

Grass Lake Community Schools



TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK

The policies and procedures included with this handbook are used as a guide to consistently maintain the safe and efficient transportation of all students riding Grass Lake Community School District buses.

TRANSPORTATION CONTACTS

District Transportation Supervisor
(517) 867-5544

District Superintendent
(517) 867-5540

WWW.GRASSLAKESCHOOLS.COM

School District Mission Statement:

The mission of Grass Lake Community Schools is to provide a quality learning environment which will empower all students to meet their individual needs, discover their potential, and gain essential skills that will enable them to become responsible contributing citizens of our world.



Transportation Mission Statement -

The mission of the Grass Lake Community Schools Transportation Department is to provide safe, efficient and professional transportation service for our students while supporting the district educational mission.



NOTICE

All school buses are equipped with video camera equipment which may or may not be in use. This equipment has been purchased to ensure the safety of all students.



Dear Parents and Students,

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your child to the Grass Lake Community Schools. At Grass Lake, transportation is considered part of your child's education program. The bus ride each day is a continuation of your child's daily learning experience, encouraging the application of classroom knowledge. Getting along with others, following directions and obeying rules are vital lessons each child must learn and practice.

As parents and guardians, we are sure that many of you have questions and concerns. In the next few pages, we will attempt to cover many transportation concerns. For example, you may have concerns regarding the bus driver and vehicle your child will be riding each day. Allow us to assure you that all of our drivers are highly qualified. They have had many hours of in-depth schooling given by certified training personnel and have passed a detailed written and skills examination given by the Michigan State License Bureau. All of the drivers have passed complete physical examinations and must participate in random drug and alcohol testing. All of our buses are inspected annually by the Michigan State Police Motor Carrier Team and have passed. Our buses are equipped with radios, camera equipment and other safety devices.

The principle concern of Grass Lake Community Schools' Board of Education is that your child is transported in the safest and most efficient manner.

May your time with us be pleasant.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

The Grass Lake Community Schools is committed to providing transportation services to all qualifying students. School-sponsored student transportation is by far the safest form of transportation of students in the United States. This safety record is due to the application of stringent rules that involve administrators, bus drivers, parents, students, and the community. The following policy stipulates those rules as they relate to our constituents. Any time that the rules are sacrificed the potential for disaster for our students increases.

We are committed to following the intent of the law, as well as the letter of the law, as we decide on our bus stops, our bus routes, and the scheduled pick-ups and drop-offs of our students. We will apply the laws and regulations of the State of Michigan and the policies of the Grass Lake Community Schools to make all of our decisions. The school district reserves the right to discontinue service to students and/or parents who do not adhere to prescribed policies while being transported, picked up, or dropped off from school district pupil transportation vehicles.

Although it is not required to provide transportation for its students, it is the intent of the Grass Lake Community Schools' Board of Education to provide safe and cost effective transportation for the students of its schools residing one and one-half (1.5) miles or more by the nearest traveled route to the child's current school building. However, the Transportation Supervisor, with the approval of the Superintendent, may determine that transportation service could be extended to identified students within the above-stated distance. Exceptions to this policy will be reviewed by the Board of Education on an annual basis. Examples of this would be a change in posted speed limits, or hardship-disability situations.

All bus stops must be legal bus stops as defined by Michigan State Law. They will be determined by the Transportation Supervisor, with the approval of the Superintendent, for safety and cost effectiveness.

The Board of Education has determined that for the safety of our students the following exceptions will be made:

1. All students grades K-5 are eligible for bus transportation unless they live less than one-half (.5) mile from the student's current school building and they have a walking route that has sidewalks.

2. All students grades 6-12 are eligible for bus transportation, except those who live less than one and one-half (1.5) miles from the student's current school building and they have a walking route with a posted speed limit of 35 MPH or slower, or they have a walking route which has sidewalks, or a combination of both.
3. All students living north of the railroad tracks and west of S. Lake Street are eligible for bus transportation.
4. All students living on Water, Watson and Clark Streets and East Michigan from Lake Street west are eligible for bus transportation.
5. All students who are eligible for bus transportation may be asked to walk up to one-half (.5) mile from where they reside to a designated bus stop.

