
MAGNET SCHOOL HANDBOOK FINAL EDITION



PREPARED BY THE VOLUNTARY INTERDISTRICT CHOICE CORPORATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation	1
VICC Staff	2
Counseling Staff	3
Transportation Staff	4
Other Things to Know	5
Transportation	6
Address Changes	8
Student Responsibilities	9
General Behavior/Safety Rules	10
Parent Responsibilities	11
Activity Transportation	12
Emergency Communication System	12
Student Safety	13
Smoking by Driver	13
Child Not Attending School	14
Inclement Weather Transportation	14
Trespass Policy	15
Video/Audio Camera Policy	15
Students Riding with Other Students	16
Rights of Parents	17
Safe Schools Act	18
Annual Notification Regarding Student Records	18
Magnet Continuity Patterns	19
Important Phone Numbers	22



VOLUNTARY INTERDISTRICT CHOICE CORPORATION

The VICC staff assist in the transfer and transportation requests of county students to the St. Louis Magnet Schools.

Five counselors are on the VICC staff to assist families with issues related to their school transfers.

The transportation staff works with transportation providers to coordinate safe and efficient transportation to and from school.

The VICC office is located at:

7425 Forsyth Blvd., Suite 110
St. Louis, MO 63105

Program Staff: 314.721.8422

FAX: 314.721.3693

Transportation

Staff: 314.721.8657

FAX: 314.721.4531

Transportation staff are available from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. during the regular school year and 6:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. during the summer.

Throughout the school year you will receive mail from VICC regarding your child(ren)'s participation in the magnet program. Most mailings are sent one-per-household rather than one-per-student to reduce printing and postage costs.

VICC Staff



Paul Northington,
CEO
314.721.8422, ext. 3013
pnorthington@choicecorp.org



Lori Merlo
Magnet School Liaison
314.721.8422, ext. 3012
lmerlo@choicecorp.org

The recruitment staff is available:

- to answer general questions about the St. Louis Magnet Schools
- to submit parent's request for magnet school transportation arrangements

You can learn more about VICC and the St. Louis Magnet Schools by visiting the following websites:

www.choicecorp.org (VICC)

www.slps.org (St. Louis Magnet Schools)

DISCLAIMER: All attempts have been made to insure the accuracy of information included on the St. Louis Public Schools; however, many changes were occurring at the time of the handbook deadline. Please consult your building principal for the most current information.

VICC Counselors

Generally, counselors are assigned according to the first letter of the student's last name.

<p>A-C</p>  <p>Vickie Williams, M.A. 314.721.8422, ext. 3011 vwilliams@choicecorp.org Part-Time</p>	<p>D-H</p>  <p>Laverne Mitchom, M.S. 314.721.8422, ext. 3020 lmitchom@choicecorp.org Part-Time</p>	<p>I-N</p>  <p>Jennifer Christy, M.Ed., L.P.C. 314.721.8422, ext. 3021 jchristy@choicecorp.org</p>
<p>O-R</p>  <p>Mildred Scott, M.S.W., LCSW 314.721.8422, ext. 3027 mscott@choicecorp.org Part-Time</p>	<p>Counselors are available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To respond to concerns and/or questions from parents, students, school staff or central office personnel regarding any issue that would interfere with the success of a child in the school setting, such as attendance, disciplinary issues, curriculum, achievement or other concerns. • To provide assistance for individual students in successfully working within the school district's policy and procedures. • To work with students and their schools to prevent out-of-school suspensions, and to help with a student's successful re-entry after a long-term suspension. 	
<p>S-Z</p>  <p>Mary Schafer Meehan, M.A., L.P.C. 314.721.8422, ext. 3016 mmeehan@choicecorp.org Part-Time</p>		

- To help parents understand their educational rights as parents and answer any questions they may have in this regard.
- To provide individual, short term counseling in the school setting.
- To meet with parents as needed on an individual or group basis.
- To help form positive connections between school and home.

VICC Transportation Staff



Tami Webb,

Operations Manager

314.721.8657, ext. 3031

twebb@choicecorp.org

The VICC transportation staff is available:

- To process magnet school transportation requests.
- To coordinate safe and efficient transportation to and from the magnet schools.

