

# BLISSFIELD COMMUNITY SCHOOLS' DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION



## Student-Parent Handbook



Office Hours: 5:30-4:00

Phone: (517) 486-3803



**Scott Abbott**  
**Director of Operations and Transportation**



**Dave Dunbar**  
**Transportation Mechanic**



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**Transportation Assistant**

# Mission Statement

Blissfield Community Schools' Transportation Department will partner with students, parents, and the community to provide safe and efficient transportation for all Blissfield Community Schools' students.

## Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide students and parents/guardians with general information about Blissfield Community Schools (BCS) pupil transportation system. Public Act 187 of the Michigan Motor Vehicle Code outlines the pupil transportation laws that all school districts must follow. A copy of Public Act 187 is available for review during regular office hours in the Transportation Department. Selected BCS transportation policies, regulations and safety rules are included in this handbook.

Blissfield Community Schools Transportation Department operates a fleet of 26 buses, performing over 21 daily routes, covering over 120-square miles and logging nearly 180,000 miles annually.

Our buses are inspected annually by the Michigan State Police and have received "A" ratings each of the past five years. We have an onsite bus mechanic with over thirty years of experience responsible for our fleet maintenance.

Our drivers are required to hold a commercial CDL with P & S endorsements, pass vigorous training by certified personnel, and attend classes through the Michigan Department of Education.

As clearly defined in our mission statement, our goal is to develop a partnership with students, parents, and community members to provide the safest and most efficient transportation for students to school and school-related functions.

# Bus Routes

The following transportation guidelines address some of the most frequently asked questions from parents. If you have any transportation questions, please feel free to contact the transportation department. Our current office hours during the school year are 5:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Our phone number is 486-3803.

Student pickup and drop off points are established from the Transportation Request Form, this is your residence. All requests for pickup or drop off at other locations need to be submitted to the transportation department in writing and signed. The transportation department will review the request and make a determination if the request will be possible. The transportation department also requests one drop off location per child/household, with the exception of daycare.

The transportation department requires that any requested changes in bus pickup or drop off points be provided to us a minimum of three weeks prior to the start of school.

Changes to routings throughout the school year require a minimum 72-hour notice, not including the date the request is given.

All routing changes must be for a minimum of five (5) consecutive schools days.

Pickup and/or drop off points must be consistent each day.

The transportation department may not be able to accommodate all requested changes in routing. The greater lead-time provided concerning any changes would allow you more time to make alternative arrangements if transportation cannot fulfill your request.

The district requires that a **parent or another authorized adult** is visible to the bus driver at the bus stop for all **kindergarten students only**. If the driver is not able to identify a responsible adult when stopped for unloading, the bus will bring the student back to the transportation office. \*\*\*

\*\*\* **PLEASE NOTE:** If your student is brought back to the transportation office, the transportation office will make every effort to contact the parent and/or emergency contact person. If no contact can be made by 5:00 p.m., the authorities will be contacted.

\*\*\* Exception to adult visibility: **“Community Bus Stops.”** While we prefer and encourage a parent/adult to be visible, one is not required at a Community Stop in order to release a kindergarten student from the bus. Community Stops are at locations where a large number of students are released. Examples of these stops include mobile home parks, apartment complexes, sub-divisions, and any other location the district designates.

The bus will stop at the established unloading point, and wait for approximately 5-15 seconds before closing the door and proceeding on route. Once the driver has closed the door, the bus must continue on route.

Parents should not “follow or chase down” the bus in an attempt to have their student picked up released at an undesignated stop. They should call the transportation office to confirm the situation and allow the transportation office to make arrangements with the bus driver if/when possible.

Students must load and unload only at their assigned bus stop location.

In normal operation conditions, subject to weather, etc..., it is suggested that students be at their bus stop 10 minutes ahead of the expected bus arrival. To assure pickup, the student must be at the assigned bus stop prior to the arrival of the bus.

If your child does not come to school on any given day, it is not necessary to call the transportation office. The bus routes are run each day as routed to keep consistent schedules.

Bus behavior and disciplinary referrals - we need your help in maintaining a safe and effective transportation system. This is especially important as it involves the student behavior on the bus. It is important that parents emphasize to their child the importance of good behavior on the bus.