Although Grass Lake Community Schools' first obligation for bus transportation is to students residing on established bus routes, Grass Lake Community Schools will make an effort to accommodate the transportation needs of our students whose destination or pick-up is at a daycare, babysitter, or designated group stop on an existing route. This will be done with overall safety and costs in mind and may require a fee.

Requests for changes of pick-up or drop-off locations will be evaluated in the order they are received throughout the school year and should be received in writing by the Building Principal or the Transportation Supervisor a minimum of three days prior to the requested change date. Requests will be granted or denied by the Transportation Supervisor or the Superintendent and notification will be made to the parent as to the status of their request based on available bus space and bus route availability.

A student residing in the school district, but enrolled in a non-public school, may be eligible for bus transportation to the Grass Lake Community School building the student would otherwise attend, as long as that student meets the requirements of this policy and there is available bus space and bus route availability. All other persons shall not be provided bus transportation. Only the Transportation Supervisor or Superintendent will make exceptions to this rule.

This policy and/or these exceptions can be terminated at any time by the Board of Education.

TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES

Transportation Service Limitations:

Bus routes shall be planned to achieve maximum safety of operation with reasonable economy.

1. Students may be required to walk up to one quarter (.25) mile if they live on a regular route.
2. Students may be required to walk up to one-half (.5) mile if they live off a regular route.
3. A bus will not make more than four (4) stops in any one mile interval, unless safety requirements make additional stops necessary.
4. In establishing routes in new or existing residential sub-divisions, buses will only travel public roads as designated by the Jackson County Road Commission. Buses will only be sent into new residential sub-divisions that are considered "mature" regarding percentage of completion. Students will be required to walk to bus stops in accordance with Sections 1, 2, and 3 above, to the extent walking safely permits.
5. Buses will be routed on dead-end roads that exceed one-half (.5) mile in length only if an adequate, all weather, bus turn-around exists, without trespassing on private property.
6. Regular and Special Education routes are to be designed to keep individual riding distances and time to a practical minimum.
7. In setting up bus schedules, it shall be the objective to arrange for buses to arrive at each respective school building approximately ten (10) minutes before the scheduled time for the beginning of classes in the morning and to leave no more than ten (10) minutes after the scheduled dismissal time.

Operation of the System:

The measurement of the mileage to determine eligibility for transportation shall be the responsibility of the Transportation Supervisor. Such measurement shall be accepted as conclusive evidence of eligibility for transportation. Any person who feels aggrieved by this measurement may request to accompany the Supervisor to witness the measurement. Such a request shall be honored and scheduled at the earliest mutual convenience.

Each eligible pupil will be assigned to a specific bus and bus stop and shall not be permitted to use any other stop without the prior permission of parents and school administrators.

The scheduled number of pupils assigned to ride a school bus, minus the approximate number students on routes who will most likely not ride, will not exceed 100% of its rated passenger capacity of no more than three pupils per seat. Upon the opening of school, should unforeseen circumstances result in an overload, adjustments in routes and stops will be made within fifteen (15) school days, with priority being given to the most seriously overloaded buses.

**PLEASE NOTE THESE SPECIAL RULES
REGARDING BUS CHANGES**

1. A requested change may not result in the overcrowding of any bus, alteration of any regular bus route, bus stop, time schedule, the provision of service in an area not normally in service, or in any other way interfere with the regular operation of the transportation system.
2. The purpose of such special permission requested shall be:
 - A. To relieve a temporary situation that would otherwise create a severe hardship on a pupil getting to and from school.
 - B. For such other emergency or unusual reason as shall be approved by the Transportation Supervisor.
3. Drivers are to transport only their regularly assigned passengers unless other authorization is received from the Transportation Supervisor or Building Principal.
4. In an emergency, a written request may be waived. Such emergency requests should be made to the child's Building Principal, or directly to the Transportation Supervisor.