Routing Specialists

Routing Specialists establish bus routes, and maintain contact with the contractors serving the various school districts.

Susan Bien

Responsible for St. Louis Magnet Schools

314.721.8657, ext. 3034

sbien@choicecorp.org

OTHER THINGS TO KNOW

There is a **district-wide policy for both homework and discipline**. You should request written copies from your school if you do not receive them when school begins.

There is no district-wide **dress code** for the St. Louis Public Schools. Standards of dress are determined on a school-by-school basis. Specific guidelines for student dress are included in the school handbook which should be requested at the time enrollment is completed at the school. Some schools have required uniforms.

Generally, shorts can only be worn during certain months of the school year. Be aware that some schools set standards as to the acceptable length for shorts.

Also included in your child's **school handbook** are such issues as the school's homework policy; school permission slips and when they are signed and dated; the school's discipline policy, i.e., in-school suspensions, etc. Be sure to read and review this important information with your child.

This information is also available on the St. Louis Public School website at www.slps.org

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to and from school is provided by the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC) for all county students who have been accepted to a magnet school. In addition, “activity transportation” is available for middle and high school students who elect to stay after school for school-sponsored activities. It is important to note that the transportation department may include students enrolled in K-12 riding together when deemed necessary.

Generally, transportation cards are mailed two weeks prior to the start of school. They contain the student’s route number, pick-up/drop-off times, location and transporter.

During the school year, new cards will be mailed every time a change is made to the bus/cab route. This could occur multiple times as students are added to or dropped from your route during the year. Please review each new card carefully for new or changed information and the effective date of the changes. Destroy all old cards.

Parents should communicate directly with the bus or cab provider with concerns of:

- Looking for lost items left on the bus/cab
- Checking on activity bus or cab location
- Questions or cancellations when the VICC transportation office is closed.

Refer to your child’s bus card for the appropriate bus/cab company:

Missouri Central South.....314.762.0318

Missouri Central Brown.....314.887.9140

Cab Companies

County Cab.....	314.995.6720
Laclede Cab	314.652.4435
Metro West Transport.....	314.427.3456
United Cab	314.241.8294
EMT	314.781.6400

Parents should communicate directly with the VICC transportation office with:

- Overall routing issues or concerns
- Pick-up or drop-off location concerns
- On-going concerns with driver or contractor
- Requesting alternative transportation service in the event your bus/cab does not show

If there is a transportation issue or problem that has not been resolved to your satisfaction by the transportation office, you may appeal the matter in writing to: VICC, 7425 Forsyth Blvd., Suite 110, St. Louis, MO 63105, Attn: CEO. You will receive a written response within 10 days.

Transportation from an Address Other than Home

A county student attending a magnet school can have transportation provided to and from an address other than his/her home such as a daycare center or babysitter under the following conditions:

1. The daycare center or babysitter must be located in a participating St. Louis County school district. (*See page 9 for non-participating districts.*)
2. Generally, students will be picked up from and returned home to the same address in the county, but a different morning and afternoon address can be accommodated as long as both addresses are within the participating county school districts (*see page 9*) and the addresses are constant Monday through Friday.

3. Neither parent nor student work addresses are acceptable

To arrange for transportation from an alternative address, please contact Lori Merlo, 314.721.8422, ext. 3012 **at least two weeks before** you need the transportation to become effective.

Transportation for Kindergarten Children

A bus or cab is not allowed to drop a kindergarten age child off at his or her designated stop unless there is an **adult (or middle or high school student 13 years or older) present to receive the child**. This applies to regular transportation, as well as emergency transportation.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Please remember that it takes up to 10 working days to make necessary changes for proper transportation. When possible, please report any change of address to Lori Merlo at the VICC office, 314.721.8422, ext. 3012, **at least two weeks before** the date that the new transportation needs to become effective.

- **After Enrollment**

If you move once your child has enrolled in a magnet school, your new address and phone number **must** be reported immediately to the principal. You also need to call Lori Merlo at the VICC office at 314.721.8422, ext. 3012, so the change can be reported to the transportation office.

