



Guide to Busing at Arts & Letters

Important Contact Information

Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT)- **718.392.8855**

A&L Transportation Coordinator- Tanya Williams twilliams@artsandlettersbklyn.org, **718.222.1605 (Ext. 3042)**

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is OPT?

OPT stands for Office of Pupil Transportation, which is the people within the NYC Department of Education that handles the transportation of students for the entire 5 boroughs. On a daily basis, they are responsible for coordinating transportation of thousands of students to and from school each day.

When should I contact A&L vs. when should I contact OPT?

Communication is an important piece of ensuring that student transportation can occur effectively and efficiently, though there are certain lines of communication for different types of inquiries and concerns. We've created the table below to help you direct your line of inquiry or concern to the party that can be of greatest assistance.

<p>A&L Primary Contact Ms. Williams- twilliams@artsandlettersbklyn.org 718.222.1605 Ext. 3042 Secondary Contact (cc on emails) Ms. Micoli- pmicoli@artsandlettersbklyn.org 718.222.1605 Ext. 3043</p>	<p>OPT 718.392.8855 Reminder: Have your student's OSIS number and bus route number ready for the call.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To sign up for bus service or find out if you qualify for bus service or metrocard services • To inquire about bus routes, bus stops, or bus times • To make changes to the regular transportation plan** • With general inquiries about busing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the bus has not shown up in the AM at the proper time • To make a complaint about a bus driver • If your student's PM bus has not arrived at the proper time

What if I need to make a change to my busing schedule on that day?

Changes to a child's plan for PM dismissal must be received by 12pm. Please email Ms. Williams and Ms. Micoli with any last minute changes. You should receive confirmation of receipt by 2pm. If, for some reason, you do not hear back, please call the main office at 718.222.1605 to ensure receipt.

What if I have an emergency and need to make a very last minute change to the plans?

We understand that things happen that might affect your child's busing plan. In the case of an emergency, please call the main office (718.222.1605) and leave a message with a staff member for Ms. Williams and/or Ms. Micoli. We also ask that you have the contact information for another family at your bus stop, so that you might be able to coordinate for pick up in the case of emergency.

How will the school communicate with me about busing?

We will be utilizing 2 main structures for communication about busing this year- group email lists through google, and a group communication app (which will allow Ms. Williams and/or I to send a bus group a message about a last minute change that will be received as a text message without using our personal phone numbers). To help us set this up, we have created a google form to organize contact information for each bus family. Please follow this link to complete the form ASAP. [Busing Student Contact Information Link](#)

When will busing start for the year?

Busing will commence on the first day of school, though it always takes a few weeks to iron out all the details of routes and systems, due to the sheer magnitude of students utilizing transportation in the DOE. We ask that families remain patient with OPT and A&L in these first 2 weeks of school, and recommend that kindergartners (who do not have an older sibling) do not begin bus services until these routes and stops are solidified. We've found that any lags or shifts can be confusing to a Kindergartner that is just beginning to understand what it means to "go to school".

How can I communicate with my bus driver?

Most of our regular bus drivers allow parents to have their cell numbers as a means to communicate about individual students. However, during their route, their focus will be first and foremost on the safe transport of students.

How does dismissal work for bus students?

At 3:10, Ms. Williams will begin picking up bus students from each lower grade classroom, including the specials classrooms. She gathers these students in the hallway by the Willoughby stairs on the 3rd floor, and then takes them downstairs to the hallway by the gym. Students will "buddy up" with another student on their bus route, and then she escorts them out to meet the bus. She will supervise the loading process of one bus at a time, checking to see that all students are on board. If there is any question, Ms. Micoli is stationed at late pickup outside of room 310, where she can communicate via radio with Ms. Williams and her cell phone with parents.

Is there busing on half days?

On official DOE half-days, there is busing available for students. A&L does have several of its own half days (for Roundtables or Student Led Conferences), and **there is no busing on those days**. We will send email reminders out to families 2 weeks prior to each half day to help families keep track of busing schedules, and will also include a note on monthly calendars.

Will the school inform me if a PM bus is running late or if there is a substitute driver?

If there is a substitute driver or if the PM bus is running late, we will send out a message to all the families that ride that bus as soon as we are aware of the change. Families should be aware that in the morning, we are not always aware when buses are running late. If an AM bus has not arrived at the stop on time, you should call OPT to report it. It would also be helpful to have a parent call the school to let us know that there is a bus issue, so we can communicate to teachers and ensure the child is not marked late or absent.

How old does my child need to be to ride the school bus?

Student can ride the bus starting in Kindergarten, but again we recommend that families with kindergartners do not begin riding the bus until the end of September.

What happens if my child does not ride the bus every day? How will my student's teacher know they ride the bus?

We work really hard to accommodate the different schedules that a student might have with afterschool programming. This year, we are asking families to submit a form that lists the student's dismissal plan for each semester, which will help the classroom teachers and our transportation team keep track of when students are riding the bus and when they are not.

Can my child ride the bus only 1 way (either to school or from school)?

Yes. Some families just take advantage of AM or PM bus service, while others take the bus both ways. It's really helpful if you communicate this to us on our Dismissal Info Sheet that will go home with blue cards this year.

Are parents allowed to ride with their child on the bus?

Parents are not allowed to ride with their child on the bus, according to DOE regulations.

Do I need to call the bus company if my child is home sick?

No. Buses will follow their daily route and pick up the students that are present at the stop.

What is the name of the bus company?

Our school's bus routes are mostly handled by Jofaz transportation, though your communication with the bus company should be directed through OPT (see contact information above).

Can I have someone else pick up my child from the bus stop?

Yes, but it's important that you communicate the change to the bus driver directly and have the person bring appropriate ID.

What are some ways that OPT and A&L maintains safety on the bus, and the bus process?

There are seat belts on each bus so students can buckle up. We also administer 3 bus safety drills a year, as required by the DOE. In special cases, students might have an assigned seat that is close to the bus driver to ensure the order of the bus. We are also using bus tags on students' bags to help ensure with safety during the dismissal/bus process.