

# CHRISTINA SCHOOL DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES



Lane Transportation Center  
400 Wyoming Rd, Newark DE 19711  
Ph: 302-454-2281 / Fax: 302-454-2338

[www.Christinak12.org](http://www.Christinak12.org)



## Table of Contents

Contact / Hours of Operation	4
Mission Statement	5
Rider Information	6
Suspension of Rider Privileges	10
Alternative Bus Stops/Change Requests	11
Safe Bus Stop Procedures	13
Special Needs	14
School Closings	15



## Contact Information

**Telephone:** 302-454-2281

**Fax:** 302-454-2338

**Choice Transportation Hotline:** 302-738-4015



**Regular Office Hours:** Mon-Fri 7:30 AM-4:00 PM


**Summer Office Hours:** Mon-Thurs 7:00 AM-5:00 PM

*The Dispatch office opens at 5:00 a.m.*



## Mission Statement

The Mission of the Christina School District Transportation Department is to provide safe, dependable, and efficient transportation. It functions as a support service to the District, in making educational opportunities for all school age children accessible.



The Christina School District Transportation Department is responsible for the operation of approximately 300 state-owned school buses and over 50 contracted buses. We have two bus yards, which provide regular day-to-day transportation for over 17,500 students. We carry regular education and special needs students to and from a variety of educational facilities as well as field trips and daily shuttles for vocational programs. In addition, we schedule after school activity buses and regular school buses for athletic and extracurricular trips.

Our drivers have passed the requirements for a CDL (Commercial Driver's License) as well as a Passenger Endorsement to meet all the State of Delaware guidelines for School Bus Drivers.

Special needs transportation attendants are trained in all the equipment and procedures necessary to make educational opportunities available to every student. Effective and safe transportation is an important element in meeting an individual students' educational goals.

The transportation administration is responsible for ensuring the department is in compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations governing school and municipal transportation operations.



## Rider Information

### **Why does my child have a seat assignment?**

Seat assignments are a positive way for the ride to be consistent and safe. It is a district wide policy for elementary and middle school students to be assigned to a specific seat. This aids the driver or substitute with discipline and learning each student's name.

### **Why can't you come further into my subdivision?**

School buses come in various sizes ranging from 25 to 36 feet long, 20,000-26,000 pounds, 12-13 feet high and 6-9 feet wide. The length is what limits the school bus to be maneuvered in cul-de-sacs and tight places. Smaller buses can turn in a shorter radius, while longer buses cannot maneuver the same circle without backing the bus, which is avoided in routing if possible. Residents sometimes park trucks, boats, and trailers on the streets, along with other obstacles. Although our drivers are well trained to be able to parallel park their buses, some subdivisions are not designed with school bus transportation in mind. Please know that we design school bus routes to be safe and convenient for ALL students within the limits of time and physics.

### **Why are there only 30 students riding some buses and my child's bus is crowded?**

Decisions regarding each bus route are made by careful planning based on information from the school registration, previous similar routes, and Department of Transportation data. Most routes are setup during the summer months and changes are made *after* the first two weeks of school. ***Bus load capacities as well as walking distances are determined by the State Board of Education.***

### **How many students are permitted on the bus?**

- Elementary buses may carry between 66 and 72 students.
- Middle school buses may carry between 52 and 55 students
- High school buses may carry between 42 and 44 students.

### **Why can't my child get off wherever they want in the afternoon?**

This policy avoids confusion and the chance for students getting lost. This helps to keep track of where students are after school and benefits both the drivers and the parents/guardians, as well as student safety.

### **How are bus stop locations determined?**

State regulation requires that we provide safe, efficient bus routes to all eligible students in our schools who reside within the boundaries of the school district where we are located. We work very hard to keep bus routes less than an hour and in order to do so we have to maintain routes that reduce time and mileage wherever possible. Some routes may be over one hour and unfortunately with the distance we have to travel for some students and with our equipment limitations we have to be creative in our approach to bus routes. Just a few of the things we consider in determining where to designate a stop are:

- Can the bus and its warning lights be seen by other motorists at a distance of 500 feet on open roadways or 200 feet on urban streets (Four seconds at typical optimal speeds)?
- Are the students and other motorists visible to the bus driver when approaching the stop?
- How do light conditions affect the visibility approaching the student stop? (Sun rising and setting, background lighting—Christmas season, etc.)
- Hills and curves reduce the visibility for drivers approaching a stop or a stopped school bus. Whenever possible, we avoid designating a bus stop near a hillcrest or curve in the roadway.
- Do surrounding buildings or foliage affect what the driver can see when approaching the stop?
- Are there potential hazards from side streets or parking lots?
- Is there an area for students to safely wait for the bus?
- Is there potential shelter for students in the event of inclement weather?
- How many students are the stop? What are their ages?

