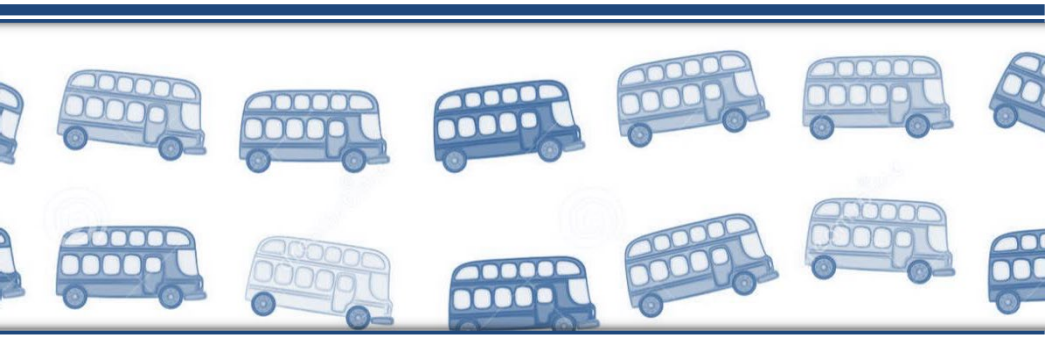




*Bus Transportation Information
and Guidelines for
SD#61 Students and Parents*



Transportation Information and Guidelines for Students and Parents/Guardians

Our goal is to provide effective, safe, efficient and reliable bus transportation services for SD#61 students and schools.

We ask that students, parents/guardians, teachers, Principals, bus companies and drivers use this booklet for reference throughout the school year to assist in our common goal of providing a safe bus transportation system.

For more information please visit our website at: www.sd61.bc.ca

<https://www.sd61.bc.ca/our-district/departments-services/facilities-department/student-transportation/>



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Guidelines for Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians can assist in our efforts to maintain the highest standards of safety and acceptable student behavior on SD#61 school buses by adhering to the following general use guidelines:

All Parents:

1. Communication to parents will be primarily via email, so please ensure the transportation department has your current email address. If your address or any contact information changes, please email transportation@sd61.bc.ca
2. School bus drivers can only pick up and drop off approved riders at an authorized regular daily stop. Drivers cannot make changes to stops without authorization from the GVSD Transportation Dept.
3. Transportation for non-school related functions is the parent's responsibility. Only those students eligible for transportation are entitled to ride a bus that has been assigned to them.
4. Regular program bussing students must have their GVSD Bus Pass on them at all times when they are riding the school bus. Service can be denied if the Student cannot produce a bus pass.
5. The GVSD cannot provide transportation for special events such as birthday parties, sleepovers, homework projects, community service hours or for a job. These requests cannot be permitted for safety reasons.
6. All students must apply for bussing each and every year regardless of previous service. Applications are to be made using the On-Line Registration Portal on the SD#61 website (<https://www.sd61.bc.ca/our-district/departments-services/facilities-department/student-transportation/>) during designated dates.
7. Students must reside within the established English school catchment area to be eligible for bussing.
8. Any and all primary address changes must be received by the Transportation Department immediately. For Inclusive Learning Bussing, all changes require a minimum of one week's notice.

9. Please contact the Transportation Department at transportation@sd61.bc.ca if your child no longer requires bussing.
10. If your child leaves any belongings on the bus, please contact the appropriate bus company. It is recommended that student's names be written on belongings.
11. Be aware of your child's bus company, route, and driver's name – it makes it easier to address issues if and when they come up.

Additional Information regarding Regular Program Bussing

1. Students must be approved to ride the bus and show their GVSD bus pass on every trip.
2. If your child loses their pass, please contact the Transportation Department: transportation@sd61.bc.ca.
3. GVSD Bus Passes are not transferrable to other students.
4. Non approved Courtesy riders (friends coming over for a visit etc.) are not permitted on the bus. Only approved riders.
5. Inappropriate behavior on the bus can result in suspension or termination of bus privileges.

Additional Information re Inclusive Learning (Special Needs) Bussing

1. The GVSD will do our best to ensure Inclusive Learning riders are serviced within one hour. This is not guaranteed due to door to door service which can experience issues with traffic, loading and location.
2. Parents/Guardians are to be home to see the student off and to receive the student after school (unless indicated on application form).
3. If a parent/guardian is not home to receive the student, the bus company will phone both the parent and the alternate contact. If neither is immediately available, the driver will return the child to the school. Any overtime charges incurred may result in the parent/guardian being invoiced by the school district.
4. One Secondary address (after school care, respite) for approval can be requested through the Transportation Department.