The building principal may request verification of the new address such as a rent receipt, utility bill, etc. It is a St. Louis Public Schools policy not to make an address change on their main computer without written verification.

- **Before the Start of School**

If you move prior to the beginning of the new school year, you should **call Lori Merlo** at the VICC office, **314.721.8422, ext. 3012**, with the updated information.

Moving to the City

A move from the county to the city will not affect your child's standing in the magnet school program. However, transportation will be provided by the St. Louis Public Schools from your new city address. Call **both Lori Merlo** at the VICC office, **314.721.8422, ext. 3012**, and your child's school to report your new address in the city.

Moving in the County

If you move from one St. Louis County district to another, you should be aware that students who live in the school districts of **Ferguson-Florissant, Hazelwood, Jennings, Maplewood-Richmond Heights, Normandy, Riverview Gardens and University City are not eligible**, under the terms of the Settlement Agreement which governs these transfers, to participate in the voluntary transfer program.

If you are contemplating a move to another district in the county, you may want to contact Lori Merlo at 314.721.8422, ext. 3012 to determine whether your child will remain eligible for the magnet schools.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

On school days, students must arrive and be visible at their designated pick-up location **5 minutes before** the scheduled pick-up time, and remain **at least 15 minutes after** the pick-up time, before calling the Transportation Office for advice on possible alternative transportation. **The child must be visible at the bus/cab stop during this time.** If your children are not at the bus stop a full 5 minutes before the scheduled arrival time and do not wait the full 15 minutes after the scheduled time, and they miss the bus, it will be **your responsibility** to get them to school. The transportation office does not send alternative transportation in such instances.

For the safety of all children, students must obey general safety rules as well as those established by the school district. You should obtain a copy of the St. Louis Public Schools bus regulations from your child's school and review them with your

child. Violations of safety rules can result in a student being removed from riding the bus or cab either on a temporary or permanent basis. If a transportation suspension occurs, it becomes the parents' responsibility to transport the child to and from school.

GENERAL BEHAVIOR/SAFETY RULES

Appropriate behavior on the buses or in cabs is expected of all students participating in the voluntary transfer program. Disciplinary problems may result in suspension from transportation. If a transportation suspension occurs, transportation to and from school becomes the parents' responsibility.

Only students enrolled in the Voluntary Student Transfer Program are eligible for transportation services which consist of one single round trip per day. Parents are not transported on regular to and from school routes.

Please review these rules with your child. Violations can result in suspension from transportation.

- Obey the driver promptly.
- Smoking, eating or drinking are not permitted.
- Remain seated until the bus/cab arrives at your stop.
- Refrain from using loud, offensive or obscene language.
- Do not damage the bus/cab in any way.
- Do not throw objects on the bus/cab or out of the windows.
- Do not tamper with the emergency door except in the case of a real emergency and only under the instruction of the driver.
- Fighting, scuffling, creating loud disturbances or displaying gang signs are not permitted.

Please also talk with your child about these important safety rules:

- Avoid the **Danger Zones** next to the bus where the driver can't see you. (See page 11.)

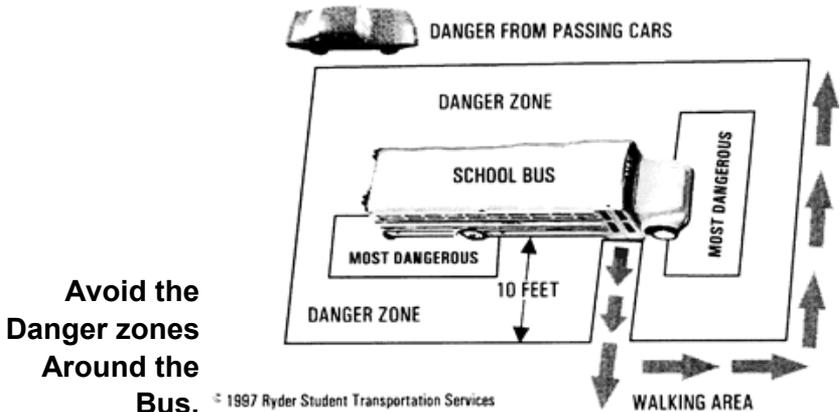
- If you must cross the street after you get off the bus, wait for the driver's signal to you and then cross in front of the bus.
- Do not stand or walk in the **Danger Zones** around the bus (See image on below)
- Don't try to pick up something dropped near the bus because the driver might not see you.
- Remember that other motorists don't always stop for a stopped school bus. Use extreme caution whenever getting on or off the bus.
- Never run back to the bus, even if you dropped or forgot something.

