



# MEI Schools

## Transportation Services

Transportation Information  
and Guidelines  
for Students and Parents/Guardians



## Welcome aboard!

Thank you for choosing MEI Transportation Services for your school bus needs to and from school. If you're reading this, you've registered for MEI bus service this year and signed all the appropriate forms. This Information guide will answer many of the questions you may have and inform you of the standards and expectations we operate by.

### Guidelines for Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians can assist MEI Schools in our effort to maintain high standards of safety and acceptable student behaviour on school buses by following these guidelines:

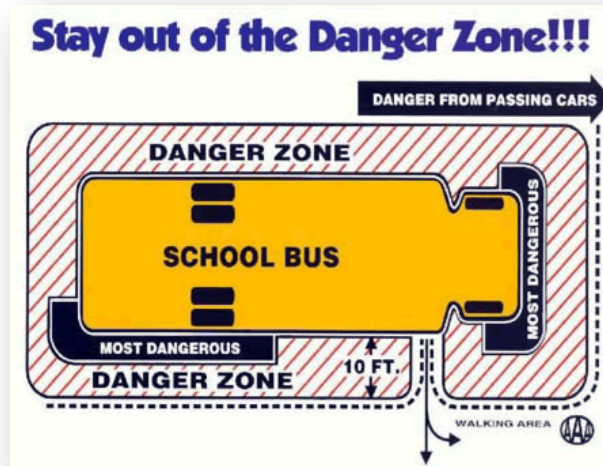
- ✓ Students can be registered for only one bus route and must ride the bus on that route only.
- ✓ **Guest riders** must have prior written permission from the rider's parent or guardian, **on an MEI-approved permission form**, which is available from school offices. Guest riders will be refused passage on an MEI Schools bus if the required form is not presented to the driver, or if the driver determines there is insufficient room aboard to safely accommodate extra persons.
- ✓ School bus drivers are authorized to pick up and drop off students **only at authorized stops**. Drivers CANNOT alter regular routes or stops.
- ✓ Parents or guardians must not stop, delay or board the bus when the bus driver is transporting students to and from school. Please do not chase down a bus if your child is late.
- ✓ MEI Schools provides bus service only to and from school, and for school-arranged field trips. MEI buses cannot be employed for any other service or purpose.
- ✓ As a parent or guardian, you have the right to keep your child home, or to transport your child to and from school another way, if bus service is limited or cancelled due to bad weather or road conditions. When bus service is cancelled, but schools remain in session, it is your responsibility as a parent or guardian to make alternate transportation arrangements.
- ✓ Make it your business to know your child's bus driver, the number of the bus for your route, stop locations and departure times.
- ✓ Children must be at a designated bus stop **5 minutes prior** to the scheduled departure of the bus. Expect buses to depart each stop at the scheduled departure time. A driver who does not see a child at a designated stop will drive by and continue to the next stop.
- ✓ Ensure your child has all belongings neatly and securely packed for carriage on board.
- ✓ Objects that may interfere with student, driver or vehicle safety will not be permitted on board the bus. This includes musical instruments, sports bags, sports balls and other large items; where available such items must be loaded in the bus's luggage compartment.
- ✓ Please do not send breakfast along for your child to eat on the bus – eating and drinking on our buses is not permitted (see below, **Student Bus Safety**);
- ✓ Parents or guardians must be present at a designated stop to receive children disembarking a bus. If the driver does not see a parent or guardian waiting for an Elementary-aged child, the driver is mandated to **wait only 2 minutes** before leaving the stop. In such instances, the driver will communicate with MEI Schools and arrange to bring the child back to school. It is then the responsibility of parents or guardians of Elementary-aged children to arrange with MEI Schools for pick-up of children returned to school under such circumstances.
- ✓ Ensure you meet your child on the same side of the street where the bus stops. While approaching and following traffic is legally obliged to stop when the bus stops and displays red flashing lights, a stop sign and a stop arm, some drivers do not stop. If possible, avoid picking up children on the opposite side of the street from the bus stop.
- ✓ Please notify MEI Schools of any changes to your address, telephone number, email address, or critical contact information. Changes may be reported to the Administration office at 604-859-3700, Ext. 438.
- ✓ Regularly review with your child the safety rules for riding MEI Schools buses.