### **Why does the bus stop time keep changing?**

Student registrations and route updates after the school year begins, can affect the individual stop times of your child's route. Adding additional stops or directing the bus into another development that previously had no stops, can cause the start time to be moved back to accommodate the new students. If your child's stop time is changed more than 5 minutes (earlier or later) the school will be notified and the driver will be given sufficient time before the change goes into effect, in order to notify any students whose times will change.

### **Are bus stops reviewed periodically?**

Yes, our administrators frequently travel on and monitor the bus routes to regularly to assess environmental and traffic changes. Bus drivers report any concerns they may have relating to safe operations at bus stops. During a typical year we will review, on our own initiative, approximately a third of these stops. We will formally review another 50 per years due to concerns expressed about stop safety by residents or parents.

### **My street has no sidewalks. Can the bus pick my child up in front of my house?**

Many development streets were designed and built without sidewalks to maintain a rustic or non-urban image. When such streets were reviewed by the Delaware Department of Transportation, they were accepted as low [traffic] volume pedestrian-safe shared traffic facilities. Parents are expected to teach their children the safe and legal way to walk along the streets in their developments. If the street is used as a "through" street or arterial, we will review traffic to determine if a bus must be assigned to pick students up along the street, due to high traffic volumes causing an unsafe pedestrian situation. Most of those streets have already been identified by past traffic studies. If you believe that the traffic using your street has increased due to changes in travel patterns, please contact us and we will conduct a traffic study to assess school transportation needs.

### **Why is my child's bus late?**

Weather, traffic, driver absenteeism, maintenance difficulties and unforeseen incidents are responsible for delays in the arrival of school buses in the morning and afternoon. Sometime bus routes must be doubled or must return to school for a group of students due to the regular driver being absent. Traffic in New Castle County is increasing. Drivers check buses before their routes and sometimes find mechanical problems that can cause delays and require driving another bus for the day.

### **Why can't you call when the bus will be late?**

There are as many as 50-70 students on each bus. That is at least 50-70 phone calls in a short time frame to parents who are quite possibly at the bus stop with their children. Please know that we are doing everything humanly possible to have all buses running on schedule everyday. In the event that your bus does not arrive as scheduled, please allow 15 minutes before calling the transportation office (302-454-2281) or your child's school.

### **Who decides what order the stops on a bus route are made? Can my child's bus pick my child up earlier or later?**

Bus stops are designed to maximize fuel efficiency and minimize travel time for all students. Every effort is made to keep each student's ride under one hour. In many cases, this may reverse the bus route from the morning to the afternoon. The students living closer to the school will be picked up last and dropped off first. Considerations of parent's work schedules or babysitter arrival times cannot be factored into these formulas.

### **The bus rides right by my house; Can the bus stop at my house?**

Bus stops are established at easily identified locations accessible to students throughout a geographic area. This assures student safety, and service reliability. Every time a school bus stops to pick up and/or drop off students, rider time on the route is increased for the deceleration, stop sequence, loading, seating, safety checks, and acceleration back into traffic flow. Stopping at every other residence along a road can be unsafe as well as an unacceptably inefficient use of resources. If we stopped at every student residence that the bus might pass by, some students would be on the bus for unacceptable lengths of time. In addition, there would be additional fuel consumption and pollution, and some other motorists would be so frequently delayed that they could begin to "take chances" to get past the bus. Problems have also been encountered with the driver being able to identify the location of the stop, creating an unsafe 'stop-and-go' hesitancy while a new or substitute driver tries to find the address.

### **A different bus shows up at our stop in the morning, or at the school in the afternoon. How does my child know he is on the right bus?**

Mechanical failures, traffic delays and closures, weather, school delays, and other occurrences can keep your child's bus from arriving at the stop or at the school in a timely manner. In extreme circumstances, the dispatcher will make a decision to send another bus to your child's location. Every effort will be made to have a sign posted on the relief bus indicating the route number the bus is covering. There may be times when, due to seating capacities and route directions, another bus can pick up some or all of the stops on your child's route. In the afternoon, the schools will be notified of the bus numbers involved and will direct the students to the proper buses. At the pickup location, when in doubt, instruct your child to ask the driver what school they are going to.



