



Welcome to the Odyssey Charter School Transportation Department

Office Hours are 6:45 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

All school bus transportation concerns should be directed to the Transportation Department at 302-518-8000 options 6, 7. You can also e-mail us at transportation@odyssey.k12.de.us

Odyssey Charter School Transportation receives many phone calls throughout the day so, if we are unable to answer, please leave a voicemail. Your call will be returned at our earliest convenience. We are especially busy during our dismissal times which are 1:30PM-2:45PM and 3:15PM-4:30PM.

General Information

Can I reach someone in the Transportation Department before 6:45 a.m.?

No, our dispatch office opens at 6:45 a.m. Before that, the dispatcher is relaying specific calls to drivers, reviewing calendars and making sure that routes are on time. Calls will not be answered before 6:45 a.m.

Who rides our buses?

We provide transportation for over 2,500 students attending 5 schools on Odyssey Charter School's Campus in Barley Mill Plaza.

29 buses make up our OCS fleet and all students are eligible for transportation. A seat on each bus is first come, first served.

Who is eligible for transportation?

All OCS students are eligible to ride the bus if there is space available. However, our dispatch office must be contacted at least 72 hours in advance to check capacity, make changes to the system, and notify the driver.

Can the OCS bus pick up or drop off where I see other district buses?

Odyssey Charter School is, and always has been a hub stop school. This is for many reasons including convenience for all families, fuel efficiency, and less time for students to be on the bus, minimizing behavior challenges. You may choose the stop your family utilizes from our route sheets at [THIS](#) link. Please keep in mind, you must request a bus or stop change at least 72 hours in advance or your request may not be accommodated.

Do all students need to have a parent or guardian present at the bus stop?

No, students in grades 6 -12 do not have to be met by a parent or guardian.

However, in the afternoon, all K-5 students must be met at the bus door by a parent or guardian. If no one is at the stop to meet the child, they will be returned to the school and placed in the aftercare program.

Students dropped off in aftercare will receive a drop-in fee of \$25 per occurrence.

In the morning, when should my child arrive at the stop, and what if they miss the bus?

Students should be at the bus stop at least ten (10) minutes before the listed stop time. If your child misses the bus, the child must be driven to school and must be dropped off in the car line. Students will be marked late if arriving after the scheduled drop-off time. Per the State of Delaware School Bus regulations, the driver shall maintain a schedule in the bus and shall at all times adhere to it. Drivers shall not be required to wait for pupils unless they can be seen making an effort to reach the bus stop.

How can I change my child's bus stop or switch them to a different mode of transportation?

Any changes to a student's transportation must be made in writing to transportation@odyssey.k12.de.us at least 72 hours prior to the change taking place. All requests are subject to availability. If a request is made with less than 72 hours' notice, the parent or guardian must pick up their child in the carline or sign their child out for an early dismissal.

Bus Routes & Schedules

Why is my child's bus late?

There are many factors that could cause lateness such as weather, traffic, maintenance difficulties, and unforeseen incidents. You may check the "Where's the Bus?" app to view the real-time vehicle location.

Please know that we are doing everything possible to have all buses running on schedule every day. If your bus does not arrive as scheduled, please allow ten minutes before calling the transportation office or the school. Once we know a bus will be late, we will send out a communication to all families who ride that bus.

Why can't you call when you know the bus will be late?

There could be as many as 50-70 students on each bus. That is at least 50-70 phone calls in a short time frame to parents who are quite possibly at the bus stop with their children. Please know that there is a bus on the way and that we will do everything humanly possible to transport your child to and from school in a safe and timely manner every day. If your scheduled bus is more than ten minutes late, please allow for the time that is required for the route to be driven as a second load.

Where's The Bus Parent App

For the most updated information on your child's bus location, please download the "Where's The Bus?" app from the Google Play store or Apple App store.

Why can't we provide transportation to different pick-up or delivery locations on different buses on different days?

According to Delaware State law, each student eligible for transportation is permitted one seat on a bus. Providing transportation to and from different locations on different days would require the assignment of multiple seats for those students. We will make every effort to accommodate your request, however, your request may not be fulfilled.

Why can't my child get off wherever they want in the afternoon? The Student Code of Conduct states that students must ride their assigned bus to and from their assigned stop. Switching buses for any reason is strictly prohibited.

How are bus hub stops determined?

State regulation requires that we provide safe, efficient bus routes to all eligible students in our district. Our district is the entire state of Delaware, unlike a true feeder pattern district. Just a few of the things we consider when creating or adjusting bus stops are: - Can the bus and its warning lights be seen by other motorists at 500 feet on open roadways or 200 feet on urban streets (four seconds at typical optimal speeds)? - Are the students and other motorists visible to the bus driver when approaching the stop? - How do light conditions affect the visibility approaching the student stop? (sun rising and setting, background lighting – Christmas season, etc.)

- Hills and curves reduce the visibility for drivers approaching a stop or a stopped school bus. Whenever possible, we avoid designating a bus stop near a hillcrest or curve in the roadway.
- Do surrounding buildings or foliage affect what the driver can see when approaching the stop?
- Are there potential hazards from side streets or parking lots?
- Is there an area for students to safely wait for the bus?

The bus drives right by my house. Why can't I have a house stop? Bus stops are established at easily identified locations accessible to students throughout a geographic area. Most of OCS's hub stops were vetted 10 or more years ago. These stops ensure student safety, and bus safety, and provide equitable transportation to all OCS students. Every time a school bus stops to pick up and/or drop off students, rider time on the route is increased for the deceleration, stop sequence, loading, seating, safety checks, and acceleration back into traffic. Repeating this process multiple times on a route reduces efficiency and safety.