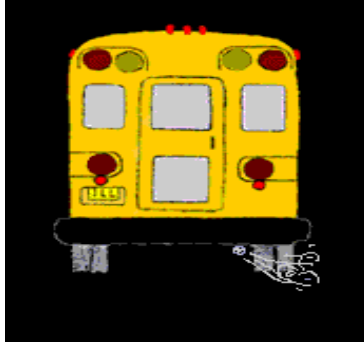
Child Safety Information:

The Transportation Supervisor and Superintendent will develop a safety program for student bus riders. The program will include instruction in rules of behavior while riding, getting to and from bus stops safely and emergency bus evacuations.

Appeal Procedures:

In any aspect of the application of the provisions of this policy, a parent, guardian or adult student may appeal the policy decisions of any official involved and submit the specifics of the case in writing. The officials involved will respond within ten (10) working days.

SCHOOL BUS STOPS - WHAT EVERY DRIVER MUST KNOW



All Grass Lake buses are equipped with an “8-Light” overhead stop light system, which means there are two amber lights in front and in back, and two red lights in front and in back, in addition to a single “STOP” sign near the driver’s compartment.

The procedure for buses approaching a stop requires that overhead flashing “AMBER” lights are to be activated 200 feet from the location of a bus stop. This is a warning to drivers that the bus is preparing to stop. **REMEMBER: *If the “AMBER” lights are flashing, children may be waiting beside the road ahead of the bus.***

When the bus stops at the stop the driver opens the door, which activates the overhead flashing “RED” lights along with the fold-out stop sign near the driver’s compartment. When all traffic has stopped students are given a signal to board or de-board , Once the students have safely boarded or de-boarded the bus and are safely off of the road, the overhead “RED” lights are then de-activated and traffic can resume freely.

If you are meeting a bus on the road, treat the lights on a bus as you would a stop light. Be cautious as you approach it. If the “AMBER” lights are activated, stop if it is safe to do so.

REMEMBER:

IT IS THE LAW THAT VEHICLES CANNOT PASS A BUS WHILE ITS ALTERNATING OVERHEAD RED LIGHTS ARE ACTIVATED.

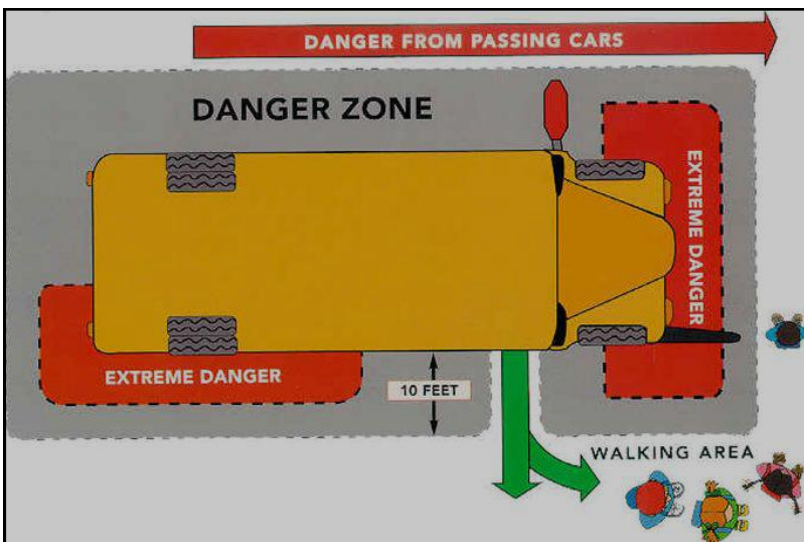
BUS DANGER ZONES

Students should enter and exit their school bus according to the diagram below.

The “**danger zone**” around the school bus indicates an area that is 10 feet from the bus. Students should never stand, wait or walk in this designated “**danger zone**”.

