



**Academic
Opportunity
Programs**



TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Summer 2025

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INTRODUCTION

The transportation safety plan for the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) Pre-College Programs, housed within the Office of Academic Opportunity Programs, is devised to ensure the safe and efficient transportation of participating students to and from the UMBC campus. All aspects of this transportation plan are in accordance with the applicable MD State Regulations outlined in *COMAR 13A.06.07*. These programs aim to provide educational enrichment and support for middle and high school students, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in higher education. This transportation plan delineates the logistics, safety measures, and operational guidelines for transporting students via buses provided by an external vendor. Parents/guardians are required to review the contents of this guide with their students.

PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF

Entering the Bus

- The driver will make sure students enter at the safest location possible.
- The driver will not pull off or move the bus until all students are safely on board and seated.
- The driver will utilize the safety flashing lights during the boarding of students.
- At the bus stop, students will wait in an orderly manner, away from traffic, until the bus stops and the driver opens the door.
- Students will stand at least five (5) feet back from the stopping position of the bus.
- Students will wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before moving forward to board.

Exiting the Bus

- The driver will make sure students exit at the safest location possible to enter to the partnering site.
- The driver will not pull off or move the bus until the student is a safe distance away.
- The driver will utilize the safety flashing lights during the exiting of students.
- Students will wait for the bus to stop completely before getting out of their seat and moving forward to exit.
- Once off the bus, students will move away from the bus promptly.

Inclement Weather

The inclement weather policy is in effect whenever transporting students to or from campus may endanger their safety and well-being. In inclement weather, our first priority is the safety of the students. We will not release buses for pick-up or drop-off during severe weather storms. If a student is on campus during severe weather conditions, the Program staff will keep the student(s) on campus until the conditions are safe for transporting the student(s).

Communication to Parents

The Program staff will announce information about transportation operations as soon as possible to parents/guardians through the following:

- Send a text and an email blast to all students, parents or guardians who have updated contact information in Program's student information database and to all staff scheduled to work.
- Post updated information on the Program's social media accounts.

Decision Making Process

The decision to delay or cancel transportation services will be based on closure decisions made by UMBC and/or Baltimore County Public Schools and based on data gathered from many sources including the National Weather Service, Accuweather, and the news media. Weather conditions (current or predicted) or continuing impact from severe weather or other events

such as widespread power outages, may cause a cancellation of transportation services. The decision to cancel transportation is made to protect the safety and well-being of students and staff. The transportation service provider may also decide it is not safe to operate bus service.

Procedure

The data received relative to the cancellation of transportation services, or the closing of the campus will be collected by the Program Director. The Program Director will consult with the Program administrative staff who, collaboratively, will review the data and then make a recommendation to the Program Director. The Program Director will make the final decision on the cancellation of transportation services or the cancelling of programming. Once the decision has been made, the Program Director will notify the AOP Director and the Program staff will initiate procedures to inform the appropriate stakeholders through multiple methods as listed above.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The safety of the students and staff are our priority. AOP has developed evacuation and accident procedures to create a safe environment in case of an incident. This evacuation plan will take into account all students needs and limitations.

Accident Procedures

In an event of a bus accident, the following procedures should be followed:

- Student's safety always comes first.
- Evacuate bus if that is the safest thing to do following the Evacuation Procedures outlined in this policy.
- Check to make sure each child is safe and has no injuries.
- Parents/guardians will be notified immediately by the Program staff.
- If a student must be taken to the hospital, a Program representative will notify the family and offer to join them at the hospital.

- Always take precautions and stop and make sure each student is safe no matter how minor the accident.
- Log every incident regardless of the level of damage or seriousness. (See *UMBC AOP Bus Accident Report*).

Evacuation Procedures

The following steps should be taken in the event of an evacuation:

- All students should listen to and follow the directions of the bus driver.
- Identify safe emergency exits and options based on conditions.
- Exit the bus through the appropriate exits.
- Help other students if and only if it does not jeopardize their own health and safety.
- Assess the environment for safe gathering places and proceed there.
- In the case of physical injury to any students, Emergency Medical Support should be contacted, and their instructions shall supersede what is specified in this policy.
- The bus driver and/or any program staff in attendance should count to make sure that all students are safe and accounted for.
- The Program Director and Program Staff should be notified as soon as is practical.

LOCAL SUPERVISOR OF TRANSPORTATION

In accordance with *COMAR 13A.06.07.04*, AOP has designated the Project Director to serve as the local supervisor of transportation to provide oversight and administration of the transportation plan.

