



# Busing Guidelines

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## Introduction

Dear DaVinci Academy Families,

These guidelines are meant to clarify how the busing service works at DaVinci Academy. It is critical that families understand the procedures used for busing as this system is different from most traditional public school systems.

DaVinci Academy does not offer door to door busing service to any families unless a child has an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) that reflects the need for special transportation. DaVinci Academy uses community bus stops to serve the students. The bus routes and stops are determined by the bus company, Kottke's Bus Company, Inc., in coordination with the school, and are created by using the following guiding principles:

1. Community-based bus stops: Publicly accessible places where families can safely wait with their kids in the morning and wait for them in the afternoon, and where the bus can easily access and maneuver. We also require permission from the establishment for use of their parking lot twice each day.
2. Maximum 50 minute average ride (assuming good weather and normal traffic). This implies shorter distances and fewer stops.
3. Generally stop within the Anoka Hennepin school district boundaries and no stops further than 1.5 miles outside the Anoka Hennepin school district boundaries.

A preliminary set of stops is communicated to families in spring of the preceding year and families are required to choose the stop that they will be using for the following school year using a school designed form. Routes are then adjusted based on numbers and a final bus stop listing is presented to parents before the next school year begins.

Parents who have concerns about the bus stop should contact the school directly and may not move or create stops, nor pressure drivers or the bus company to move stops. Once the school year begins routes and stops will only be adjusted at the discretion of the administration for the following reasons:

- Safety and traffic concerns regarding the location of a stop
- Stops that are not being utilized by families
- Elimination of a stop by the parties who own the property on which the stop is located.
- Other qualifying circumstances as determined by the school and Kottke's.

**DaVinci office staff will enter bus stop selections into the Silent Dismissal system over the summer, but it is the parent's responsibility to make sure that it is accurate for the first week of school.**

### **Changes to Bus Stops or Routes**

Families wishing to make official changes to the bus registration after the school year has begun (i.e. choosing a different stop, change of address, etc.) should contact the school directly. Students are not allowed to ride on a bus to which they are not assigned. Alternative arrangements should be made for after school events that involve children going home with friends. In order to limit exposure to multiple cohorts students are only allowed to choose 1 bus for the school year. We recognize that this may cause a hardship for some families but ask for your flexibility during this time.

## **Bus Stop Guidelines**

### **When to Arrive at Your Stop**

Parents/students should arrive 10 minutes early to their stop.

### **Late Buses**

Please factor an additional 10-20 minutes into bus times during the first 3 weeks of school. It is normal and expected for buses to occasionally run late for the first few weeks as drivers learn their routes and students, families, and the school settle into a routine. Families are advised to arrive at their stops at the normally scheduled time and asked to wait the additional 15-20 minutes if needed. Arriving late may cause you to miss the bus if it is on schedule.

If a bus is running extremely late, DaVinci Academy will alert parents via email, text, or phone call through our automated system as soon as possible. Parents should make sure their contact information and preferences are current using the Infinite Campus Parent Portal in order to receive these important messages. That link can be found on our website at [www.davincicharterschool.org](http://www.davincicharterschool.org).

DaVinci Academy's main office opens at 7:30 AM and some bus routes begin earlier. If parents are concerned that their bus is running late, or that they missed their bus before the main office is open, they may call Kottke's dispatch office directly at 763-755-3100 Option 1.

## **Morning Bus**

## **Missing the Morning Bus**

Buses cannot wait for students who are late to the bus stop as it will slow down the rest of the route. If students miss their morning bus, their parents are responsible for transporting them to school. The bus will not loop back to pick up students who missed the bus. Students arriving late to school because they missed the bus will be recorded as having an unexcused tardy.

## **If the Bus is Late to School**

If students are late to school in the morning because the bus was late, they will not be marked late in Infinite Campus. This includes when their parents have to drive them to school because the bus was running abnormally behind schedule.

## **Bus Dismissal**

### **Afternoon Instructions**

Because of the complexity of managing transportation schedules for over 900 students, we use the Silent Dismissal program which allows parents to change transportation plans as necessary and ensures that the information gets to the school and the teachers in time for dismissal. Changes to a child's dismissal plans should be made by 1:30 each day and it is critical that parents keep their Silent Dismissal settings current. Students will be dismissed using the instructions given by Silent Dismissal, so if the setting is inaccurate the student will not get to where they are supposed to be going.

Neither the front office nor the teachers will be making adjustments to dismissal plans over the phone or email, as it is the parent's responsibility to keep Silent Dismissal settings current. You can always call the office for help in how to manage that program at 763-754-6577.

### **Afternoon Bus Departure**

Students will be dismissed from classrooms a couple of buses at a time in order to limit the number of students in the halls at one time. This may cause buses to leave later than the scheduled 3:15 departure time. If buses leave extremely late, those families will be notified of the delay.

### **Missing the Afternoon Bus**

Tracking down missing students is the most common reason for delays in bus departure. In order to keep the buses on schedule we are not able to wait for missing students. This makes the bus late and negatively effects every other family on the route. The following policies shall be in effect regarding missing/late students.