5. The order of student pickup and drop off is usually determined by rider address (but not always), so that the fastest and most efficient route can be designed and implemented.
6. Any special requests must be approved through the Transportation Department. Please do not contact the bus company regarding route changes, as the GVSD must approve all changes.
7. Student behavior/safety concerns can result in the student being returned to the school and not transported home. In this case the school will contact the parent, and it will be the parent's responsibility to pick up their child.
8. Please disclose any medical information pertinent to bussing that will assist with your child's transportation.
9. Assist your child from place of residence to the vehicle, and vehicle to place of residence. This is not the bus driver's responsibility.
10. Have your child ready for pickup 5 minutes early. The bus waits approximately 3 minutes after the scheduled time before leaving.
11. Contact the Transportation email: transportation@sd61.bc.ca for any approval regarding an adult or service animal that **must** travel on the bus with the Student (eg nurse, educational assistant).
12. Please be aware Transportation will be arranged as efficiently as possible. Notify the Transportation Department as soon as possible of any changes to contact, address, and/or caregiver information.

Additional Info regarding BC Transit Passes

1. BC Transit passes are delivered to the schools prior to month end for the following month.
2. If your child qualifies for a free Victoria City BC Transit pass, they **do not** qualify for a SD61 funded BC Transit pass.
3. Passes are not transferrable to other students. Students are to fill out the back of their bus pass.
4. Lost or stolen passes will not be replaced by the school district. If you lose your pass, you can contact BC Transit's Lost and Found:

[Phone: 250-995-5637](tel:250-995-5637) (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)

lostandfound@bctransit.com

5. To report any issues with BC Transit service, please contact a Transit representative:

Phone: 250-382-6161 or

email: transitinfo@bctransit.com

6. Please review BC Transit **Bus Etiquette** with your child:

<https://bctransit.com/victoria/riderinfo/etiquette>

School Bus Safety

1. GVSD strives to ensure the safest possible bus transportation for all of our eligible students.
2. Ultimately, each parent has the right and legal obligation to protect their child. You may decide to keep your child at home, at any time, if you feel that conditions are not conducive to have him/her transported to school.
3. When buses are cancelled due to inclement weather, but the school remains open, it is your responsibility to either arrange your own transportation to and from school or to keep your child at home.
4. Please ensure that your child is at the bus stop a minimum of **5 minutes prior** to the arrival of the bus. The bus will wait approximately 3 minutes after the scheduled time. Drivers have a schedule to maintain.
5. Ensure that you meet your child on the same side of the street where they exit the bus.
6. Parents/guardians should not attempt to stop or delay the bus at any time or board the bus without the driver's permission.
7. Remember you are responsible for your child's safety and conduct prior to boarding the bus and following drop-off at a designated stop.
8. Make sure that your child's belongings are securely packed in their school bag.
9. Objects that may interfere with student or vehicle safety cannot be permitted on the school bus.
10. Ensure that clothing toggles and drawstrings are not left dangling, as they can become snagged on school bus handrails, doors or other mechanical equipment which may result in injuries.

Rules for Riding the Bus Safely - Regular Bussing

1. Routes are designed for right side drop off/pickup to avoid students having to cross in front of bus.
2. Wait safely for bus, back from the side of the road.
3. Don't run to, from or after bus, wait for bus to come to complete stop.
4. Hold handrail and do not push others.
5. Don't use your cellphone while boarding/disembarking.
6. Take your seat promptly and sit properly, facing forward at all times.
7. Remain in your seat during ride, and until bus comes to a complete stop.
8. Place your belongings under the seat or on your lap.
9. Keep the aisle of the bus clear at all times.
10. Do not place items or body parts out of the window at any time for any reason.
11. Throwing objects inside or outside of the bus is not permitted
12. Speak quietly; the driver needs to concentrate on driving safely.
13. Fighting, shouting, or use of obscene language is not permitted.
14. Ensure you are aware of all bus evacuation procedures.
15. Dangerous or distracting objects are not permitted on the bus.
16. Eating and drinking (this includes chewing gum) are not allowed on school bus at any time. This rule protects riders that have food allergies and anaphylaxis, prevents choking, and maintains bus cleanliness.
17. Be aware that other students and the bus driver may have sensitivities to scents such as perfume, etc.
18. Always follow the bus driver's instructions
19. When exiting bus, do so in a safe and orderly manner – single file
20. Never stand in the danger zone (close enough to touch the bus)



Transporting Articles on the School Bus

Due to limited storage, space on bus and safety, you will need to contact the bus companies directly if your child is transporting equipment other than a backpack and school supplies.