TRANSPORTATION PROTOCOLS

The safety of the students will be paramount throughout the transportation process, encompassing regular sessions and field trips alike. Drivers are required to follow all traffic laws and safety rules on roadways and on the UMBC campus. Transportation must be provided

in passenger vehicles only. Students are prohibited from being transported in non-passenger vehicles.

Bus Conditions

The transportation provider should ensure the buses are clean and safe. Each vendor should ensure that the buses used meet the following conditions:

- Type I or Type II school vehicle as defined by *COMAR 13A.06.07.12*.
- Meet federal, COMAR, and motor vehicle administration requirements.
- Each bus undergoes a regular maintenance program that includes checks by the bus operator, safety inspections, and all state-required annual inspections.
- Buses will be equipped with seat belts for all passengers, and students will be instructed to wear them at all times.

Emergency Equipment for Buses

Buses are required to have the following equipment according to *COMAR 11.19.02.25*:

- Fire Extinguisher.
 - The vehicle shall be equipped with at least one 5-pound capacity pressurized, dry chemical fire extinguisher complete with hose.
 - The extinguisher shall be mounted in a bracket located below the window line in the driver's compartment and shall be readily accessible.
 - A pressure gauge shall be mounted on the extinguisher so as to be easily read without moving the extinguisher from its mounted position.
 - The fire extinguisher shall be of a type with a total rating of 2A 10 BC or greater. The operating mechanism shall be sealed with a type of seal which does not interfere with the use of the fire extinguisher.
- First Aid Kit. The bus shall carry a weatherproof first aid kit, removable and readily identifiable, mounted in the driver's compartment. The kit shall contain at least the contents suggested by the National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures.

- Reflectors and Flares.
 - Reflectors and flares shall be located in the driver's area.
 - The vehicle shall be equipped with three red triangular emergency reflectors in a suitable holder.
 - Vehicles shall be equipped with three 30-minute stand-up lean-to flares stored in a red canister.
- A locking device on the storage door for emergency equipment is prohibited.
- Body Fluid Clean-Up Kit. Each bus shall have a removable and moisture-proof body fluid clean-up kit. The kit shall be properly mounted in the driver's compartment, and identified as a body fluid clean-up kit.

The safety equipment may be stored in a non-locking compartment that is permanently labeled "Safety Equipment Inside".

Authorized Passengers

Authorized passengers are the only riders allowed on the bus. Authorized passengers include Program participants, Program staff, approved operators, and volunteers. Parents are not allowed to ride on the school bus unless they fall into one of the aforementioned categories.

The number of occupants on the bus cannot exceed the buses seating capacity.

Staff Transporting Students

Under no circumstances can Program staff transport students to their pick-up and drop-off points without permission from the Program Director AND written authorization from the parent/guardian. If a student misses the bus, the Program Director will be contacted to establish an alternate solution.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Behavior

The school bus is considered part of the Pre-College Programs. Therefore, students must follow their respective Program's Code of Conduct. Students receiving transportation services have the responsibility to follow all bus rules. To ensure safety, students are required to adhere to the following guidelines:

Once on board the bus, follow the established Bus Rules:

- Keep the aisle of the bus clear at all times, ensuring the rear emergency exit is accessible.
- Large objects that cannot be held on your lap or placed on the floor between your legs are not allowed.
- Follow directions promptly, the first time you are asked.
- Remain seated and facing forward throughout the ride.
- Keep hands, feet, arms, bags, and any other object inside the bus (not hanging out the window)
- Refrain from any form of eating, smoking, drinking, or using vulgar language.
- Absolutely no alcohol or drugs on the bus at any time.
- Minimize sound level of voice and electronic equipment.
- Stay in seats and do not stand or move around while bus is in motion.
- No use of profanity, insults, or threats (not even in a joking manner).

Parents/Guardians Responsibilities

Parents/guardians are important partners in working closely with the AOP staff to ensure the safety of students using transportation services. Parents/guardians have the responsibility to ensure that their children know, understand, and follow all bus rules AOP Programs expect that parents/guardians take responsibility for the following:

- Teach children that riding the school bus is a privilege that can be temporarily suspended or permanently revoked if their behavior jeopardizes the safety of the bus or other children. Emphasize the importance of obeying the rules.
- Ensure children leave home early enough to arrive at the bus stop five (5) minutes before the scheduled arrival time. Arriving too early or too late can lead to safety risks.
- Supervise your children from the time they board the bus in the morning and from the time the bus arrives in the afternoon.
- If the student will be walking to or from the bus stop, the Program Staff must be informed in writing.
- For walkers, familiarize yourself with the walking route your student will take and avoid dangerous shortcuts or areas.
- Encourage children to carry their belongings in a backpack.
- Dress children appropriately according to program specifications or guidelines.
- Stay informed about any closures or delays in the Pre-College Programs by keeping your communication channels open. This will enable you to stay updated on the latest information.
- Providing written notification of any special care the student needs on the bus.
- Contacting the Program Staff if there is a delay in meeting at the designated pick-up and/or drop off time.

