



GISW Transportation FAQ's

Our goal is to always provide the safest, most efficient, and caring transportation to all GISW students. We achieve this through harmonious collaboration. All riders must adhere to the School Bus Rules posted on the website and follow the guidance of the school bus driver.

GISW runs eight bus routes which are posted on the GISW website and operated by Coughlin Transportation, Inc. (www.coughlintransportation.com). Your contact at GISW for all bus matters is our Transportation Manager (TM), Ms. Karen Kinsler (kkinsler@giswashington.org).

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the best way to contact the TM during the summer/in the morning/in the afternoons/during school hours?

A: The best way to contact the TM is through email. During regular business hours, you can also reach the TM's office via phone (301-767-3839).

Q: Who should I contact regarding my child's/children's bus stop or questions about riding the bus?

A: For currently enrolled bus service users: All questions and concerns regarding bus services should be made to the TM. If you have not yet registered your child for the bus with the school contract, please use the [Change Form](#) and send it directly to aburns@giswashington.org. If you are not able to connect with the TM and it is urgent, please call the front office at 301-767-3800. For emergencies, you can contact the TM on their mobile device at TBD.

Q: At what time should I be at the bus stop?

A: We ask that all students be at their bus stop in the morning 10 minutes before the scheduled stop time and that parents come in the afternoons to pick up their children at the bus stop 10 minutes before the scheduled drop off time. In case you feel your children are old enough to go from your home to and from the bus stop on their own you can request a form from the TM to complete and submit.

Q: How are bus stops and zones determined?

A: *Bus stops are established to fully utilize all buses, but safety is our number one priority. For the most part, centralized pick-up points are established in one or more neighborhoods. They will be determined based on safety and efficiency. Buses will not be routed into a dead-end cul-de-sac or other street that requires a three-point turn or backing maneuver to exit.*

Q: How do you determine who will be picked up first and dropped off last?

A: *Typically, the bus will pick up those students who live the furthest from the school first, then work towards the school. The students will be dropped off in reverse order. On occasion, students join GISW later in the school year. It can happen that bus routes are adjusted to accommodate these new students. GISW does its best to minimize route changes. Parents will receive prior notification if a new bus stop is being added.*

Q: The stops listed on the website are too far for my child to walk. Can my bus stop be moved?

A: *Stops are established at central pick-up points. Bus routes are evaluated every summer and new stops may be considered at that time. If the closest stop is more than a fifteen (15) minute walk or a forty (40) minute car ride, adjusting or adding a stop will be taken into consideration but is not guaranteed. The Transportation Department is not permitted to create new stops in the middle of the school year if they will drastically alter the pick-up/drop-off times for current students riding the bus.*

Q: When will the new bus routes be posted on the website over the summer?

A: *Bus stops are normally posted one to two weeks before the school is scheduled to open.*

Q: Will I be notified if the bus arrives late?

A: *Parents enrolled in our GISW school messenger service will be contacted by text message if their bus will arrive more than ten (10) minutes late. Parents will also be contacted when there is a substitute driver or substitute bus on the bus route because that may cause delays.*

Q: After the bus routes are posted on the website, what should I do if I am not satisfied with my child's/children's bus stop?

A: *Bus stops are assigned based on the address provided. If you have an issue with the assigned bus stops, please send an email to the TM explaining your concerns. Please understand that stops cannot be added if they create safety concerns or will cause a drastic change to routes or times.*

Q: What's the average travel time for students on a bus?

A: *Our goal is to keep the travel time of students to an hour or less. The time is factored from the first pick up to the actual arrival time at the school. There may be some circumstances which require travel times longer than an hour.*

Q: I noticed other buses picking up at a location closer to my home, why can't I have a bus stop at this location?

A: *Stops are established at central pick-up points. Additional factors considered, besides student location, include other schools' stop locations, safety concerns, and traffic congestion.*

Q: If I want my child to ride on another bus, what do I need to do?

