



TRANSPORTATION SERVICES HANDBOOK

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OBJECTIVE

The primary goal of Westmount Charter School (“WCS”) transportation is to safely transport students to and from their designated residence. The school bus is an extension of the classroom, and students are expected to follow the same rules and conduct as in school. The bus driver is responsible for students from pick-up to drop-off and must be shown respect and cooperation. Drivers enforce rules established by WCS, the School Act, and federal and provincial transportation laws. Families are encouraged to review these safety expectations with their children. This Student Transportation Parent/Guardian Handbook was developed to assist in understanding Westmount Charter School Division busing system.

The Alberta Education School Act (Act) provides that a school board shall, in accordance with the regulation, transport a student who:

- Busing is provided only for
 - Resides within the attendance area of the school in which the student is enrolled;
 - Resides within the division boundary; and
 - ECS to Grade 6 students who reside more than 1.6 km from the school.
 - Grades 7 to 12 students who reside more than 2.0 km from the school

The Act allows the Board to levy a fee for transportation services over and above what has been mentioned.

ROUTE INFORMATION

Bus routes and stops are established based upon the following criteria:

1. Bus routes and stops are reviewed annually based on spring busing registrations.
2. Students are assigned to one bus route only.
3. Community stops are used to serve the greatest number of families and reduce travel time; door-to-door or end-of-block service is not provided.
4. Routes aim to remain within a one-hour ride, though this may be exceeded for students living at the furthest distances.
5. Bus service is limited to within Calgary city limits; families outside the city may drive to the nearest in-city stop.
6. Stops are selected based on safety, road accessibility, route efficiency, and the number of families served.

7. Routes will travel along major roadways wherever possible to minimize travel time and stops are created to accommodate as many families as possible.
8. Under no circumstances should a parent approach a driver to make a route change request.
9. Requests to add new stops or changes for an existing location must be reviewed and subject to an approval process.
10. Temporary requests for route changes may be granted for illness, emergency and or medical needs on a case by case basis. Written requests can be submitted to schoolbus@westmountcharter.com.

WESTMOUNT CHARTER SCHOOL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CHANGE ROUTES AND STOP LOCATIONS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR TO REFLECT RIDER NEEDS AND TO IMPROVE ROUTE EFFICIENCY, TIMING OR SAFETY.

BASIC TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

Pick-Up Times

At the start of the year, WCS will contact families with morning pick-up times. Routes are reviewed for efficiency in September, and times will be finalized as soon as possible. Pick-up times may change during the year due to route or rider changes; families will be notified.

Late for Pick-Up

Students must be at the stop and ready to board five minutes before the scheduled time. Buses leave on time and cannot wait. If a student misses the bus, families must arrange alternate transportation. Families should also have a contingency plan in case the bus is delayed or unable to complete the route.

Drop-Off Times

Afternoon drop-off times may vary and can be earlier due to route changes or absences. Families must plan accordingly.

SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

School attendance boundaries are established by the Board as required under the School Act. Students are transported to their designated school within the attendance boundaries. Busing for WCS is provided within Calgary city limits only.

SCHOOL BUS LOADING AND UNLOADING

The most dangerous part of a school bus ride is loading and unloading. The “Danger Zone” is the area within three metres on all sides of the bus, where students may not be visible to the driver.

School zones are in effect from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on school days. Bus loading zones must remain clear during arrival and dismissal. Students must not jaywalk, run between buses, or play in loading zones or parking lots.

It is also important that driver along with parents/guardians instruct students on the proper procedure for loading and unloading.

1. Stand back at a safe distance from the bus
2. Be cautious when carrying loose papers or books which might drop near the bus – we encourage students to use a book bag.
3. Be aware of the dangers of clothing, book bag, backpack, and jacket strings/straps that could become entangled in the doorway of the school bus.
4. Wait in an orderly fashion safely back from the roadway or pick-up zone. Students need to be at their stop **five minutes early**. The time you have been given for pick-up is the time the bus departs from your stop.
5. Board the bus in single file; use the handrail so you do not trip on the steps.
6. Sit down right way.
7. Sit back in your seat, face forward and keep your feet to the front.
8. Keep the aisle clear of feet, backpacks, books, etc.
9. Talk quietly in order to not distract the driver.
10. Keep your head, arms and hands inside the bus, not out the windows.
11. Never throw things in the bus or out the windows.
12. Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop and the doors are open before standing up and leaving your seat.
13. After leaving the bus, take five giant steps away from the bus so you are out of the Danger Zone and in a safe spot.
14. Stand back at a safe distance from the bus.
15. Wait until the bus leaves the stop.
16. Walk to the closest intersection
17. When crossing in front of a bus, students must wait for the driver’s signal and ensure traffic is clear in both directions.
18. Never enter the street from between parked or stopped vehicles.
19. During shorter daylight hours, reduced visibility makes reflective material on winter clothing strongly recommended.