Bus Driver/Vendor Responsibilities

AOP holds the driver and vendor to the highest standards while providing for the safety and wellbeing of AOP students. AOP has identified the following effective best practices for the driver and/or vendor. AOP requires the transportation provider (Vendor) to ensure each bus driver meets the following qualifications:

- Maintain a current commercial driver's license (CDL).
- Complete bus referral form and other reports as necessary (Attachment H).
- Attend additional training conducted by AOP.

The Driver should:

- Submit to drug test if/when AOP makes a request to the Vendor.
- Wear seat belt whenever driving.
- Refrain from using a cell phone while driving.
- Understand the emergency evaluation procedures and plan.
- Ensure bus is clean and maintained.
- Never leave children on bus unattended.
- Obey all traffic rules, signs, and procedures and all speed limits and will not drive aggressively.
- Ensure proper temperature (air and heat) are adjusted for the comfort of students.

The vendor will be expected to provide evidence that the drivers have undergone training on safe driving practices, emergency procedures, and interactions with students, ensuring their competence and preparedness. Emergency contact information for program staff (for academic year transportation) and parents/guardians (for field trips) will be readily available onboard each bus, facilitating prompt communication in case of emergencies.

BUS BEHAVIOR, DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES AND CONSEQUENCES

The Pre-College Programs prioritize the safety and support of all students and staff. Our main goal is to ensure the safe transportation of all bus riders to and from school. To achieve this, we require the cooperation of the entire community. Positive student behavior while entering, riding, and leaving the bus contributes to safe transportation by allowing drivers to focus on the road and other drivers. Students are expected to always behave responsibly and respectfully. If a student violates the rules, a *UMBC AOP Bus Behavior Referral Report* will be completed and a *UMBC AOP Bus Behavior Report* may be sent to the parent and included in the student file and may be subject further disciplinary action.

Engaging in behavior or activities that jeopardize the safe operation of the school bus or interfere with the well-being of other occupants is strictly prohibited. School bus drivers will promptly report any conduct that requires disciplinary action to the appropriate administrative staff.

Consequences for misbehavior depend on the severity and frequency of the behavior, and extenuating circumstances may be considered by the Pre-College Programs when determining disciplinary action. Riding the bus is a privilege, which may be temporarily revoked or permanently taken away if misconduct endangers the safe operation of the bus or the well-being of fellow students. Students' behavior on the bus can result in dismissal from their respective Pre-College Programs.

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

Staff

Any Program Staff that participate in transportation will review the Transportation Safety Plan during their onboarding process. The Plan will be included in the Staff Handbook and Staff members will be required to sign a statement acknowledging their receipt of and agreement to the terms and conditions of the Plan (*UMBC AOP Staff/Volunteer Transportation Plan Agreement*). The signed statement will be included in the staff member's employment file.

Vendors/Bus Driver

An authorized representative from the Vendor will review the Transportation Safety Plan and sign a statement acknowledging receipt and agreement as a part of the completion of the contract. All bus drivers who transport students will be required to review the Transportation Safety Plan prior to transporting students and sign a statement acknowledging their receipt of and agreement to the terms and conditions of the Plan (*UMBC AOP Vendor Transportation Plan Agreement*).

Volunteers

Any Program Staff that participate in transportation will be required to review the Transportation Safety Plan prior to transporting students and sign a statement acknowledging their receipt of and agreement to the terms and conditions of the Plan (*UMBC AOP Staff/Volunteer Transportation Plan Agreement*).

Students, Parents/Guardians

All students, parents/guardians will review the Transportation Safety Plan at orientation. The Plan will be included in the Student Handbook and students and parents/guardians will be required to sign a statement acknowledging receipt of and agreement to the terms and conditions of the Plan (*UMBC AOP Parent/Student Transportation Plan Agreement*). Students admitted to the program after orientation will review the Transportation Safety Plan as a part of their onboarding process and will be required to sign the *UMBC AOP Parent/Student Transportation Plan Agreement* acknowledging their receipt of and agreement to the terms and conditions of the Plan of the Plan. The signed agreement will be included in the student's file.