Any items left on the bus by students will be brought into the transportation department after each route. These items may be reclaimed at the transportation office between the hours of 5:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Bus drivers are not allowed to keep items on the bus. Blissfield Community Schools and employees will not be held responsible for any items left on the school bus or turned into the transportation office. All items of value that remain unclaimed will be donated to charity after July 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year.

Bus routes and estimated run times will be published in the “Blissfield Advance” newspaper and listed on our school web site prior to the start of school.

To avoid overcrowding, as well as for the safety of all students, students are not permitted to ride non-assigned buses. However, in the event that it is necessary, an orange bus pass will be issued by the building principal after receiving a signed permission slip from the parent or legal guardian. A note from parent or legal guardian directly to the bus driver is not an acceptable practice, and this does not authorize permission to ride a non-assigned bus.

# Bus Safety and Rules

1. The driver will be responsible for the orderly conduct of the students. While on the bus, the students are under the authority of and directly responsible to the driver. Show respect for the driver at all times and follow his/her direction.
2. Students should be expected to walk some distance and should arrive at the bus stop 10 min early.
3. For safety reasons, students may only board and exit the bus at their assigned stop.
4. Please instruct your child to wait off the roadway and to approach the actual boarding location only after the bus is stopped with its red school lights flashing.
5. If it is necessary to cross the road to get to your bus stop, students should wait until the driver has stopped the bus and activated the red lights. They should cross at least 15 feet in front of the bus and look both ways before crossing to make sure conditions are safe. Bus driver will clearly signal when it's safe to cross.
6. Students should wait until the bus has come to a complete stop before attempting to enter or leave the bus. They should enter or leave the bus using only the front door (except in case of emergency) and remain seated while the bus is in motion.
7. All carry-on materials must be small enough to be held on the child's lap. Backpacks must not be worn while students are seated. Large materials, large band instruments, etc... are/may not be permitted on the bus, unless it will sit on their lap, parents are responsible to get their child/children back and forth to school when large class projects are due at school or to be brought home, they will not be allowed on the bus unless it will fit on their lap. All house numbers should be clearly visible from the road. If the bus driver is unable to clearly identify the address on your house or mailbox, your child's stop may be missed. To ensure that the stop can be easily identified by the driver, please be sure that house numbers are clearly visible from the road.
8. Occupy the seat assigned by the driver and expect to sit three (3) in a seat when necessary.
9. Students shall keep their head and arms inside the bus when the windows are open and keep aisles clear of feet, books, packages, coats, and all other objects.
10. School dress codes are in effect on the school bus.
11. Students are not to carry materials on the bus that may be potentially hazardous to others. If in doubt, contact the transportation department.
12. No food or drink is allowed unless approved by the driver.
13. Portable electronic devices will be permitted so long as they do not create a distraction that could compromise safety. Bus driver may restrict such devices if necessary, driver has the right to take away the phone/ device from the student until they get off the bus. The school district is not responsible for any personal items.
14. Any damage caused by pupils riding the bus, e.g., cut seat, broken window, etc..., will be paid for by the student(s) and/or their parents.

# Student Discipline

Riding the school bus is a **privilege not a right**, so good student behavior is expected and enforced.

When on the bus, the driver is in charge. One of the leading causes of bus accidents is driver distraction due to misconduct by students. Safe transportation to and from school is a team effort that requires the cooperation of students, bus drivers, parents, and school administrators. In the event that disciplinary actions are necessary due to misconduct, the following Board-approved procedures will be followed:

## Administrative Procedures for Bus Misconduct

**First Offense:** The bus driver will communicate to the student(s) the inappropriate behavior(s) and initiate some type of intervention such as assigned seating. The driver will contact the parent or legal guardian within 24 hours to make them aware of the offense. A bus Conduct Report must be used to document the offense and the driver's intervention. This form will be sent home to parent to sign and return to school with student the next day.

**Second Offense:** The bus driver will communicate to the student(s) the inappropriate behavior(s) and initiate some type of intervention such as assigned seating. The driver will contact the parent or legal guardian within 24 hours to make them aware of the offense. A bus Conduct Report will be filled out by the driver with supporting documentation and given to the building principal. The building principal will contact the parent or legal guardian to make them aware of the offense and to discuss disciplinary action. Second offense will result in a **three- (3) day bus suspension**. Parents will receive a copy of the Conduct Report to sign and return.