A: *Students may ride on another bus if there is space. Written or verbal communication from a parent to the TM is needed before noon on that day, AND the TM must approve the request. If the student is not a current bus user, then the student may ride the bus by purchasing a Single Ride Ticket at the front desk following these [Guidelines for obtaining Single Bus Tickets](#).*

Q: How do I purchase a single ticket? What is the cost?

A: *Single Ride Tickets can be purchased from the front office, only after a parent has contacted the TM and has received approval. Please follow these [Guidelines for obtaining Single Bus Tickets](#).*

Q: Can I contact my child's bus driver directly?

A: *We appreciate the relationships established between the drivers and parents but please DO NOT contact the drivers directly. ALL communications should go through the TM. In emergencies, you may also contact the Front Office at 301-767-3800. Drivers are not permitted to talk on the phone while driving.*

Q: What if my child is being bullied on the bus, what do I do? How do you handle it? What are the steps for students misbehaving on the bus?

A: *GISW does not tolerate bullying nor inappropriate behavior on any GISW property. If a student is being bullied or students misbehave, please report this to the TM. Our bus drivers will report bullying/other concerns to the TM. A report will be filled out by the TM and submitted to the Head of School. If measures to separate students or reminders by*

parents to their children prove ineffective in resolving the situation, *students who violate GISW bus rules may be subjected to pedagogical and disciplinary actions to be decided by the disciplinary conference.*

In the event of a serious violation, the Head of School can immediately suspend the student from riding the school bus. A permanent suspension from the bus can be decided by the disciplinary conference and does NOT justify a refund of payment.

Q: Can I ride my child's bus to school?

A: *Parents may not ride nor board school buses when they are being used to transport children to and from school. Only in special circumstances will a parent be allowed to ride the bus. Approval will be needed from GISW leadership.*

Parents may not board the bus. If a parent has concerns about their child/ren or other students, they should report this to the TM immediately.

Q: What if my child misses the bus in the morning/afternoon?

A: *If you feel your child missed the bus due to driver error, please contact the TM immediately. If possible, the bus will return for your child. HOWEVER, this may not always be possible, and, in this case, parents will need to find an alternative way to drive the student to or from the GISW.*

Q: Is there a way to track the location of my child's bus?

A: *No, we are not able to track buses.*

Q: My child lost something on the bus. Is there a lost and found box?

A: *When an item is left on a bus, the driver will keep the item on the bus until the student returns. If the item is needed earlier by the student, they should notify the front office at 301-767-3800 as soon as possible. If the bus is still on the GISW campus the TM will make a best effort to retrieve the item immediately. If the bus has already headed back to the Coughlin bus depot the item will be kept on the bus. GISW is not liable for lost items.*

Q: Is there a deadline to sign my child up for bus service?

A: *There are no deadlines to sign up for bus service, however if a bus is at capacity, you will be placed on a waiting list and only notified once space becomes available. If you would like to add bus service, please use the [Change Form](#) and send it directly to aburns@giswashington.org.*

Q: How do you communicate with bus families in case of an emergency/delay of arrival/departure?

A: All bus families will be contacted via our GISW messenger service. Students/parents are organized based on bus routes and parents will receive an email, text, or both when weather, traffic, other factors might delay or cancel their bus.

Q: What should we do if there are weather issues?

A: GISW follows Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) for school delays and closures. Please familiarize yourself with Plan A, B, C and D as described on the website a [CAMPUS LIFE > School Events > Cancellation of Classes](#)
Cancellations are always posted at www.giswashington.org and if you provide current contact information and sign up for the service you will also receive a text message.

Q: Are the school buses air-conditioned?

A: The buses that transport GISW students are equipped with AC. If for any reason the student feels the bus isn't cool enough, please ask the driver first. If the AC is not fully operational, Coughlin Transportation will attempt to repair the unit in time for school dismissal or another bus may be assigned until repairs can be made.

Q: Are the buses equipped with seatbelts?

A: No, school buses are not equipped with seatbelts. Students should remain seated at all times while the bus is in motion.

Q: Are students allowed to eat or drink on the bus?

A: Eating and drinking is permitted only with the permission of the driver. Students have to take their trash with them when leaving the bus or place it in trash can on the bus.