Parent Responsibilities

Transportation may run late and/or routes may frequently change—especially during the first few weeks of school. Please make sure your child knows exactly what to do if the bus/cab does not arrive. This includes knowing where to go and whom to call. Also make sure your child knows what is expected when he or she is dropped off at the end of the school day. If you normally meet your child at the bus stop, be sure your child understands what to do if you are not there.

It is important for parents to keep the school informed of any

School Bus Danger Zones:



changes in the home phone number or the emergency phone number for your child. If either phone number changes, be sure to contact Lori Merlo, 314.721.8422, ext. 3012, as well as your child's school.

Activity Transportation

Before and after school activity transportation is available for students attending middle school and high school who participate in school sponsored activities and clubs that meet the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidelines. Elementary activity transportation is provided on a limited basis for tutorial or remedial classes. **All activity transportation must be scheduled through your student's school.** If your student is scheduled via cab transportation and that transportation is not needed, please cancel by calling the VICC transportation office at 314.721.8657 during normal business hours. If you are calling before or after normal hours, please call the service provider, whose numbers are listed on pages 6 and 7.

Emergency Communication System

To improve communication with parents regarding transportation and their child's participation in the St. Louis Student Transfer Program, the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation has instituted a telephone broadcast system, similar to ones used in many participating school districts.

This system, provided by School Messenger, allows VICC to quickly send all households and parents a pre-recorded message by phone within minutes of a transportation emergency or unplanned event that could significantly delay a child's pick-up for or drop-off from school. These emergencies include traffic jams, bus breakdowns, inclement weather, accidents, construction delays, etc. The service may also be used from time-to-time to communicate general program announcements or reminders.

This system will simultaneously call a home and one additional cell or alternate/emergency number for each student's family who needs to be contacted and will deliver a message from Tami

Webb, transportation operations manager, or another official with the transfer program. Calls will be delivered to both live (in person) responders and answering machines. Calls not answered and busy signals will be automatically retried by the system two additional times in 15 minute intervals after the initial call.

The St. Louis Public Schools will also continue to separately announce school closings due to snow or weather, via the media or their own phone system. However, in the event that the St. Louis Magnet Schools are open, but road conditions are such that VICC's transportation department feels it is not safe to transport students to school, VICC would use its system to notify families attending the affected schools, in addition to making the standard media announcements.

For this system to best operate, it is imperative that you keep your school and VICC aware of any future changes in your home and/or cell or alternate/emergency phone numbers.

Student Safety

Help us protect your children as they travel to and from school. Certain types of children's clothing can create a hazard as your child exits the bus. Especially dangerous are jacket and sweatshirt drawstrings, long backpack straps, long scarfs or any other loose clothing. Such clothing has been known to become caught in the bus handrail, door or other bus equipment as the child exits the bus. Please take the time to check your children's clothing. Also talk with your child about the behavior and safety rules listed on pages 10-11.

Smoking by Drivers

By contract, cab and bus drivers are not to smoke when children are in their vehicles. Parents are asked to help by reporting infractions of this rule directly to the transportation office, 314.721.8657. Be sure to indicate the bus/cab route number. The driver will be disciplined if found to be smoking while driving students.

Child Not Attending School

If your child is not going to attend school, the transportation office needs **thirty minutes advance notice** in order to cancel the bus or cab for either the morning or the afternoon or both. If canceling before 6:30 a.m. when the transportation office opens or after

6 p.m. when the office is closed, please call your service

provider. Those numbers are listed on the on pages 6 and 7 of this booklet.

If a student who normally rides a bus or cab is taken to school by a parent, but needs transportation home at the end of the day, the parent and/or the school must contact the transportation office to arrange for the afternoon bus or cab at least 60 minutes prior to dismissal.