**Third Offense:** The bus driver will communicate to the student(s) the inappropriate behavior(s) and initiate some type of intervention such as assigned seating. The driver will contact the parent or legal guardian within 24 hours to make them aware of the offense. A bus Conduct Report will be filled out by the driver with supporting documentation and given to the building principal. The building principal will contact the parent or legal guardian to make them aware of the offense and to discuss disciplinary action. Third offense will result in a **five- (5) to ten- (10) day bus suspension**. Parents will receive a copy of the Conduct Report to sign and return.

**Fourth Offense:** The bus driver will communicate to the student(s) the inappropriate behavior(s) and initiate some type of intervention such as assigned seating. A bus Conduct Report will be filled out by the driver with supporting documentation and given to the building principal. A meeting may be arranged between the bus driver, parents, administrator, and transportation personnel to discuss long term **eleven- (11) days or more bus suspension**. Parents will receive a copy of the Conduct Report to sign and return.

The transportation department will receive a copy of the disciplinary action taken by the building principal.

## School Delays, Closings and Early Release

In the event of a delay or school cancellation due to inclement weather conditions or the extreme case that require school be released early, Blissfield Community Schools will use Blackboard Connect 5 instant messaging system to inform parents, students and staff. It is important that all phone numbers for students' emergency contacts are current. Please contact your child's school office to update this information if/when it changes. It is also recommended to check the following radio and TV stations in the event that Blackboard Connect 5 is non-operational.

Please do not contact the school, but listen to the following radio and TV stations:

WLEN (103.9)

WQTV (95.3)

WABJ (1490)

TV Channel 11 and/or 13

## Bus Driver Loading and Unloading Procedure

The following is the student loading and unloading procedure when making a red light stop

1. Check mirrors and traffic
2. Apply brakes lightly and slow down
3. Activate alternately flashing 8-light system at least 200 feet from stop
4. Activate right turn signal
5. Pull as far to right side of road as possible (all or part way off the roadway)
6. Do not pull closer than 10-20 feet from students/bus stop
7. Apply parking brake and shift bus into neutral (secure bus)
8. Cancel turn signal, check mirrors and traffic
9. Open door, as a signal for students to enter bus- \*\*\*this will activate stop arm and red alternating flashing lights\*\*\*
10. Students enter or leave bus in orderly manner- \*\*\*be sure all students are accounted for\*\*\*
11. Check to see if students are seated and close door- \*\*\*this will deactivate red lights on 8-light system\*\*\*
12. Deactivate the alternating flashing red light (4-light buses only) (Unsecure bus)
13. Allow traffic to clear
14. Activate left turn signal
15. Check mirrors and traffic
16. Enter the traffic lane
17. Cancel left turn signal