Students should **NEVER** enter the areas labeled “**extreme danger**” in the diagram below, as these are blind spots for the driver.

Whenever boarding or de-boarding a bus, never move in the area behind the side passenger door. Always stay in line with the door, or forward of the door to allow the driver to see you.



Responsibilities of the Parents:

1. To ensure that children arrive at their designated bus stop before the bus arrives in the morning. It is mandatory that students be at the stop ahead of the scheduled pick-up time. (10 minutes is suggested.) Failure to adhere to this mandate will result in consequences as described in the disciplinary process section of this policy.
2. To ensure they arrive at the bus stop in advance of the scheduled drop-off time. After two warnings for missed pick-ups, riding privileges may be revoked for the remainder of the school year.
3. To provide necessary protection for their children when at the bus stop and going to and from the bus stop.
4. To work cooperatively with school authorities to encourage the proper and responsible conduct of their children.
5. To make arrangements for alternative locations for children to report to if parents are not at home when the bus arrives for the afternoon drop-off.

Responsibilities of the Students:

1. To occupy the seat assigned by the driver and to refrain from moving from their seat while the bus is in motion.
2. To observe classroom-type conduct while getting on or off the bus and while riding the bus.
3. To obey the driver and to report promptly to the building principal when instructed to do so by the driver.
4. To warn the driver of approaching danger if there is reason to believe the driver is not aware of the danger.
5. To be in the location designated ready to board the bus at the designated time. (The driver is responsible for the maintenance of the schedule and cannot wait for tardy pupils.)
6. To stay at least 10 feet from the traveled roadway at all times while waiting for the bus.
7. To wait until the bus has come to a complete stop before moving toward the bus for boarding, and before rising from their seat for de-boarding.
8. To only leave the bus with the consent of the driver, and then to enter or leave the bus only at the front door, except in the case of an emergency or a drill.
9. At any multi-family stops it is required that students de-boarding the bus will gather at the designated area and remain there until the bus has completely left the stop.
10. **BUS STOPS WHERE ROAD CROSSINGS ARE REQUIRED -**
To cross the traveled road the student must always wait for a signal from

the bus driver that it is safe to cross. This signal will be a hand wave to the student indicating that they are clear to cross.

● Upon disembarking from the bus, the student must exit the bus, then move to an area 10' in front of the bus that is in sight of the driver. When the driver confirms that the stop is secure, they will give the signal to the students that it is safe to cross. Always WALK (do not run) in front of the bus when crossing the road.

11. Keep hands and head inside the bus at all times.
12. Inform the driver when an absence is expected from school.
13. Report to the driver at once any damage to the bus that is observed.
14. Help keep the bus clean, sanitary and orderly.
15. In case of a road emergency, students are to remain on the bus unless instructed by the driver to leave the bus.
16. Eating, chewing gum, and drinking are not permitted on the bus.
17. Students are not permitted to bring live animals, glass containers or bottles on the bus.
18. Large musical instruments are permitted as long as they may be held on the lap or placed under the seat. Instruments may not take the place of students' seating. Individual situations should be discussed with the Transportation Supervisor.
19. There shall be no fighting, profanity, or inappropriate language used on the bus. This rule applies to all persons, youth or adult, who ride school buses.
20. Riders are to board only their regularly assigned bus and get off at their assigned stop. In case of an emergency, notify the Building Principal or the Transportation Supervisor for accommodations.
21. Emergency bus exits are to be used only at the direction of the bus driver.
22. Prior to leaving the bus, students will be required to close the windows that they have opened.
23. Lost items will be turned in to the school offices.
24. Weapons, drugs and items that could cause a fire, such as lighters or matches, or other items that could cause harm to riders, are absolutely forbidden and are subject to the possible revocation of bus privileges and/or expulsion from school, according to the Weapons Free Act and district policies. (See a definition of "weapons" on p.14 of this handbook.)
25. Sharp items such as screws, screw drivers, letter openers, and other objects that could cause harm to others, or damage to school property, must not be carried on the bus.
26. No objects that inhibit the driver's view to the back of the bus, such as balloons, will be allowed on the bus.
27. Videotaping of other students either on purpose, or inadvertently, is not allowed.

THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

Students will be required to maintain acceptable behavior while riding the bus. Parents are asked to help support the maintenance of these safety guidelines. Students who fail to respect and observe the adopted rules will be subject to the infraction disciplinary procedure. In the event a student violates one of the standards, parents will be notified as to the nature of the infraction and the consequences of their student's behavior, which may include a suspension from bus privileges. Because school transportation is a privilege, further misbehavior could result in loss of riding privileges.

Grass Lake Community Schools uses a progressive discipline plan to promote positive behavior on our buses. Safety of the passengers is the primary focus toward the requirement of following rules on the bus. Proper behavior is demanded of all students. Because the bus is an extension of the classroom, all School Board policies are to be followed. Transportation is a privilege, not a right.

The District's Transportation Supervisor handles all bus discipline for students in the District. The Transportation Supervisor may consult with the Bus Driver and/or the Building Principals to establish appropriate interventions and consequences for inappropriate behaviors.

The following discipline levels are guidelines that the Transportation Supervisor will use when deciding on student interventions and disciplinary actions. The Transportation Supervisor may substitute or add other disciplinary consequences that are appropriate for the grade level and the specific student misconduct, such as writing sentences or apologies, having the student sit in the front of the bus, lunch detentions, before or after school detentions, or in-school detentions. All students will complete a Behavior Intervention Plan that will act as a written notice to parents.

Discipline Level One: Verbal warning. Written notice to parents. (Don't do it again.)

Discipline Level Two: Written warning. Written notice to parents. Possible 1-3 day suspension from bus.

Discipline Level Three: Written notice to parents. Possible 3-5 day suspension from bus. Parent conference recommended.

Discipline Level Four: Written notice to parents. Possible 5-10 day suspension from bus. Parent conference required.

Discipline Level Five: Written notice to parents. Possible suspension from bus for greater than 10 days up to expulsion from school. Parent conference required.

THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS - Continued

Violations of the Transportation Rules and Regulations are divided into two tiers:

Tier One Offenses include, but are not limited to the following:

- Consuming or using food, gum, or beverages on the bus
- Not sitting properly. Students are to remain seated “bottom to the bottom, back to the back” and out of the aisle at all times until the bus has come to a complete stop at each student’s specified destination, unless directed to move by the driver.
- Swearing or abusive language
- Any body parts out the window
- Throwing objects inside the bus
- Verbal or physical harassment of another student, or physical contact without the intent to do physical harm
- Disrespectful speech or actions toward another student
- Failure to observe or cooperate with a driver request or warning
- Failure to be at a designated stop on time.
- Being at a stop other than the student’s designated stop
- Videotaping other students on purpose, or inadvertently

Tier Two Offenses* include, but are not limited to the following:

- Possession of a weapon or dangerous instrument (See a definition of “weapons” on p.14 of this handbook.) Weapons, drugs and items that could cause a fire, such as lighters or matches, or other items that could cause harm to riders, are absolutely forbidden and are subject to the possible revocation of bus privileges and/or expulsion from school
- Use, possession, or consumption of alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other illegal substance
- Fighting, assault, or threat to harm another individual
- Damage or destruction of school property
- Causing any life threatening situation
- Disrespectful speech, harassment, or name calling directed toward the bus driver
- Throwing of objects in the bus out the bus window
- Obscene gestures to vehicles or pedestrians

***Tier Two Offenses will instantly move the student into the Discipline Level Three, or greater, consequences.**

The Michigan Penal Code (Act 328 of 1931):

Intentional damage, destruction, or alteration of a school bus is a felony. If a person intentionally damages, destroys, or alters a school bus without the permission of the entity that owns that school bus and that damage, destruction, or alteration creates a health or safety hazard to any individual occupying that school bus or who may occupy that school bus, the person is guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than 5 years, or a fine of not more than \$5,000 or both. "School Bus" includes a school transportation vehicle that is clearly marked as a school transportation vehicle.