## Student Bus Safety

Bus drivers are responsible for the safety of children riding MEI buses. As such, bus drivers will enforce the rules outlined below. Please make their job easier by following these rules:

### RULES FOR GETTING ON THE BUS SAFELY

- Be at the bus stop **5 minutes prior** to the scheduled departure time of the bus. Never run to or from the bus.
- Wait at the designated stop in a safe place, back from the side of the road or the parking area where you are to be picked up. Do not approach the bus until it is fully stopped.
- Never stand in **the danger zone** that surrounds the bus. The danger zone is anywhere close enough for you to touch the bus.
- Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before walking toward the bus door. Look for the crossing arm and stop sign to extend, and for the red lights to begin flashing, before approaching the bus. If you must cross the road to get to a stopped bus, wait for the driver to signal you. The driver will check that the road is safe for you to cross.
- Hold the handrails on the bus as you climb the stairs. Do not push or shove students in front of you.



### RULES FOR RIDING THE BUS SAFELY

Following are the basic rules for riding MEI Schools buses, and are posted inside each bus, and which each student acknowledges with a signed form as part of bus service registration:

1. Board and exit the bus in an orderly manner;
2. Show respect to the driver and to others;
3. Listen to and obey the instructions of the driver;
4. Talk quietly;
5. Remain in your own seat;
6. Sitting only is permitted – no standing;
7. Abstain from horseplay or throwing objects (never throw something out of the bus) – this applies to conduct at bus stops also;
8. **Train time is quiet time;**
9. Keep the aisle clear;
10. Treat the bus and its equipment with care and respect;
11. Remain on the bus until the driver gives you permission to exit;
12. Do not eat food or drink beverages on the bus (sudden stops may induce choking, which is why we don't permit eating and drinking during transportation).



In addition to the basic rules, students are expected to abide by the following standards:

- Take your seat promptly and quietly, sitting forward. Do not sit in such a way that you or your carry-on bags obstruct the aisle.
- Place bags or parcels under your seat or keep them securely on your lap.
- Do not fight, shout or use abusive or obscene language on board the bus.
- Be aware that other students, and even the driver, may have allergies to scents such as perfume, and refrain from wearing them.
- Do not smoke on the bus or at bus stops.

#### **RULES FOR LEAVING THE BUS SAFELY**

- Remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- When you leave the bus and descend the stairs, hold the handrail.
- Walk around the bus far enough away to stay outside the danger zone.
- If you must cross the street, cross in front of the bus, never behind it. Walk well ahead of the bus (outside the danger zone) and cross only when the bus driver gives you the signal that it's safe to cross. Watch for traffic in both directions and walk across – don't run.
- Cross the street in single file.
- People who are sitting ahead of you in the bus, and getting off at the same time, leave first. Do not push past them.
- If you have a bag or article that is stored in a bay under the bus, inform the driver each and every day and wait for the driver to assist you or give you permission to open the bay door yourself.

#### **Transporting Articles on the School Bus**

For safety reasons, only certain equipment is permitted on the bus. Here are MEI's guidelines, intended to maintain the highest level of safety:

- Skates, rollerblades and sports balls must be carried in a sports bag.
- Sports bags must be kept on the floor at the student's feet; larger bags must be stored in the luggage compartment if the bus has one.
- Musical instruments must be transported in a suitable instrument case. Instruments must be kept on the student's lap and out of the aisle; anything too large to fit in lap must be stored in luggage compartment or, where necessary, transported by family vehicle.
- Hockey bags (for Hockey Academy students only) must be carried in luggage compartment below the bus floor, or in the absence of such bays, transported in a separate vehicle. Hockey sticks must be stored in a manner and at a location in the bus that is acceptable to the driver.
- Dangerous objects are not permitted onboard school buses (i.e. knives, swords, etc.)
- Animals are not permitted on the bus, except certified service animals.

In the event there is a dispute about what can or cannot be transported on the bus, the driver retains the authority to make the decision. Notwithstanding that, the matter may be referred to the Manager of Transportation for further consideration.



#### **Bus Routes and Stops**

Our bus routes are posted.... Routes are occasionally modified to improve safety for students. When changes are made, updates will be communicated first via WhatsApp, X (formerly Twitter) and Emailed.