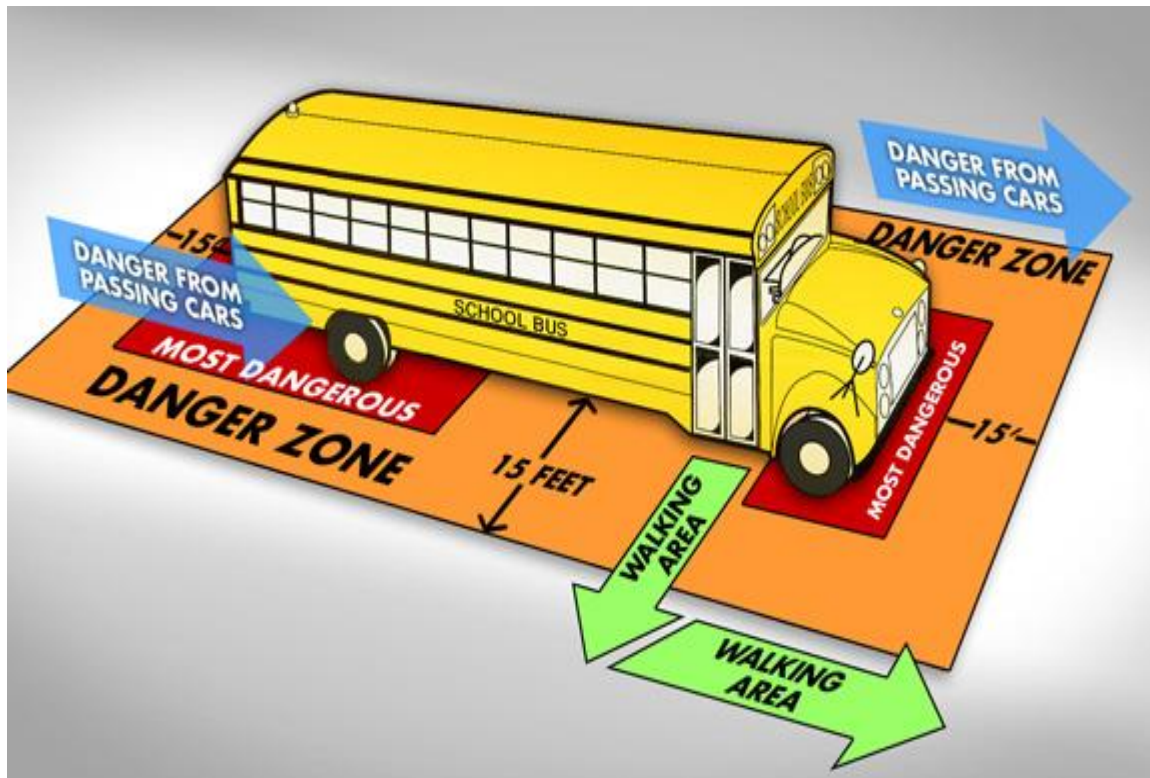


Crossing the highway is **DANGEROUS!**

**REMEMBER:**

- Step away
- Walk
- Stop
- Walk & Look

Traffic **SHOULD** stop --- but **MAY NOT!!!**



# WHEN BOARDING YOUR BUS:

## HERE IS HOW TO CROSS THE ROAD SAFELY

Follow the 10-Foot Rule:

**STAY** - on your side of the road- far away from traffic

**WAIT** - for the bus to stop and for your driver to signal to cross

**CHECK** - traffic both ways - then check again

**CROSS** - walk directly across, checking traffic both ways

**WALK** - approximately 10 feet ahead of the bumper and board bus quickly

## REMEMBER

- Stay on your side of the road until your driver signals you to cross
- Check and re-check traffic
- Follow the 10-foot rule
- Board quickly - go directly to your seat

Traffic SHOULD stop --- but MAY NOT!!!

