



*Growing Together,
Learning for Life*



Rockwood Resident Transportation Services – Parent and Guardian Information

In Rockwood, we understand that school buses are an extension of the classroom. Our job is to support the education of children by safely transporting students to and from school and school-related events.

Working together with First Student, Inc. (formerly Laidlaw) and Atlantic Express (VICC) bus services, we transport more than 12,000 students each day, traveling over 5 million miles per year. Our goal is to provide dependable, safe transportation for all children entrusted in our care.

The following information is specific to students transported on the First Student buses and will help parents and students understand the mission of Rockwood Transportation. Parents, guardians, and students of the VICC program should refer to transportation material provided by the VICC office for specific rules, guidelines, and consequences.

The following areas are addressed within this document:

Students: Safety

District: Guidelines for Routes

Parents: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

Our mission is to provide safe, reliable and efficient transportation services for Rockwood School District students.

Sincerely,

Bill Sloan
Director of Purchasing and Transportation

Students: Safety

- **Students are allowed to board or exit only at their designated stop.** Parents/guardians must send a request to the school office if a temporary change is required for their current stop on their current bus.
- **Seat assignments** are encouraged for elementary and middle school students as needed. The form of assignment by individual, grade, age or gender will be determined through the cooperation of the bus driver and school administrator.
- **Students must act in a respectful and safe manner** whenever on a school bus, on school property and when interacting with staff and other students. Bus drivers are considered part of the school staff and the bus is considered an extension of the school. Drivers are required to complete a **student discipline form** for any discipline problem requiring a school administrator's action. Students acting in an unsafe or disrespectful manner towards other students, the bus driver, or the equipment will be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the school administrator.
- **Guest riders** are not allowed on a bus without a parent or guardian note, which must be submitted to the school office for approval. Requests must be for a legitimate education-related reason as determined by the school office and the bus must have sufficient capacity to seat the guest rider. A copy of the school office approved note will be presented to the bus driver prior to boarding. School administrators have the authority to deny guest riders for other reasons. The school office will notify parents and guardians should a request be denied.
- **Student sibling sickness** is an important bus safety concern. The school administrator will attempt to notify students in advance when the student's sibling is not riding the afternoon bus due to a sudden illness or change in plans. Bus drivers will refer students to an administrator or the office should a student raise the concern of a sibling not being on the bus.

District: Guidelines for Routes

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education established criteria related to bus routing and bus stops for school districts and transportation providers' guidance. Rockwood adheres to the rules unless road conditions or safety concerns justify a variance. The criteria include the following:

- No stop should be within 500 feet of another stop.
- The school bus must be visible for at least 500 feet in each direction on a highway with no shoulder and a speed limit greater than 60 miles per hour. The bus must be visible for at least 300 feet in each direction on other roadways.
- Students living more than three and one-half miles from school must be provided transportation service. All students can be transported by local board decision.

Rockwood School District has established the following additional criteria for student transportation and bus route assignments:

- All regular routes should be established no later than August 1 of the new school year.
- Student information must be entered into Infinite Campus by the school office prior to assigning the student to a bus route.
- Route assignments for newly registered students after the start of a new school year will go into effect in one day or less.
- Student route changes will normally take no more than three days to implement and go into effect.
- Student eligibility for bus transportation is based upon distance from their school and the student's home. In general, students living one-half mile or more from their school are eligible for bus transportation. The district will provide kindergarten students through 5th-grade students who live beyond one-fourth mile from school bus transportation when road conditions are considered unsafe as determined by the Driver Development and Safety Supervisor and the Director of Transportation.
- Bus stops will be assigned at street corners where possible.

- Bus stops will be placed to minimize the possibility of a student being exposed to a known predator's (as defined by the State) residence. Bus stops will be located so students are not required to walk past a predator's home address.
- Kindergarten bus routes will provide home stops for students where road conditions allow sufficient room to operate a bus safely. Parents or guardians must be present when the driver is dropping off a kindergarten student at their bus stop. Drivers are required to take a kindergarten student back to their school if his or her parent or guardian is not visible at the stop and/or cannot be reached at their home phone by the dispatcher.
- Kindergarten students riding a regular elementary bus route are subject to the rules of the elementary route. It is the parent's responsibility to have a family member or another adult meet their kindergarten student at the bus stop when returning from school.
- Bus stop information will be available to parents, guardians, and students through the VersaTrans E-Link site.
- Bus routes shall not be published online for general public access due to security concerns. Schools will be responsible for distribution of routes on an as needed basis to their school community or secured Web site.
- CCL students will be transported from their home school to CCL usually one day a week. The CCL will identify afternoon transportation requirements for each student as one of the following: parent pickup, transport to home school for parent pickup or to walk home, transport to home school for Adventure Club, or transport to the student's regular bus stop.
- High School Zero Hour routes will be established with regional stops only. Regional stops will typically include another school, an intersection, or a subdivision entrance. Regional stops do not include home stops or multiple stops within a specific neighborhood.
- Bus driver assignment is based upon route and vehicle selection as determined by the bus driver's union rules.