BUS RULES

In accordance with the WCS Charter Board's policies, the following are the expectations for Westmount students while on the school bus or while waiting at the bus stop. These rules have been established to ensure that a safe, clean and comfortable environment is maintained for all riders.

Students are responsible for their conduct to the bus driver and ultimately to the Principal. Serious or continued violation of these rules may lead to the loss of riding privileges and possibly suspension from school.

1. The driver is in full charge of the school bus at all times and students shall obey him/her promptly and respectfully.
2. The driver shall assign a seat for which the student shall be held responsible and he/she shall retain this seat until directed otherwise by the driver.
3. All students should be standing at the stop five (5) minutes prior to the departure time. The scheduled time is posted on [MyBusStop Application](#)
4. Unnecessary conversation with the driver is prohibited.
5. Classroom conduct is to be observed on the bus and any disturbance, which may take the driver's attention and endanger the safe operation of the bus, is prohibited.
6. To prevent allergic reactions or choking hazards, eating is not allowed on regular school buses. Food must remain sealed, as allergens can become airborne. Drinking water is permitted.
7. Students may play portable music devices using personal headphones only.
8. All items brought aboard the bus must be of adequate size to fit on the student's lap. No items such as large band instruments or unsecured sporting equipment are permitted on the bus including skis, skateboards, skates and balls.
9. There shall be no tobacco products, drugs/controlled substances, contraband or weapons on any school bus.
10. Students shall not litter on the bus or throw anything out the bus windows.
11. Students shall not extend any part of their body out the windows.
12. Students shall remain seated while the bus is in motion.
13. Students shall leave the bus at their regular stops unless a note from the parent/guardian is presented to the driver requesting a drop-off at another regular stop.
14. When leaving the bus, students shall observe the directions of the driver and watch for traffic before crossing the road
15. Kindergarten and Grade 1 students may only disembark if a parent, guardian, or designated caregiver is present. If no authorized adult can be reached, the student will be taken to the nearest Calgary Police Station and not returned to the school. Any overtime costs will be billed to the family. Families must keep contact and emergency information current.

STUDENTS VIOLATING THESE RULES MAY BE REPORTED TO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND MAY BE SUSPENDED FROM RIDING THE BUS.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CHECKLIST

1. Complete the Transportation Registration form online with accurate contact information.
2. Ensure children arrive at the pick-up location five minutes early; do not wait in your vehicle.
3. Teach children to respect property and avoid using private property as a gathering spot.
4. Dress children appropriately for the weather.
5. Be responsible for any willful damage caused by your child on the bus.
6. Ensure children can recognize their bus stop and get home safely.
7. Attach name, address, and phone number to clothing or backpack for Kindergarten, Grade 1, and first-time riders.
8. Escort and meet young children at the bus stop to ensure safety.
9. Provide necessary medication and ensure children know how to use it.
10. Establish emergency procedures for delays, no one home, or school closures.
11. Ensure Kindergarten and Grade 1 children wear bus tags and know their phone numbers.
12. Have a backup plan for bus delays and ensure children know it.
13. Encourage children to talk to the bus driver if they are unsure about stops or get on the wrong bus; they should not get off at an unfamiliar stop.
14. Review bus safety rules and expectations regularly with your children.

COMMUNICATIONS

Westmount Charter School Society is committed in keeping parents/guardians informed with bus delays and cancellations through their website and also downloading the [MyBusStop Transportation App](#)

The app and website are updated for delays over 15 minutes or cancellations. If a run is canceled, the transportation coordinator contacts parents/guardians. For breakdowns, the driver radios the Transportation Office, and updates are posted online for schools and families.

Please also provide change of address with your dedicated school.

ecadmin@westmountcharter.com – Westmount Charter School Elementary
mhadmin@westmountcharter.com - Westmount Charter School Mid-High

CONTACT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Westmount Charter School Society
728-32nd Street NW, Calgary, Alberta T2N 2V9
403-217-0426
schoolbus@westmountcharter.com