Inclement Weather Transportation

The VICC would like to remind you of the following procedures:

1. Voluntary Student Transportation service will be provided whenever school is in session, unless road/ weather conditions make it unsafe. If school is in session, but it is not safe to transport students, the following announcement will be made by the designated media outlets: *“Deseg transportation for the voluntary student transfer program to the following school districts will not operate (list of districts affected will follow.)”* **If the St. Louis City Public Schools is included on that list, there will be *no transportation* for your child to any magnet school.**

This announcement will be made on:

A.M. Radio Station — KMOX, 1120 A.M.

Television — KSDK-5, FOX-2, KPLR-11 KMOV-4

2. If the St. Louis Public Schools cancels school because of inclement weather, transportation service will

also be cancelled.

St. Louis Public Schools reports school closings on all major television and radio stations.

Information is also available by calling the SLPS weather line at 314.345.2466

School closings can also be found on the St. Louis Public Schools website at www.slps.org The district also issues automated calls for weather-related closings.

St. Louis Magnet Schools are not listed individually when school closings are announced. If the St. Louis Public Schools are closed, magnet schools **will not** be in session.

Parents are urged to listen for announcements regarding school cancellations and transportation, rather than calling the transportation office.

Trespass Policy

To bolster the safety of students riding buses to school, the VICC Board adopted and enforces the following trespassing policy:

“Trespass on a school bus shall be defined as anyone who gains unauthorized or unlawful entry. Any VICC-designated person, contractor or school staff whose job responsibilities require him/her to be on a school bus shall be authorized and not be considered trespassing. Only with prior approval from VICC or a contractor may any parent, guardian or member of the general public be allowed on a bus.”

Video/Audio Camera Policy

Video/audio cameras are placed on buses/cabs to record activity to help ensure the safety and security of all passengers. Only authorized persons may view tapes of bus/cab rides. Authorized personnel would include school district officials, VICC officials and contractor officials. Parents of

students involved in an incident will be allowed to view the tapes, only with the permission of VICC and the school district involved.

Students Riding with Other Students

The VICC Transportation Department understands the importance of providing not only an appropriate learning environment, but also a social connection between the students participating in the voluntary program and resident students of the participating school districts. It is, therefore, the intent of the transportation department to allow students to ride the bus with other students with special permission. It is, of course, the number one priority of this department to maintain the safety/security of all students involved. The following guidelines have been developed to ensure the safest, most secure program available:

- Students must be part of the voluntary transfer program and/or a resident student of the participating school district riding with a transfer student.
- Similar service is provided by participating SLPS school.
- The program is for regular Home to School/School to Home transportation. Due to the difficulty of scheduling transportation, to/from activities, weekends and non-school day functions are prohibited.
- The intent of this program is for special occasions (*for example Birthday Parties, Special Events, Sleepover, etc.*) and not to be used on a regular reoccurring basis (*for example not for baby sitting or regular days of the week, etc.*)
- These special riding privileges are on a space available basis only. Space is particularly limited on cab routes.
- **Must have prior approval from your student's school and the VICC transportation office.**
- Student must have signed note from parent/guardian giving permission to go home with another student and also from the parent/guardian of the student

RIGHTS OF PARENTS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act states that school policy must contain information on “how the agency or institution informs parents and students of their rights.”

It is important for parents to request a written copy of the school policy. Parents should note all procedures which need to be followed. If there are questions about policy, call the district.

In the case of a suspension of over ten days, the parents may appeal the suspension to the school board. State law requires that “the notice and the hearing shall follow as soon as practicable.” Parents should take care to notify the district in writing that they are requesting an appeal hearing and that they expect the hearing to follow as soon as possible.

