> for mor information or you may contact RYDE directly at: 262-637-9000.

3. How can I get my child bused from a babysitter or daycare?

Alternate Address Form: This form is for a different pick up or drop off location, such as a babysitter or daycare. Please read the form carefully so you understand the policies that pertain to this request. Alternate Transportation forms may be submitted via email at: transportation.department@rusd.org or in person at the RUSD office.

4. If I am divorced, how can I get my child transportation from both locations?

Dual Custody Form: This form is for divorced parents that require transportation to both addresses. We also will need a copy of the divorce decree that stipulates "LEGAL JOINT CUSTODY" along with the court seal and the judge's signature. Please read the form carefully so you understand the policies that pertain to this request. Dual Custody Transportation forms may be submitted via email at: transportation.department@rusd.org or in person at the RUSD office.

5. How and when will I learn about my child's bus stop at the beginning of the year?

Busing information for eligible students will be available on your Infinite Campus Parent Portal approximately 10-days prior to the start of the school year. Bus routes are still being finalized for existing and newly enrolled students throughout the summer months.

6. When should my child be at his/her bus stop?

Students must be at the bus stop approximately 5 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. The bus will arrive, open its doors and if no student(s) are present will close the door and continue its route. The bus is responsible to get all students to school in a timely manner.

7. What are the expectations for student conduct during transportation?

The school bus is considered school property – an extension of the school – and all rules that apply to proper conduct in the classroom and school also apply to the bus. Most importantly, all riders should follow all safety rules and respect and obey the driver. A complete list of ridership rules can be found on the district website. Riding the school bus is a privilege. If the behavior of any student is unacceptable, riding privileges can and will be revoked. If the riding privilege is revoked, it will be the parent's responsibility to get his/her child to and from school.

8. Why might my child have a seat assignment on the bus?

RUSD policy states that all students can be assigned a seat on the bus. If the driver determines it necessary, this process can aid the driver with learning about your student and/or ensuring their safety.

9. Can my child have food on the bus?

No. Eating food of any kind or having open food containers is not permitted on school buses at any time, as some students suffer from severe allergies to certain foods. Packed lunches/meals must remain unopened in a student's bag or backpack while they are on the bus.

10. How will I know if the bus will be late?

There are several ways you can track your child's bus, including downloading the First Student Bus Tracker app. (FIRST VIEW) Please visit www.rusd.org/District/transportation for more information or simply download the FIRST VIEW app. You will need to have your student(s) District ID# available.

11. Why might our bus stop change from year to year?

Bus stops could change year-to-year depending on the number of students at each location. School bus stops may be moved with the purpose of establishing stops that are the most conducive for families in that community or for families that may move into that community.

12. My child's bus route did not change. Why is his/her route longer this year?

Along with the growth of Racine Unified School District and its surrounding communities, traffic congestion has also increased in all corners of the district. While some school buses may use the same routes from year-to-year, traffic congestion or added stops can have a significant impact on school bus times in both the morning and afternoon hours. RUSD makes every effort to keep route times as short as possible.

13. I think my child's ride is too long, can the bus schedule be changed?

It is not always possible to change a route to make it shorter. We strive to establish routes that require no student to ride the bus for more than one hour each way; unfortunately, we cannot always guarantee this will happen.

14. My child is the only student at the stop this year, why can't the stop be moved to my house?

Generally, bus stops are centrally located for all students. If we change a stop for one student, it could displace other students further from their home. A central bus stop is necessary because other students may begin riding the bus or new families may move into the neighborhood.

15. What if I don't like my child's bus stop or think that my child's path to the bus stop or the waiting area is unsafe?

Parents/guardians can fill out a Change Request Form. RUSD personnel, First Student Services and select members of Racine County review bus safety concerns. This review may involve a site visit. It is important to note that the types of concerns typically raised by parents are: no sidewalks, traffic speed, no posted school zone signs, no crosswalks, no crossing guards, no railroad crossing signs, construction, can't see child's stop/wait area, or crossing road bus pick up. These potential concerns are under the jurisdiction of the municipality and Racine Unified School District may not consider these types of situations as safety concerns in and of themselves. Based on the review of bus stop conditions, the committee submits a recommendation to the district to either keep the current stop or recommends a new stop location. Families will be notified of that decision. The School District's Transportation Department is the only authority who can make changes to bus routes and stops. School bus drivers do not have the authority to make changes to routes or student pick up/drop off locations. Please read the form carefully so you understand the policies that pertain to this request. Change Request Forms may be submitted via email at: transportation.department@rusd.org or in person at the RUSD office.

16. Why can't the bus stop and pick up my child given it passes by my house?

Given state and district transportation eligibility policies as to how parent responsibility zones and bus stops are determined (see previous question/answer), changes are not made for these reasons. School bus stops are placed in central locations to shorten route length and times. RUSD's Transportation Department makes every effort to ensure our bus stops are safe and have appropriate walking routes.

17. Why can't you come further into my subdivision, cul-de-sac, or dead-end street?

Buses come in various lengths, widths, heights, and weights. The length is what limits the school bus to be maneuvered in cul-de-sacs and tight places. Most subdivisions are not designed with school bus transportation in mind.

18. Why are there only a few students on some buses and other buses are crowded?

Decisions regarding each bus route are made by careful planning based on information from school registration and previously used routes. Distance from school and grouping of students and neighborhoods are all factors that are considered. Sometimes it is just not possible to have the exact number of students on every run. Bus capacity is designed for up to three (3) students per seat in elementary school and two (2) per seat in middle and high school.

19. How can I get help if things are happening on the bus that the driver is not doing anything about?

If something is happening on the bus that concerns your child, please contact the principal of your school, or call the RUSD Transportation Department so we can assist in working with you and our bus provider. We want to ensure every child's bus ride is a safe and enjoyable experience.

20. How can I communicate a general transportation concern not mentioned above?

General Transportation Concern Form: This is a way of formally making it known that an issue exists and needs to be addressed. General Transportation Concern Forms may be submitted via email at: transportation.department@rusd.org or in person at the RUSD office.

21. What can families do to help their child deal with Wisconsin weather and environmental concerns when walking to/from school or bus stops?

Wisconsin weather can vary highly, change quickly, and be highly dependent on the time of year. As Wisconsin weather and environmental concerns are hazards that all students face, it is important for families to prepare accordingly to keep their child safe as they are getting to/from school or to their District provided bus stop. These situations can include, but are not limited to, conditions being extremely hot or cold, light, or dark, wet/humid, or exceptionally dry.

Recommendations for a child/family in such situations are:

1. Children should wear brightly colored and/or reflective clothing, especially if waiting for the bus before sunrise or getting home after dark. This is both good for the bus driver to see them, but also helps make oncoming cars aware of them too. Some examples include:
 - a. Brightly colored and reflective safety vests.
 - b. Reflective clothing items specifically designed for students such as backpacks, hats, jackets, etc.
 - c. Use a clip-on safety strobe light attached to their arm(s), hat, etc.
 - d. Place removable reflective tape on their outer garments; including on their hats and coats.
2. Children should have access to use a flashlight.
 - a. This helps the child see where they are walking and helps cars see the individual.
3. Dress for the weather.
 - a. A filled water bottle to help a child stay hydrated.
 - b. A coat which not only provides warmth, but also deters wind or repels water.
 - c. An umbrella, raincoat, or waterproof poncho.
 - d. Footgear that will keep their feet safe and dry.