

Town of Los Gatos School Bus Pilot Service – FAQ

December 14, 2018

BUS OPERATIONS AND SERVICE

Q: Who operates the buses?

Student Transportation of America (STA), Inc., has been chosen to be our school bus transportation provider. STA is North America's safest independent provider of school bus transportation services, with an industry-leading safety rating and the youngest fleet in the business. They operate more than 13,500 vehicles and are committed to providing their customers with the highest level of safe and reliable student transportation, management, logistics and technology solutions possible. STA's services are delivered by drivers, dispatchers, mechanics, managers, technology professionals and others who are committed to STA's longstanding culture of safety and the well-being of students in their care.

Q: Why do you want passengers at the stop 5 minutes early?

State law requires drivers to stop traffic and escort children to the bus if they are not already standing at the stop. This delays our schedules and annoys the neighbors. We also don't want your kids to miss the bus by cutting it too close in the morning. Our drivers try hard to stick to the published schedule, but sometimes things happen, and they just can't be that precise.

Q: What if my child misses the bus?

All passengers are advised to arrive 5 minutes earlier at the bus stop. The bus drivers will not wait for passengers after the scheduled time. Every family should have a backup plan where kids have a way to contact a parent or neighbor that can get them to school.

Q. The Mountains route doesn't match the bell schedule of Lexington Elementary School. Can my child ride the bus to school?

Yes, any student can ride the bus with the proper pass. At the Lexington School Bus Stop, the Los Gatos Union School District requires Elementary School students to attend the onsite childcare (Clubhouse), if they are on campus outside of school bell time.

BUS PASSES AND PRICE

Q: What is the sign up process and how do I buy a pass?

To sign up for the program, please complete and submit our sign up form located on our web page at <https://www.losgatosca.gov/schoolbus>. Once you submit the form you will be directed to the payment page. There are a few ways you can make the payment.

Q: How much does it cost?

The cost for a bus pass is \$180 per passenger for the first semester, January – June of 2019. It will cover both the morning and afternoon trips to and from school on all school days. Starting in the fall of 2019, the annual passes will be \$350 each.

Q: Are there discounts for multi-child families?

No. There are no discounts for multi-child families.

Q: Do passengers need to show a pass to board the bus?

Yes. Each passenger will receive a bus pass and they must carry this pass whenever they ride the bus, even if the driver already knows them. No one can ride the bus without a pass, even if the bus is not completely full.

Q: Do you sell single/weekly passes or morning/afternoon-only passes?

A key to the financial success of a program is predictability in filling a bus, which will result in congestion relief and fare revenue. To make the pilot successful, we are only offering one type of pass. At its sole discretion, the Town may make other types of passes available in the future if there is space available. However, that product does not exist currently.

Q: What if my child loses the bus pass?

If your child has lost his/her pass, you can request a replacement pass through our website. There will be a \$10 processing fee. Once purchased, the school bus administrative assistant will mail the new bus pass. Your receipt can be used as a temporary bus pass until you receive the new bus pass in the mail.

Q: Can I get a refund if things change later?

When you purchase a bus pass we must reserve a seat on the bus for you. Therefore, the Town does not issue refunds, with the only exception that your child moves away from the School District and no bus service is available to you. In all other situations, including when the student's bus pass has been revoked due to not following the rules, no refunds will be issued.

If your child does move away from the School District and no bus service is available to you, then your refund will be pro-rated based on the number of service days left in the school year from the day the bus pass is returned to the Town and proof of change of address is provided. Refunds for online credit card purchases will be refunded by credit card. Payments made by cash or check will be refunded by check. There will be a \$20 processing fee for all refunds.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Q: Where do the buses go? What is the bus schedule? Where are the bus stops?

You can find all the service information on the Town's website. The information is updated regularly as needed. <http://www.losgatosca.gov/schoolbus>.

Q: How do I find out when the bus will arrive? What if the bus is late?

STA uses SafeStop, a mobile app that allows parents, students and schools to securely pinpoint the location of a vehicle on its route to and from school. The app updates in real time with stop/arrival information and includes notifications of when a student has boarded or exited the bus.

The SafeStop app is accessible from any device connected to the Internet - smartphones, tablets and desktop computers. It can be downloaded from the Apple App Store and Google Play. To register for SafeStop visit <https://www.safestopapp.com/>.

Customers may call STA customer service at 408-998-8275.

Q: Who should I talk to about the bus route design and schedule?

Please contact STA customer service at 408-998-8275 or email STA's Operation Manager, Linda Billing at lbilling@ridesta.com. STA and Town staff will work together to improve the service.

Q: What happens if my child leaves an item on the bus?

Bus drivers keep items on the bus for a few days so that the student can pick up the item the next time they ride the bus. Please remind your student to ask the bus driver if they have found any items matching the description of the student's lost item. Additionally, customers can call the STA customer service at 408-998-8275 to inquire about lost items.

Q: Who do I talk to if I have complaints or compliments about the service?

Customers may call STA customer service at 408-998-8275. Alternatively, you may contact the Town of Los Gatos Parks and Public Works Department at 408-399-5772 or via email schoolbus@losgatosca.gov.

SAFETY:

Q: Do the buses have seat belts? Do all riders have to wear their seat belts?

Yes. All our buses are equipped with lap and shoulder seat belts. All riders must wear a seat belt at all times without exception.

Q. Do children of various age groups ride the same bus?

Students of various grades can and may be mixed on school buses. The Town of Los Gatos and STA will take every step necessary to ensure that students are properly seated and supervised to maximize behavior management. The first five rows are reserved for Elementary School students.

Q: What if my child has to cross the street?

Elementary and Middle School students who have to cross the street from the bus stop to the school or home will be escorted by the bus driver or crossing guard. All students will need to follow the driver's direction regarding exiting and entering the bus. After getting off the bus, cross the street *in front* of the bus, never behind.

Q: Do cars have to stop when a bus stops?

Yes! When a bus stops and its red lights and stop arm are activated, cars in both directions must stop. Where there is a divided roadway with a median, only cars moving the same direction as the bus must stop. There are significant fines for drivers who fail to yield to a school bus.

Q: What happens if there is an emergency?

In the event of an emergency or similar serious incident, the Town and the STA will dedicate themselves to securing the safety of students as a first priority and will respond to the incident accordingly. Communication to customers will be sent as soon as possible once all necessary safety and response measures have been taken and information is available to share.

DISCIPLINE

Q: How is discipline carried out on the bus?

Drivers are responsible for maintaining proper student supervision and monitoring of all students on board.

Q: What steps are taken to maintain the discipline of school bus?

A verbal warning shall be issued first to students violating behavior guidelines. After a verbal warning, an Incident Report form shall be submitted to the Town. Town staff will forward Incident Report to the student's parents. After the second verbal warning, STA and Town staff will determine the progressive discipline actions and provide the information to the parents in writing.

Q: Can my child's bus pass be taken away?

Yes. If a child does not respond to the progressive discipline assigned, a child's pass may be suspended or revoked without refund. In this case, the Town will notify the parents in writing and request the bus pass be returned to the Town. The passenger will not be allowed on the bus if his/her pass is suspended or revoked.

Q: Are parents financially responsible for vandalism?

Yes. Parents are financially responsible for vandalism caused by their child(ren).