Seatbelt Covers for Inclusive Learning Students

1. Bus privileges may be suspended if a student won't remain seated for safety reasons.
2. If a student will not remain seated, the driver may use a "seatbelt cover" to safely transport the student. This cover is placed over the existing seatbelt and can only be removed by the driver.
3. Please contact the Transportation Department if you have any questions at: transportation@sd61.bc.ca.



Disciplinary Action for Regular Bussing

- **Improper conduct by a student riding on the bus or waiting for the bus may result in a withdrawal of service**
1. School buses under contract with the GVSD are considered to be an extension of the school system. Consequently, the disciplinary standards set by your school; the GVSD Transportation Department and school board apply to all vehicle passengers.
 2. Students whose behavior endangers the safety or interferes with the comfort of others may have their riding privileges revoked.
 3. Students are accountable to their School Principal for their behavior on the school bus.
 4. The bus driver acts on behalf of the GVSD. Students must obey instructions from the driver.
 5. Compensation for damage or destruction of board property by a student is the responsibility of the student/parents/guardian.

Process of Disciplinary Action for Regular Bussing

1. The driver is required to report any and all inappropriate student behavior or incidents to the District Transportation Department in writing.
2. The Transportation Department will notify the Principal of the incident report.
3. The Principal will notify the parents/guardians of the incident.
4. With respect to major incidents, the Transportation Department and/or Principal may decide upon immediate withdrawal of bus privileges, temporary withdrawal of service, or the loss of the bus privilege altogether.
5. The Principal will notify the school Superintendent, as well as the parents/ guardians, of any bus suspensions.

Bus Incidents - Inclusive Learning

The Transportation Department will make every effort to problem solve any bus incidents with Principal's and school staff to ensure students are successful on the bus. The School Principal will communicate these issues to the parent/guardian.

School Bus Incident Reports

The drivers must issue a report to District Transportation for the following:

1. actions which significantly distract the driver
2. actions which cause harm to other students/driver
3. failure to remain safely seated while the bus is in motion
4. safety concerns
5. any other conduct which would raise concern in the classroom




Inclement Weather Procedures

1. During an emergency or inclement weather, it is a priority to communicate effectively to parents, and students.
2. We work closely with local municipalities and emergency services to gather accurate information about road conditions and safety considerations.
3. We will work quickly to determine impacts to school so parents can adjust plans accordingly in the early morning hours. We try to determine school closures due to inclement weather by 6:30 am. If schools are closed, an alert will appear on the GVSD website.
4. Our website www.sd61.bc.ca should be used as the primary point of contact for accurate updates about inclement weather or emergencies.
5. Please use this website as your official source of information and current status of bussing across the District.

Twitter and Facebook

Updates will also be posted on the Greater Victoria School District

 Twitter Account: [@sd61schools](https://twitter.com/sd61schools)

 Facebook page, [Greater Victoria School District](https://www.facebook.com/GreaterVictoriaSchoolDistrict).

Help us share updates by sharing posts with your friends and followers on Twitter and Facebook.

Local Media Outlets

1. To reach as many people as possible – as quickly as possible – we work closely with our local media to share information.
2. Listen to local radio stations and follow local news outlets for updates on the impact of severe weather on school schedules.

If schools are open, and weather conditions deteriorate during the morning, an early dismissal may be decided upon. If this happens, Transportation will notify Parents via email with the new dismissal time and bussing information. Schools may also assist by phoning bussing parents. Please check your email on any days it is snowing and your child is at school.

Student Safety is a Shared Responsibility

Student safety is our first priority and a shared responsibility. The Greater Victoria Region is large and we understand that some areas may be more difficult to travel than others. It's a parent's decision if you choose to keep your child home due to road conditions. Please call the school and let the school know of your child's absence. The decision to attend school is the responsibility of each family.



Thank you for riding with the Greater Victoria School District