Parents: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Why can't my child be picked up in front of my house? The bus is going right by.**
Buses typically try to stop at corners and within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of home for elementary and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile for secondary students. There are state and district guidelines that are used to develop routes, and Rockwood is funded by the state for transportation based upon the efficiency of our bus routes. Individual home bus stops drive up fuel costs, extend route times, thus reducing the efficiency of the routes. Group bus stops help reduce route times and stabilize transportation costs by allowing a bus to service two to three routes (multiple tiers) in the morning and afternoons. Many buses have 65 children on a route, and each stop can add close to 60 seconds of time on the route. Individual stops will add 15 to 30 minutes per route resulting in an extended bus ride for the students, fewer routes being served by a bus and a significant increase in the overall number of buses required for the district.
- 2. I can't see my child at the bus stop. Can the stop be moved closer to our home?**
In order for our students to be transported in an efficient manner, and to be fair and consistent, stops are no farther than $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from elementary students' homes and no farther than $\frac{1}{2}$ mile for secondary students unless there are road restrictions. We encourage parents to be involved in monitoring their child's bus stop by walking to the stop with your child in the morning and meeting the bus at the stop in the afternoon. Parent visibility is an important aspect of student, neighborhood, and bus safety.
- 3. My bus has not arrived and it is 10 minutes past the scheduled arrival time. What should I do?**
If your bus is more than 10 minutes late, call First Student (636) 458-2044 (Wildwood/Grover Office) or (636) 677-7711 (Fenton Office) so they can determine the reason for the delay and provide you with an estimated arrival time. Parents of children on Atlantic Express buses need to call (314) 721-8657.
- 4. I understand all of the buses are equipped with digital cameras. What is the purpose of the cameras?**
The bus cameras monitor who gets on and off the bus, activity in the student seating area, and bus driver actions. The cameras are used to verify accusations of unacceptable behavior occurring on the bus and activities that occurred on the bus prior to an accident. In the event of a disciplinary problem, the camera recordings are reviewed by school administrative members to determine if disciplinary action is warranted.
- 5. My child is in kindergarten. Will he/she be picked up at our home?**
Morning kindergarteners will use the normal elementary bus stop designated for their home. These students will be dropped off at their home during mid-day if road conditions allow for the safe maneuvering of the bus. Afternoon students will be picked up from home as long as the road conditions allow for the safe maneuvering of the bus. (Please note many cul-de-sacs are not large enough for school buses.) Parents or guardians of kindergarten students riding a kindergarten only bus must be present at the bus stop or a student may be taken back to their school. Kindergartners transported on buses with elementary students will be let off the bus at the regular stops and parents are

encouraged to be at the bus stop.

6. We live on a busy street without sidewalks. It is unsafe for my child to walk to the closest bus stop. What will you do?

We place the greatest priority on the safety of each student being transported. Therefore, when the above conditions or similar unsafe conditions exist, we will adjust the bus stop to safeguard the safety of your child.

7. Zero hour buses: Why are the rides so long? Why are the stops so far apart?

Only a portion of all high school students participate in the optional zero hour program and only a small portion of those students choose to ride a bus to school with ridership being frequently sporadic. In the past, this had led to an average of 12 students on a typical zero hour bus. In August 2004 the district, based on the recommendation of our consultant, implemented "regionalized" bus stops for zero hour transportation to improve our efficiency. These bus stops are normally located at a school, subdivision entrance or a major neighborhood intersection.

8. Middle school/high school after school activity buses: Why do the activity buses have long such long routes? The number of activity buses assigned to each school is based upon the number of student activities and the history of ridership. Ridership is very unpredictable and location of students' homes may vary daily so routes will vary daily. Activity buses and car-pooling are options that should be considered for those students with limited evening personal transportation.

9. What is the tier system and how does it work to create efficient routes?

Rockwood has a system that allows us to use bus drivers and buses on multiple routes to ensure students arrive at school safely and on time, while using resources efficiently. The three tiers for 2008/09 are as follows:

1st Tier - Middle schools buses will drop off students at school between 7:00 a.m. and 7:10 a.m. for a 7:30 school start time.

2nd Tier - High schools and early-start elementary school buses will drop off students between 8:00 a.m. and 8:10 a.m. for an 8:16 a.m. high school start time and an 8:23 a.m. elementary start time.

3rd Tier - Late start elementary schools will drop off students at approximately 8:50 a.m. for a 9:02 a.m. school start time.

10. What is the District doing to address rising fuel costs and low ridership on some routes? Student ridership counts are conducted twice a year, and each year routes are reviewed to determine if the student population has shifted as a result of students

graduating or moving into the district. Routes will be adjusted if there are significant changes in student home locations. High school ridership is the most difficult to predict as many of the upper classmen drive to school. We assign every eligible student a bus to ride regardless of their personal transportation capabilities. We assign more high school students to a bus than the bus capacity allows knowing many of the students will not ride

the bus. We are looking at fuel hedging as a method to stabilize fuel costs and route consolidation for more sparsely populated areas in the district. These changes will be announced as they occur.

Please feel free to send your transportation questions to Mr. Bill Sloan, Director of Transportation, at 636.938.2232 or sloanwilliam@rockwood.k12.mo.us.

Contact Information

Online Transportation Information System - E-Link is Rockwood's online Transportation Information System. This program allows parents to determine which bus their child will ride, the bus stop times and more! Visit the system at <http://elink.rockwood.k12.mo.us/elinkrp/>.

USERID: parent

PASSWORD: parent

Bus Services – Call bus services at the following phone numbers:

First Student – Wildwood/Grover: 636-458-2044

First Student - Fenton: 636-677-7711

VICC Program/ Atlantic Express: 314-721-8657

Rockwood Transportation Services – Contact Bill Sloan, director of purchasing and transportation at the Rockwood Administrative Center at 111 East North Street in Eureka, MO 63025

Phone: 636.938.2232

Fax: 636.938.2251

Find out more about Rockwood Transportation on the Web at www.rockwood.k12.mo.us/departments/transportation.