DUE PROCESS:

In all instances of disciplinary action the rights of the student and parents will be carefully observed and respected. All must be frequently informed of rules and expectations, procedures and consequences and, in a specific incident, of the infraction, evidence, witnesses, penalties and appeal procedure.

APPEALS:

At any step of the disciplinary process, the parent/guardian or adult student may appeal the decision of the authority at that level. The appellant should be prepared in every instance to both meet with the official involved and submit the specifics of the case in writing. The response to such appeals will be rendered within ten (10) working days.

WEAPONS FREE SCHOOL

The district follows the State of Michigan's Weapons Free School Law. Weapons are considered to be any object capable of causing injury, or an object being used in a threatening manner. Students found to be in violation of this law will be suspended and/or subject to expulsion by the School Board, and the police will be contacted.

- Do not bring or have in your possession any object that would be classified as a weapon. For purposes of this policy, a dangerous weapon is defined as a "firearm, dagger, dirk, stiletto, knife, pocket knife, iron bar, or brass knuckles" or other devices designed to or likely to inflict bodily harm, including, but not limited to air guns and explosive devices.

PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL CLOSINGS OR SCHOOL DELAYS:

From time to time, school must be delayed or closed due to weather-related or emergency conditions. Every attempt will be made to make the decision before 6:30 a.m. Parents should be aware that school may, at times, be delayed for two hours if conditions warrant it. Parents are asked not to drop students off at school early in the event of delays.

Delays and closings will be broadcast through the District's automated calling system that may also include special directions. The information will also be sent to the following local media stations:

Television: WLNS -TV6; WLAJ TV 53; WILX -TV10; WSYM TV Fox 47

Radio: W4 Country 102.9

Internet:

Grass Lake Community Schools: www.grasslakeschools.com
WILX-TV10:

<http://gray.ftp.clickability.com/wilxwebftp/closings.html>

WLNS-TV6: http://66.70.209.226/schools/CL_TODAY.HTM.

In very rare instances, it may be necessary to dismiss school early during the day because of deteriorating weather conditions, power failures, etc. Parents should remain posted to any of the above media outlets while keeping phone lines open for messages from the District's automated calling system, and our website. We ask that phone calls into the District during these times be kept to a minimum so as not to tie up lines for calls from and to emergency responders.

PLEASE NOTE: While we attempt to maintain the same bus schedules on "bad weather days," there will be days when buses are running behind schedule. Please be sure that children have on proper attire in the event that they have to wait longer than expected for the bus.

EMERGENCY DISMISSAL FOR SEVERE WEATHER:

In the event of an announcement of tornado watch or warning by the U.S. Weather Bureau, students shall remain in school until the regular time for dismissal or until such time, in the judgment of the Superintendent or designee, students can be safely dismissed.

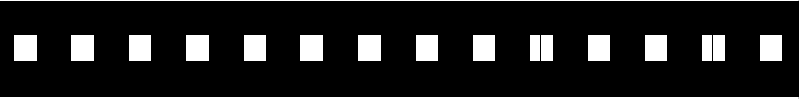
In the event of other severe weather warnings or conditions, the Superintendent or designee shall make a decision regarding the dismissal of students. Parents may pick up their children at school during a weather crisis, at their discretion, after notifying the appropriate School Principal.

It is the responsibility of the Superintendent to develop and implement a plan for the care of students during those times when a tornado watch and/or other severe weather warning and conditions have been announced. Such a plan shall pertain only to the regularly scheduled school day and to the safe dismissal of students.

TORNADO WATCH: “alerting the public, in or near an area designated to the possibility of tornadoes and advising them to be ready to take necessary precautions.”