Are bus stops reviewed periodically by transportation?

Yes, we have approximately 185 stops located within New Castle County. Transportation Department leaders regularly drive these routes to stay current on traffic and environmental changes that may occur. Bus drivers will also report concerns they have as well, and those concerns will be looked into. During a typical year, we will review on our initiative approximately a third of these stops. We will formally review another 50 per year due to concerns expressed about stop safety by residents.

Capacity

How many students are allowed on a bus?

Passenger Seating Guidelines			
Bus Seating Capacity K-5 6-8 9-12			
72	72	55	48

On our 6-12 routes students in grades 6-8 can and will sit 3 to a seat. 9-12 graders will only sit two to a seat.

Why are there only 30 students riding some buses and my child's bus is crowded?

Decisions about each bus route are made by careful planning based on information from school registration, previous similar routes, and Department of Transportation data. Most routes are fixed during the summer months and changes are made after the first four weeks of school. The more current the information we are given, the better decisions about specific routes can be made.

Distance from school, number of buses and drivers, and grouping of students and hub stops are factors considered also. Sometimes it is just not possible to have the exact number of students on every run.

State and national guidelines allow for up to 20% over-capacity seating.

Student Behavior on School Buses

Does the school district have a policy regarding behavior on the school bus?

Acceptable behavior on a school bus is addressed in the Student Code of Conduct. The bus is an extension of the school day. The Student Code of Conduct remains in effect any time a student is on the school bus. Children should be instructed in the following rules of behavior:

BUS SAFETY RULES / CONDUCT OF STUDENTS

The following rules can be enforced only with the cooperation of every person concerned with transportation. Following the Bus Safety Rules and Regulations will ensure safety, prompt arrivals and departures of buses, and positive attitudes on the part of students. Violations of these rules may result in the suspension of bus privileges.

- a. The driver is in full charge of the bus and pupils and has the authority of a classroom teacher. Pupils must obey the driver promptly and be courteous to him/her and to fellow pupils.
- b. The Odyssey Charter School Code of Conduct applies on the bus and will be enforced.
- c. Pupils must be on time; the bus must run on schedule and cannot wait for those who are tardy.
- d. Before boarding the bus, pupils must keep a safe distance from it while it is in motion.
- e. Pupils must enter the bus without crowding or disturbing others and occupy their seats immediately.

- f. Pupils must enter the bus without crowding or disturbing others and occupy their seats immediately.
- g. Pupils must keep out of the driver's seat and remember that unnecessary conversation with the driver is prohibited while the bus is in motion.
- h. Pupils must not call out to passers-by. They should not open the bus windows without permission from the driver or extend head or arms out of the window.
- i. Pupils shall not leave the bus without the driver's consent, except on arrival at their regular bus stop or at school.
- j. Pupils should help to keep the bus clean, sanitary, and orderly. They must not damage or abuse the equipment.
- k. Pupils must not throw articles of any kind out of or around the bus.
- l. Pupils are not to eat or drink while on the bus.

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Why did you suspend my child from riding the bus?

Behavioral expectations on the school bus are much like those in the classroom. Then, factor in the mobility of that "classroom" and traffic, added noise, and the size of the "classroom" and you have a potential catastrophe if there are not clear expectations and enforcement. The behavioral expectations on the bus revolve around the individual rights of every person on the bus, including the driver, and the collective rights of students and drivers as it pertains to SAFETY. Anything that jeopardizes the safety of individuals on the bus is viewed as serious.

Most drivers have bus rules or expectations posted on the bus. When there is an infraction, a referral is turned into the school administrator, who is responsible for contacting the student and parent to solve the lack of compliance with bus expectations. The school administrator is solely responsible for consequences based on the incident as described by the driver and student. Most buses have video cameras, which are used to verify incidents. Our goal is never to deny any student transportation to and from school, but we must maintain safety for all students.

Denial of bus privileges is the temporary removal of the opportunity to ride the school bus. Such denials are for a period not to exceed five school days. The principal may, however, deny bus privileges for a period to exceed five (5) days for repeated misbehavior. Denials for longer than five (5) days must have the approval of the Superintendent or his designee.

Why does my child have a seat assignment?

Bus drivers must assign seats to each child riding the bus by Delaware regulations. This

is usually done in cooperation with the administrators of the school the bus serves. Assigned seating helps the driver learn the names of their riders, prevents conflicts on the bus, assures that each student will be seated, and reduces confusion during loading/unloading. Drivers may change the designated seats at any time, even temporarily or during the middle of a ride, to correct or prevent disruptions on the bus. This is rider management and is not a 'punishment'. If your child wants to be assigned to a specific location on the bus or to sit with some other rider, they can ask the bus driver to change their assigned seat. The bus driver will determine whether the request can be approved.

The closest bus stop to my house is too far. Why can't I have a closer stop?

All bus stops are designed to be within 5 miles of most OCS families. Some families may have to drive a little further to get to a hub stop. Remember, we are one of the few schools in DE that transports students from all 3 counties, every day, besides your typical Vo-Tech High School. Vo-Tech routes can run over 2 hours and sometimes 2 and a half. Our goal is always to have the safest, most efficient route possible.

Thank you for your cooperation and helping to keep your students safe!