We try to arrange our routes to minimize dangerous street crossings for students, and we select stops that provide the best possible safety for both bus and students. For details

about stop schedules and student conduct at bus stops, see **Guidelines for Parents and Guardians**, and the section on **Student Safety**.

Where we use parking lots with permission by the owner, we have specific protocols instituted to protect students from dangers presented by moving vehicles. Buses will engage their red lights and stop sign/crossing arm at these stops. All parent/guardian drivers in the parking lot are obligated by law to remain stopped until the driver turns off all signals and retracts the signs/arm (refer to the Motor Vehicle Act for the definition of a Highway). The bus driver will turn off red lights once he/she is satisfied all bus passengers have crossed to the safety of a waiting vehicle or are well out of danger. Drivers who violate this protocol will be reported by the bus driver to the Manager of Transportation.

## **Addressing problematic student behavior**

Occasionally, student behavioural issues must be addressed by a bus driver. Drivers have the authority to address students directly when they do not comply with bus safety rules. Students are expected to comply with the driver. All issues will be documented by the driver on a Incident form. Repetitive behavioural problems or serious infractions of the rules will be reported to the principal for the school the student attends. The principal will deal directly with these matters and convey to the Transportation Manager the outcome of the intervention. Discipline up to and including permanent loss of transportation privileges is possible.

Because our buses are an extension of the MEI campus, the code of conduct expected of students attending MEI will apply to bus time. You will find the standards for conduct online at [www.meischools.com](http://www.meischools.com) or available from school offices.

## **Video Cameras on School Buses**

Video cameras on school buses may be used to promote good student behaviour, aid in driver training, and assist in promoting good driver/student relationships. MEI Schools reserves the right to employ cameras onboard buses for these purposes. Data collected by these cameras is the sole property of MEI Schools.

## **Inclement Weather**

Sometimes, weather makes our roads and highways unsafe for bus travel. When that happens, MEI Schools will announce to parents that buses are not running or running on **modified routes**.

During periods of bad weather, we drive selected routes to assess road conditions ourselves. We also consult with School District 34 about their road assessments and watch for weather and road alerts from various sources. When it's too risky to drive, we handle bus route closures in the following ways:

1. An announcement on WhatsApp on your smartphone
2. A message through our website and **X** (Formerly Twitter)

All announcements for bus cancellations or modified routes will be posted or sent by 6:30 a.m. **Buses that do not run in the morning will not run in the afternoon.**

For up-to-date information about buses and routes, join:

- WhatsApp – Ask for our QR Code



### WINTER SAFETY TIPS

- Leave yourself plenty of time to get to the bus stop.
- Dress appropriately for winter conditions.
- Stand well back from bus stops. Buses require extra space to stop when ice, snow and slush are present on the ground.
- Do not throw snowballs or horseplay on ice and slush at bus stops.

### Route cancellations/adjustments:

The MEI Transportation Department works hard to ensure that our service runs as consistently as possible for families. From time-to-time routes may be altered for a variety of reasons and it is also possible that routes may need to be cancelled for periods of time for staffing, weather related, maintenance, or other reasons. In cases like this, MEI does not provide any reimbursement for bus service that is curtailed or cancelled for short periods of time. In any of these cases we will always endeavor to get the service up and running as soon as possible and will keep you updated through our regular communication systems!

### Complaints & Emergencies

If you have a complaint about bus service, or an emergency regarding your child and transportation, please tell us. You may do that one of several ways:

- By calling 604-859-3700 and selecting Ext. 438 (Christine Green, Assistant Transportation Manager);
- By email: [cgreen@meischools.com](mailto:cgreen@meischools.com) or [sburkinshaw@meischools.com](mailto:sburkinshaw@meischools.com). We do our best to deal with complaints and emergencies quickly and fairly. Please provide us with your name and full contact information, so that we can better serve you.

### Feedback

We always welcome your feedback. Please let us know how we're doing, by calling, emailing or dropping us a note on Facebook.

#### MEI Schools Transportation Department

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Abbotsford, BC V4X 2M8

Tel: 604-859-3700, Ext. 438

Fax: 604-859-9206

Email: [meibus@meischools.com](mailto:meibus@meischools.com)

Website: [www.meischools.com](http://www.meischools.com)