TORNADO WARNING: “a tornado has been sighted or has been detected by radar. A person in its path should take immediate safety precautions.”

If your child’s bus is en-route and a warning should occur, the driver will go to the safest location for the duration of the warning.



**CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS PERTAINING
TO TRANSPORTATION:**

It is recommended that all questions or complaints be directed to the Transportation Supervisor or Superintendent. They may be reached by either of the following means:

Transportation Supervisor
899 S. Union Street
Grass Lake, MI 49240
Telephone: 517-867-5544

Superintendent
899 S. Union Street
Grass Lake, MI 49240
Telephone: 517-867-5540

School District Website:

WWW.GRASSLAKESCHOOLS.COM

(Go to the “Departments” heading and click on “Transportation”)

ADDENDUM – SCHOOL OF CHOICE BUSSING POLICY

In recognizing the need for transportation for out-of-district students attending Grass Lake Community Schools, and in the interest of advancing safety and efficiency within Grass Lake Community Schools bus routes, Grass Lake Community Schools bus stops can be established in adjacent school districts contingent on the following:

- 1) The location of the initial out-of-district bus stop must be located no further than 2.5 miles from Grass Lake School District boundaries as traveled by public roads. If it is determined that a safe and efficient turn-around location is not available to allow the bus to return immediately using its incoming route, the bus will employ the next reasonable closest route to return to the Grass Lake School District and its assigned bus stops.
- 2) The bus stop can be located at a residence or at a group stop location that is determined to be efficient and safe by the Grass Lake Transportation Director.
- 3) The initial bus stop located outside of the Grass Lake School District will be established only if the stop includes at least one eligible passenger who has been enrolled in Grass Lake Community Schools for no less than 72 calendar weeks (two school years).
- 4) Any other school-of-choice families who reside on an established out-of-district route, or who wish to utilize an established group stop, will also be eligible to ride the bus. The locations of these stops will be identified by the Grass Lake Transportation Director.
- 5) If circumstances arise that cause the student(s) at the original initial stop to no longer ride from that stop, Grass Lake buses will continue to follow the established out-of-district route to accommodate students previously accommodated.
- 6) Bus stops will only be established that are financially effective, fit within our time schedules, and that are considered safe by the rules and regulations of the State of Michigan and as outlined by Grass Lake Community Schools transportation policies.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Please have students waiting at the designated stop when the bus arrives. Drivers are not expected to stop or wait for students that are not at their designated stop.

Please allow a five minute window both ways of scheduled arrival time at each bus stop.

Please have your students dress for the weather conditions.

Parents are expected to know bus rules for safety and behavior, and support the school in enforcement procedures.

Even though a student may have had their bus riding privileges suspended, this does not necessarily mean the student has been suspended from school. It is the parent's responsibility to provide transportation for their student to and from the school they attend.

Parents must accept responsibility for their student's behavior at the bus stop prior to the arrival of the bus or after delivery.

Students are only allowed to ride un-scheduled alternate buses in the event of a family emergency, such as when a caregiver will unexpectedly not be available when a child is expected to be home and a babysitter is needed who lives on another bus run.

If your child misses the bus, call the school to arrange for an authorized stop. **Do not attempt to catch the bus and send your child to the bus.** This could be very dangerous.

THE FOLLOWING ARE VIOLATIONS OF BUS RULES

Eating, drinking and chewing gum while on the bus

Loud talking, singing, or screaming

Not sitting properly. Students are to remain seated “bottom to the bottom, back to the back” and out of the aisle at all times until the bus as come to a complete stop at each student’s specified destination, unless directed to move by the driver.

Profanity or abusive language

Any body parts out of the bus windows

Throwing object inside or outside of the bus

Disrespectful speech or actions toward another student or the driver

Videotaping other students on purpose, or inadvertently

Damage or destruction of school property

Use or possession of any incendiary device, such as a light or matches

Use or possession of any type of weapon

Use or possession of any illegal substance