

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS & TRANSPORTATION
John Deatruck, P.E., AICP, LEED BD+C
Director



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August 14, 2020

Dear SMCNPS Families,

The Department of Public Works & Transportation is finalizing a transportation plan, to be called the *Back to School Plan*, for non-public school bus contractors and drivers, so as to be transparent regarding expectations of school bus operations this semester and potentially for the remainder of the school year. The *Back to School Plan* will be distributed to schools for dissemination so that you can become familiar with what to expect if your child rides a bus. In the meantime, the 2020 / 2021 Parent / Student Handbook has been updated to include information for parents, students, and bus drivers as it relates to COVID-19. The handbook is available [here](#) and on the County's website located at: <https://www.stmarysmd.com/dpw/nonpublicschools.asp>. Hard copies of the handbook will also be provided directly to your child's school for distribution to students/parents.

While COVID-19 has had significant impacts on school operations, which include school bus transportation, the County, schools, contractors and bus drivers have worked diligently to come up with a plan to transport students as safely and efficiently as possible. The CDC guidelines as well as the St. Mary's County Health Department and dedicated County Government Nurse were all consulted in the development of the *Back to School Plan*, and the county, schools, bus contractors and drivers will do everything possible to minimize risk, including to ensure that each student (or family) that boards a bus will sit in a clean seat. It is our goal to transport your children as safely as possible, however it is also important to understand that there will always be risk when transporting groups of students together on buses, as there will be some CDC and MSDE guidelines that may not be possible to observe during transport, such as maintaining a 6 ft distance.

We are hopeful that transportation operations will continue as we all work together to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 during transport. Please know that subsequent to the information provided above, it is the County's and Health Department's recommendation that parent's transport their students directly to school whenever possible, as that is the safest means to get your child(ren) to and from school.

We thank you for the opportunity to serve your family and welcome any questions or feedback that you may have. Please feel free to contact the Transportation Department via email at becky.george@stmarysmd.com or by phone at 301-475-4200 ext. 1124.

Sincerely,


John Deatruck
Director of DPW&T