

# Transportation FAQ's

- **When will we know about our bus stop and pick-up time?**

The district will send Parent Notification Letters (PNL) the week of August 21st.

- **We were given bus service but we did not request it! What should we do?**

Don't worry, you can ignore that. The bus routes are generated by a computer system that just sees your address and your child's enrollment at ICS. We, at ICS, go back into the system and request that your child be removed from the bus service. It takes a week or so to process so we ask that you are patient. We ONLY follow the dismissal instructions parents have given so your child will NOT be placed on a bus just because they are technically eligible for the service.

- **My 7th grader got a letter saying they have bus service, is this correct?**

This is incorrect and we have already submitted the correction to the district. For 7th and 8th graders at ICS the district provides free weekly transpasses for students that are eligible for transportation services. The district requires ICS to provide legal documentation (such as an IEP or medical 504) to continue bus service for a 7th or 8th grader.

- **I requested the bus stop to be at an address other than our home address. But the PNL has only a stop for our home. What should I do?**

Bus stops are generated by the computer system based on your home address. We, at ICS, go back into the system and request the alternate drop-off/pick-ups that you provided on your dismissal paperwork in May. There is a window beginning two weeks before school starts for us to do this. The district transportation department works 7 days a week to make these changes, but please be patient. You can email [transportation@icscharter.com](mailto:transportation@icscharter.com) if you have not received an updated PNL as the first day of school draws closer. We can check the latest updates for you or perhaps provide an alternative in the interim.

- **The bus stop is several blocks from our house. Can it be changed to something closer?**

Sometimes. In our experience the district will accommodate requests for a change to stop location if there is a hazard or a very busy road the child would have to cross, but will deny requests based on convenience. The 11 ICS buses travel through nearly every neighborhood in Philadelphia. The district makes every effort to keep the routes as short and as efficient as possible considering our sometimes far-flung student body. Keep in mind, a more convenient stop for you may mean a longer ride for every other student on the bus. We will certainly submit the request for you, but

the decision lies with the district. Bus stops are at intersections, unless there is a legally documented need (in an IEP or medical 504) for “curb to curb,” meaning at your door, service. Curb to curb service can only be granted through the district.

- **I don't see an afternoon drop off time. How will I know when to meet my child?**

The School District of Philadelphia does not assign afternoon drop off times. You can estimate the drop off time by finding the difference between your morning pick-up time and the expected arrival at ICS (8:10-8:15) and then adding that to the ICS bus dismissal time (3:15-3:25, depending on when your child's bus pulls off). Clearly, this is a rough estimate, but it is better than nothing. Bus drivers are NOT required to wait for an adult to meet a child at the stop. Thankfully, the drivers do so as a courtesy and because they care about our students. Please be on time to meet the bus.

- **I've heard the bus service is unpredictable and unreliable, is this true?**

We won't sugarcoat our answer: Yes sometimes it is. The beginning of the school year tends to be the most unpredictable as kinks are worked out, new drivers learn their routes and seasoned drivers adjust to major changes to their routes. Throw in some road closures, a rainy morning, a mechanical difficulty and students who are not at their stops on time, and the result can be extreme delays or even no-show buses. **Bus students are never marked late for bus-related issues.** Please be patient, have a “plan B,” and know it does get better. The District is working to address many issues.

#### **When there are issues:**

1. Call Durham School Services and see if they can provide an update on your bus. 215-537-5405. It can be tough to get through; they are always understaffed. They contract with the district for hundreds of bus routes, so make sure you know your route number. You may also call the School District at 215-400-4305.
2. Make friends with parents at your stop or the stop before. A phone tree and/or a carpool, when necessary, can be valuable in keeping bus-related frustrations in check.
3. ICS is NOT notified of late or no show buses. If you hear from Durham that your bus is late you can let ICS know, but unfortunately we do not have the staff available to notify other families on the route.
4. If your bus was late or a no-show in the morning or exceptionally late in the afternoon CALL the DISTRICT! 215-400-4350. If Durham is not providing the service they are contracted to provide, the District must be informed so they can act accordingly. ICS files paperwork with the District regarding bus performance, but parent complaints/concerns are powerful tools for effecting

change. If you call between 10 and 2 you may have a better chance of getting someone who can really listen to your concerns.

5. The School District is rolling out a real time GPS tracking system for all its bus routes. Unfortunately, ICS is not a pilot school that will have access to the system at the start of the 17/18 school year. However, we can expect to have school based access to the system this fall and sometime after that families will be able to sign up for the system themselves. FINALLY!!

ICS uses colors to refer to our bus routes, but the District and Durham only know them by the route number. Here are the routes by color and their corresponding route number.

#7600 -Ivory bus  
#7601 - Green bus  
#7602 - Orange bus  
#7603 - Purple Bus  
#7604 - Blue bus  
#7605 - Red bus  
#7606 - Yellow bus  
#7607 - Brown bus  
#7608 - Silver bus  
#7609 - Gold bus  
#7610 - Turquoise bus

Please refer to this list when reviewing your Parent Notification Letter so you can let your child know what bus to take home in the afternoon.

Lastly, please be kind to your bus driver. They work very hard in a difficult situation. We have had the pleasure of having some highly dedicated drivers. Remind your kids that the bus driver is the “teacher” on that bus. They are in charge of the bus and the students, but most importantly they need to concentrate on driving safely.

You can never remind them of these safety rules enough:

**B**e kind to ALL. Speak in a quiet voice and keep your body calm.

**U**se your seat safely. SIT and face forward.

**S**ave your food for school. NEVER eat on the bus.

For more information on bus behavior expectations please refer to the parent handbook or request a copy at [transportation@icscharter.com](mailto:transportation@icscharter.com).

Additional questions? Contact [transportation@icscharter.com](mailto:transportation@icscharter.com)