## **Suspension of Bus Privileges**

Riding the school bus is a privilege for each student. If the rules are not followed, the student may lose their privilege to ride the bus. If the student is suspended for a period of time from riding the bus, the parent is responsible for transporting their child to and from school. ***The school administrator is solely responsible for consequences based on their investigation of the incident as described by the driver and student.*** Denial of bus privileges includes both the regularly assigned bus and activity buses.

Along with Bus Safety Rules, the following regulations will assist with safety, prompt arrivals and departures of buses and promoting positive attitudes on the part of students.

*Violations of these regulations may result in disciplinary actions:*

1. Students must ride their assigned bus to and from their assigned stop; switching buses for any reason is strictly prohibited.
2. Students are not to leave the bus without the driver's permission, except on arrival at their regular bus stop or at school.
3. Students should help keep the bus clean, sanitary and orderly. They must not damage or destroy bus seats or equipment.
4. The bus windows should not be opened without permission from the driver.
5. Students are not permitted to smoke while on the bus.
6. Students are not to use abusive language or profanity, obscene gestures, or spit on board.
7. Students may not bring large musical instruments, live animals, balloons, glass containers, skateboards, or large school projects onto the bus.
8. Students are to enter the bus, immediately take their seats, and remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
9. Athletic equipment brought on the bus must fit between the student's legs and not be placed on the seat or in the aisle. Students misusing the equipment or allowing another student to misuse equipment while on the bus will result in losing the privilege to transport the equipment on the bus. Whenever possible, the athletic equipment should be kept in appropriate equipment bags.
10. Students are to conduct themselves while on the bus in such a way that will not distract the driver. Distracting the driver puts everyone at risk.



## Alternative Bus Stops

### Before and After School Child Care Bus stops

If you need an alternative pickup and drop-off location at a daycare in the attendance zone for your child's school, fill out the **Child Care Transportation Form** and turn it in at the school. Your child will be assigned a bus to and/or from the daycare. Please allow 3-5 business days for changes to take effect. You can obtain a copy of the form at the school or online at: [www.christinak12.org](http://www.christinak12.org)—*Registration Information, Other Registration Forms*

### Transportation for Choice Students

For students attending a school outside of their regularly assigned feeder pattern, transportation options are limited to locating an existing bus stop already established on a bus route of the school they are choosing. Transportation to and from a daycare facility in your choice school feeder pattern is also available (*see above paragraph*). Parents are responsible for getting their children to and from the bus stop selected. To be assigned a bus stop in the choice school feeder pattern, call the Choice Transportation Hotline at 302-738-4015.

### Shared Custody Arrangements

Alternating bus stops can be made for parents who have shared custody and both parents live within the feeder pattern of the school their children are attending. A letter signed by both parents that details both addresses and a copy of the custody order can be faxed to transportation at our fax number: 302-454-2338.



## Bus Change / Stop Change Requests

All address changes or day care provider changes must be made through the school office. Once the school verifies these changes, transportation will be notified and all changes to the bus assignment or stop changes will be made within 2-3 business days.

**The transportation office will NOT give permission for a student to ride a different bus, except in an emergency, and after the parent/guardian notifies the school.**

Changing buses for social events, school projects, getting on and off at a work location, visiting another student, or allowing multiple drop-off locations for different days are not acceptable reasons to ride another bus to or from school.

Requests to move or change a stop location must be made in writing to the transportation office. Include any mapping references, reasons for the request, and contact information and mail to: Lane Transportation Center, 400 Wyoming Ave, Newark DE 19711 or fax to: 302-454-2338.

## Meeting Your Student at the Bus Stop

Anyone meeting a student that requires to be met, that is not listed as an authorized adult to meet that student, will be asked to show identification. (A designee must be at least 12 years of age to receive a child from the bus.) The driver will notify the dispatch office and attempts will be made to contact a parent/guardian.

Failure of a parent/guardian or designee to meet their child at the assigned bus stop, will result in the following protocol:

- ◆ The transportation office will be notified. Attempts will be made by the dispatcher to call the parent/guardian.
- ◆ The bus will be directed to continue on the route and drop off any other students who may still be on board.
- ◆ The bus will return to the stop to make a *second* attempt to drop off the student.

If the parent cannot be contacted or the bus route does not accommodate a return (as determined by time, distance, and traffic conditions), or the parent/guardian is not at the stop on the second delivery attempt, the student will be returned to the school.

