



Sarasota County Schools' 2020 Back 2 School Guide – Transportation

Sarasota County Schools' over 200 buses travel about 30,000 miles each day to transport over 18,000 students. Transportation is provided to students in grades K-12 if they live more than two miles from school. Transportation may or may not be provided for students who live outside the attendance boundaries of the school they attend. Some students who attend special

schools or magnet programs are served by bus stops in various parts of the county, such as a stop at a south county school for students attending a north county school.

Bus Routes

Bus routes for the 2020-21 school year will be available Tuesday, August 18, 2020. Your child(ren) must be registered or re-registered for school and complete the [Transportation Pre-Registration Form](#).

Requesting a Bus Stop

Bus stops can be requested through your school, or through filling out the Transportation department's [Bus Stop Request](#) form online.

Transportation Help Line

Sarasota County Schools will be hosting a Transportation Help Line. From August 24 - September 4 families will be able to call in for personalized assistance for their questions on all things transportation. The Transportation Help Line can be accessed Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM—4:30 PM by dialing **941.486.2141**.

NEW! Where's The Bus™ Mobile App

Sarasota County Schools is excited to invite all families to download the Where's The Bus™ App to help you track the location of your child's bus, including when it will arrive at their stop. The Where's The Bus™ App is free and available for use with mobile devices (smartphone, tablet, personal computer) that have Internet access.

1. Visit www.WheresTheBus.com
2. Click on the "Set up account" button on the Parents menu, on the left
3. Select "Sarasota County (FL)" from the drop-down menu, then click "Continue"
4. Add in your parent/guardian information as well as your child's information
5. Keep an eye out for an email from WheresTheBus that will have download information & further instructions

Bus Safety

Each school principal or designee shall provide instruction at least twice each year for all transported students in safe practices to board and depart from the school bus including emergency evacuations. Initial instruction shall be given during the first twenty (20) days of the school year and the second period of instruction shall be given during the first two (2) weeks of the second semester. The principal and his/her instructional staff members shall determine the most effective and practical way to provide such instruction. We encourage all families to review their school's specific school bus rules and procedures with their children.

Here are a few general bus safety tips to keep in mind:

- **Board the bus safely** – Students should walk, not run, to the bus stop. While waiting for the bus, children should stay in a safe spot away from the road. Remind your child to never speak to strangers at the bus stop. When the bus arrives, students should wait their turn to board and should never push or shove others while on the stairs. Students should ask the driver for help if they drop something while getting on or off the school bus.
- **Follow the driver's rules** – Explain to your child that drivers must focus on the road to keep students safe. Distracting the driver, even for a second, could put all the riders in danger. Remind students to treat drivers with respect, and always follow printed rules or the driver's procedures—especially in case of an emergency.
- **Keep the bus calm and quiet** – Students should find a seat quickly and stay in it. Many schools have a code of conduct for the bus—go over it with your child to make sure they understand the behaviors that are acceptable and unacceptable. Behaviors that might seem “cool” (waving one's arms out the window, for instance) can put your child's, and other children's, safety at risk. Students should never throw things on the bus or out the windows, or play with emergency exits.
- **Exit the bus safely** – Children should wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before getting off, and use the handrails. When crossing in front of the bus, children should take five giant steps away from the bus, make eye contact with the driver, and cross when the driver indicates that it's safe. Teach your child to look both ways before crossing, and to stay away from the wheels of the bus.

Additional Safety Tips & reminders from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

For Parents:

- **Safety Starts at the Bus Stop** – Your child should arrive at the bus stop at least five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. Visit the bus stop and show your child where to wait for the bus: at least three giant steps (six feet) away from the curb. Remind your child that the bus stop is not a place to run or play.
- **Use Caution Around the Bus** – Your child should never walk behind a school bus. If your child must cross the street in front of the bus, tell them to walk on a sidewalk or along the side of the street to a place at least five giant steps (10 feet) in front of the bus before crossing. Your child should also make eye contact with the bus driver before crossing to make sure the driver can see them.

For Drivers

Make school bus transportation safer for everyone by following these practices:

- 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.
- 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.
- Learn and obey the school bus laws in your state, as well as the "flashing signal light system" that school bus drivers use to alert motorists of pending actions:
 - **Yellow flashing lights** indicate the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. Motorists should slow down and prepare to stop their vehicles.
 - **Red flashing lights and extended stop arms** indicate the bus has stopped and children are getting on or off. Motorists must stop their cars and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop-arm is withdrawn, and the bus begins moving before they can start driving again.