# WHEN LEAVING YOUR BUS:

## HERE IS HOW TO CROSS THE ROAD SAFELY

**STEP** - two steps away from bus

**WALK** - along the side of the road until you can see your driver

**STOP** - wait for the signal to cross

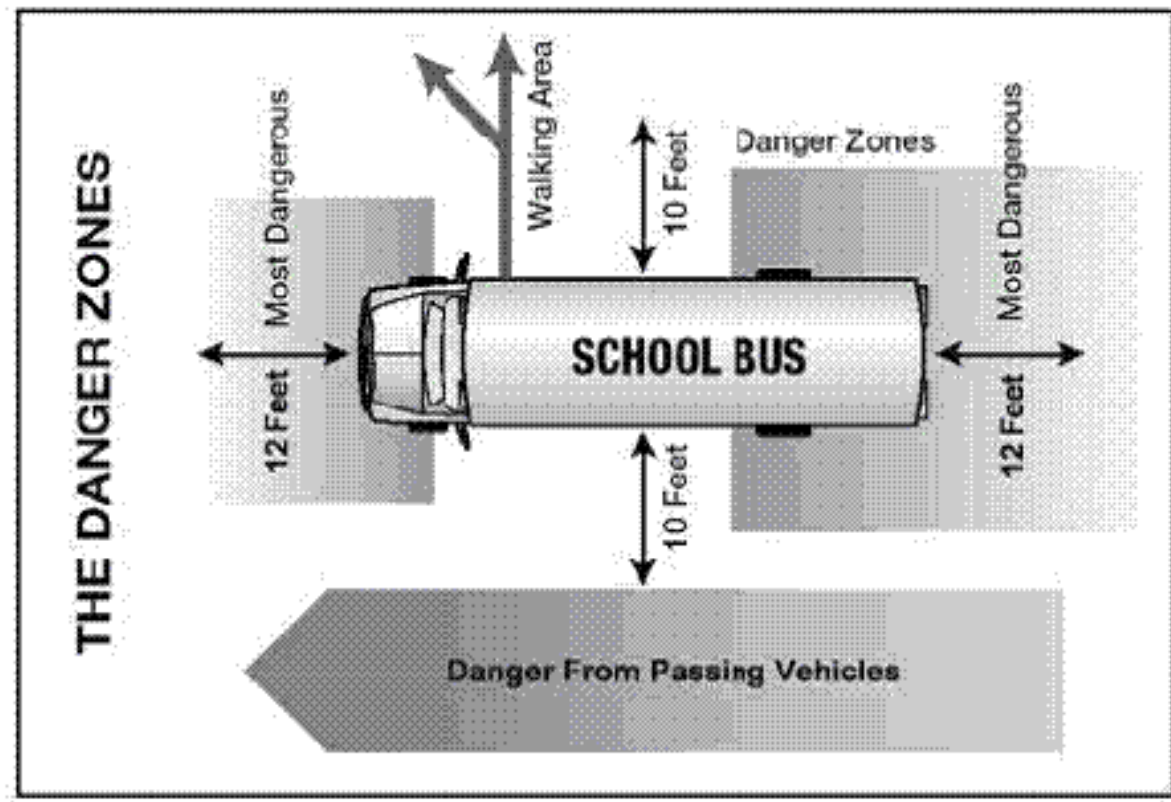
**WALK & LOOK** - for traffic both ways - if you see a vehicle that has not stopped, go back to the bus immediately. If all vehicles have stopped, cross the road quickly.

Parents:

PLEASE REVIEW WITH YOUR CHILD THE BUS RULES AND REMIND THEM TO STAY  
OUT OF THE DANGER ZONE.

## WHEN WAITING FOR THE BUS:

- Stay a safe distance from the roadway
- No pushing or horseplay
- When the bus arrives, wait for a complete stop and load bus in orderly manner



## Hazard Warning Light Stops

Hazard light (only) stops may be made with written permission of the school district. Remember, this type of stop does NOT control traffic. A hazard light stop may ONLY be made for right side of the road pick-up & drop off. NO student crossing is permitted at hazard light stops.

# School Bus stops

## What Every Motorist Must Know

School Buses with overhead red and yellow lights (with or without stop signs):

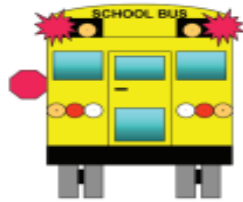
### School Buses: What do the Flashing Lights Mean?

#### When the Yellow Overhead Lights are Flashing



- When the YELLOW overhead lights are flashing, prepare to stop.

#### When the Red Overhead Lights are Flashing



- When the RED overhead lights are flashing, stop at least 20 feet from the school bus.
- Remain stopped until the flashing red lights are turned off or the bus resumes its travels.

#### When the Yellow Hazard Lights are Flashing



- When the YELLOW hazard lights are flashing, **proceed with caution.**

It is not necessary to stop for a school bus stopped on the other side of a divided highway where the road is separated by a barrier, such as a concrete or grass median, island, or other structures that separate the flow of traffic. Use extra care around buses and in school zones. Children are small and hard to see and may dart into the street or out from around parked vehicles.

Fines for failing to stop for a school bus are double what would normally be assessed for a moving violation.

Increased fines and imprisonment may result for violations resulting in injury or death.

# “Don’t lose your Riding Privilege!”

## Follow these rules:

- Observe same conduct as in the classroom
- No loud talking or yelling
- Be courteous, use no profane language
- Do not distract the bus driver
- Obey directions of the bus driver
- Do not eat or drink on the bus
- Keep the bus clean
- Cooperate with the driver
- Do not smoke (electronic devices included)
- Use of tobacco is prohibited
- Do not be destructive and report any/all damage
- Stay in your seat facing forward and clear of aisle
- Keep head, hands, feet, and objects inside the bus
- Do not tamper with emergency exits
- Bus driver is authorized to assign seats
- Written permission required to leave bus at stop other than your own

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Parent/Guardian signature

Date