***If you know ahead of time that the parent/guardian/designee cannot meet the bus, notify the school and/or transportation (302-454-2281). The school will notify the transportation office prior to the drop-off time.***



## Safe Pupil Transportation

**Bus stop safety begins at home. The greatest risk is not in riding the bus, but approaching or leaving the bus. Before children go school or start school for the first time, it is essential that adults and children know these general safety rules.**

- Get to the bus stop at least ten minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
- When the bus approaches, stand at least three giant steps (6 feet) away from the curb, and line up away from the street.
- Wait until the bus stops, the door opens, and the driver says that it's okay, before stepping onto the bus.
- Never walk behind the bus. If you have to cross the street, cross in front of the bus. Be sure that the bus driver can see you, and that you can see the bus driver. Cross when directed by the bus driver.
- Use the handrails to avoid falls. When exiting the bus, be careful that clothing with drawstrings, and book bags with straps don't get caught in the handrails or doors.
- Walk at least three giant steps (6 feet) away from the side of the bus.
- If you drop something near the bus, tell the bus driver, or get the driver's attention. Never try to pick it up, because the driver may not be able to see you.

**Other motorists: Please use extra caution when school buses are out on the road loading or unloading at bus stops:**

- When backing out of a driveway or leaving a garage, watch out for children walking or bicycling to school.
- When driving in neighborhoods with school zones, watch out for young people who may be thinking about getting to school, but may not be thinking of getting there safely.
- Slow down. Watch for children walking in the street, especially if there are no sidewalks in neighborhood.
- Slow down. Watch for children playing and congregating near bus stops.
- Be alert. Children arriving late for the bus may dart into the street without looking for traffic.



## Special Needs

**How can I receive transportation for my special needs child?**

A committee of people at your child's school, already involved in a student's education, determines transportation needs. (IEP team) After it has been determined that the student would benefit from special needs transportation, the Educational Diagnostician (ED) or Building Administrator will complete and send a Specialized Transportation Request Form to our office for processing.

**How long does it take to set up transportation for my special needs child?**

Due to these bus stops being "curb-to-curb", five to seven (5-7) business days are needed to obtain all emergency information, process routing information, contact drivers and communicate with parents and other professionals involved.

**What is the procedure for pickup and drop-off changes for my child?**

When the bus stop change involves a different address location, two to three days may be needed to notify other parents of stop time changes and to give the driver and attendant time to locate the new address and report back any accessibility concerns to the routing specialist.

**What is the average time length of the ride for special needs students?**

Our goal, for students within the Christina School District, is no more than one hour.

**How do I let the driver know my child does not need transportation in the morning, or that someone else will be meeting the bus in the afternoon.**

You can call the dispatch office the night before school, or in the morning before the pick up time to let the driver know your child will not need transportation that morning. The dispatch office opens at 5 AM @ 302-454-2281, ext. 1.

In an emergency situation, when the designated person cannot meet the bus at the drop-off, please call ahead to the dispatch office AND notify the school (*see page 8*). If you want to add another person to the authorized list of adults who can meet your child, contact the Educational Diagnostician (ED) at your child's school.



## School Closing Alerts

### **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?**

The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for the final decision to close schools due to inclement weather. The process begins around 2 AM and a decision is made after administrative staff report from various positions in the state regarding road conditions, temperature and wind chill, snow and ice build up 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. The following media sites will carry that information to the public:

#### **Radio Stations**

WDEL 1150 AM • [www.wdel.com](http://www.wdel.com)  
WILM 1450 AM • [www.wilm.com](http://www.wilm.com)  
WJBR 99.5 FM • [www.wjbr.com](http://www.wjbr.com)  
WSTW 93.7 FM • [www.wstw.com](http://www.wstw.com)

#### **Television Stations**

Channel 3, 6 and 10 will carry school closing information.

#### **Wilmington News Journal**

School closing information is available online at [www.delawareonline.com](http://www.delawareonline.com)

#### **Delaware State School Closing Notification Site**

[schoolclosings.delaware.gov](http://schoolclosings.delaware.gov) - Listings are posted online as soon as they are available. You can also register to sign up for email notification for your specific schools.

#### **Voice Activation Phone Number**

For recorded information on any school in the state, call the toll free number: 1-877-831-7215 and answer the prompts.

#### **Facebook & Twitter**

“Friend” the Christina School District on Facebook to see up-to-the-minute information or use Twitter and have text alerts sent to your cell phone. The account [@CSDalerts](https://twitter.com/CSDalerts) is a way for parents, students, staff and the community to sign up for CSD Urgent Twitter alerts via text messaging without having a Twitter account. To sign up, simply text **Follow CSDalerts** to **40404**. (Please note: Standard text messaging rates apply.)



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