**Kindergarten** – Older students will escort kindergarten bus riders to their buses according to the daily Silent Dismissal settings chosen by their parents. For safety, kindergarten students will not be allowed on the bus if they are not on the electronic Silent Dismissal bus roster.

**Lower School (1-5)** – The school will attempt to track down missing lower school bussers until 3:15 p.m. if they are on the electronic Silent Dismissal bus roster as set by parents. For safety, lower school students will not be allowed to get on the bus if they are not on the electronic Silent Dismissal bus roster.

**Older Students (6-8)** Middle School students are expected to know their end of day transportation plans and travel to the east door or bus accordingly when the end of day bell rings. Parents should keep Silent Dismissal accurate so that it can be referenced if a student does not remember their dismissal plans. Because students should not be using their phones during the school day, if a last minute change to dismissal plans needs to occur parents can call the office by 1:30 and a note will be sent to the child’s last hour teacher with the instructions.

**Meeting the Bus at Drop Off** – Parents need to be at the bus door not in cars

For the safety of our students, parents meeting their children at the bus stop should gather at the door to the bus so that the bus driver can make a visual connection. In the event of a substitute driver this practice is especially important to ensure that all students have an adult there to greet them. Bus drivers will not be expected to recognize parent cars, so a face to face hand off at the bus stop is important. For safety reasons no child will be left at a bus stop if a parent/caregiver is not there; nor is a child allowed to walk home from the stop unsupervised without permission. If you would like to give your child special permission to walk home from their stop alone, please check the appropriate box on Silent Dismissal.

### **Missing Your Child’s Bus**

If parents miss their child’s afternoon bus and have not signed the release that allows students to remain at the stop to wait, the student will continue riding the bus through the end of the route while the bus company or the school contacts the parents. Parents then have the option of either catching the bus at a later stop along the route, or picking up their child at the school. Any student remaining on the bus at the end of the route will be brought back to the school to wait for pick-up. All students must be picked up immediately upon school drop or they will be placed into the DaVinci Den after school program and parents will be charged a \$20.00 drop in fee. Parents may contact the Kottke’s dispatch office directly if they missed their child’s stop and wish to coordinate meeting the bus at the next stop. 763-755-3100 opt. 1. Calling the school’s main office is also appropriate (763-754-6577).

\*\*Parents who routinely miss their child’s afternoon drop-off may lose busing privileges for the remainder of the school year.

## **Bus Safety**

Students who have the opportunity to ride DaVinci Academy school buses must display behavior that is responsible and safe. The bus driver is responsible for the safety and discipline of the students on the bus and must be obeyed and treated with respect in order to guarantee the safety of everyone on the bus.

DaVinci students will receive school bus safety training twice during the school year. The school bus safety training will include at least the following:

- Transportation by school bus is a privilege and not a right;
- School policies for student conduct while on the school bus;
- Appropriate conduct while on the school bus;
- The danger zones surrounding a school bus;
- Procedures for safely boarding and leaving a school bus;
- Procedures for safe road crossing;
- School bus evacuation procedures.

### **Conduct on School Buses**

Riding the school bus is a privilege, not a right. The school's general student behavior rules are in effect for all students on school buses. Consequences for school bus/bus stop misconduct will be imposed by the school under adopted administrative discipline procedures. Consequences are progressive and may include suspension of bus privileges. It is the school bus driver's responsibility to report unacceptable behavior to school administration.

### **Rules at the Bus Stop**

- Get to your bus stop five to ten minutes before your scheduled pick up time. The school bus driver will not wait for late students.
- Respect the property of others while waiting at your bus stop.
- Keep your hands, arms, legs and belongings to yourself.
- Use appropriate language.
- Stay away from the street, road or highway when waiting for the bus.
- Wait until the bus stops before approaching the bus.
- After getting off the bus, move away from the bus.
- If you must cross the street, always cross in front of the bus where the driver can see you. Wait for the driver to signal to you before crossing the street.
- No fighting, harassment, bullying, intimidation or horseplay.
- No use of alcohol, tobacco or drugs.

### **Rules on the Bus**

- Immediately follow the directions of the driver.
- Sit in your seat facing forward.
- Talk quietly and use appropriate language.

- Keep all parts of your body inside the bus.
- Keep your hands, arms, legs and belongings to yourself.
- No fighting, harassment, bullying, intimidation or horseplay.
- Do not throw any objects.
- No eating, drinking, or use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.
- **Students are not allowed to take pictures or videos while riding the bus or waiting at the bus stop.**
- Do not bring weapons or dangerous objects on the school bus.
- Do not damage the school bus.

### **Consequences**

Consequences for school bus/bus stop misconduct will apply to all regular routes and field trips. Depending on the nature of the offense, consequences such as suspension or expulsion from the bus or from school may result from school bus/bus stop misconduct.

### **Vandalism/Bus Damage**

Students damaging school buses will be responsible for the damages. Failure to pay such damages (or make arrangements to pay) within two weeks may result in the loss of bus privileges until damages are paid.

\*Refer to policy 709 Student Transportation Safety Policy for more information.