If you are unable to resolve an issue with your school district about a short-term suspension or another concern, other avenues you may pursue include:

- Seeking assistance and district counseling, being certain the proper school district procedures have been followed.
- Seeking assistance from VICC by calling a counselor. VICC counselors (*see page 3*) assist families in the transfer program who encounter difficulties as a result of their participation in the transfer program.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Annual Notification is available to view at www.choicecorp.org/FERPANotice.pdf

SAFE SCHOOLS ACT

The Missouri Safe Schools Act governs issues concerning student discipline and safety. These regulations apply to all public schools in the State of Missouri. Among the regulations that may have specific interest to you are the following:

- The law requires that each school district have a written discipline policy. Request a copy of this policy from your child's new school.
- The law states that any student on a suspension may not re-enroll in **any school** until the suspension period is over.
- The law requires a conference prior to re-admission of a student suspended for more than ten days for an act of school violence, or where the student poses a threat of harm to self or others.
- Each school district is to maintain records of any serious violation of the discipline policy. These records are to be sent to any school the student later attends.
- Prior to registration, proof of residency for the student must be established. Giving false information regarding residency is now defined as a Class A misdemeanor.

For more information about the safe schools act, call your magnet school principal.

MAGNET SCHOOL CONTINUITY

FROM ELEMENTARY TO MIDDLE TO HIGH SCHOOL

The magnet school programs are divided into seven themes – Visual and Performing Arts, International Studies, Math, Science and Technology, Military, Gifted Education, General Academic and Early Childhood Education.

Two of these themes (*Visual & Performing Arts and Math, Science and Technology*) have schools which continue from elementary through high school. Students enrolled in these programs will automatically be assigned to the next school in their theme. Students wanting to continue from middle school to high school in the same theme **must submit a continuity form and meet the high school's established entrance eligibility criteria**. The feeder patterns for these schools are as follows:

Visual & Performing Arts Feeder Pattern

- Ames VPA Elementary to Carr Lane VPA Middle to Central VPA High School *
- Shaw VPA Elementary to Carr Lane VPA Middle to Central VPA High School *

Math Science and Technology Feeder Pattern •

- Gateway Elementary to Gateway Math & Science Prep to Gateway STEM High School *
- Mullanphy ILC to Compton-Drew ILC to Gateway STEM High School *

Gifted

- Columbia GE, Betty Wheeler CJA and Mallinckrodt AGI Elementaries to McKinley CJA Middle School (*Students must be determined to be eligible according to McKinley's gifted criteria.*)
- Stix ECC to Betty Wheeler CJA for 3rd-5th grade

Students who complete the 8th grade at McKinley must meet eligibility criteria to continue in **any** of the magnet high schools. A gifted high school, McKinley Classical Leadership Academy, has been established at McKinley. McKinley Middle School students can apply to attend this program.

International Studies Feeder Pattern

- Students completing 5th grade at Dewey are automatically assigned to Compton-Drew Investigative Learning Center.

General Academic

Students who complete the 5th grade at Washington Montessori School will automatically be assigned to Gateway Math & Science Prep. Students completing the 5th grade at Lyon Academy @ Blow have the option to remain at Blow for middle school.

Students who complete the 8th grade at Busch Middle School of Character must complete a continuity form and meet eligibility criteria to continue in **any** of the magnet high schools.

Early Childhood Education

Students who complete the 2nd grade at Wilkinson have direct continuity to Humboldt Academy of Advanced Learning, which provides dynamic Constructivist curriculum for students in the

3rd through 5th grades.

Students completing the 5th grade at Humboldt will automatically be assigned to Busch Middle School of Character.

*** Note: All magnet high schools have entrance eligibility criteria established specific to the school's theme and curriculum. Any student wanting to attend a magnet high school must submit a continuity form or application and must meet the high school's established entrance criteria in order to be considered for placement.**

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**Voluntary Interdistrict
Choice Corporation
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Monday through Friday
314.721.8422**

Call this number if you have questions about the voluntary student transfer program. Staff members can assist you if you need help with a problem that you are unable to resolve with your school. You may also call this number during the first few weeks of school if you are unable to reach the transportation staff.

**SLPS School and Community Hotline
314.241.7577 or 1.866.610.7577**

The SLPS has created a safety hotline that can be used to report any suspicious activity or concerns in and around school buildings and neighborhoods. The hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All calls will remain anonymous.

**SLPS Activity Hotline
314.345.4636**

Support by SLPS's Communication Office, this hotline will provide the community with a recorded message about upcoming events across the district. The phone line will be updated continuously so that parents and the community can have more of an opportunity to participate in students' activities. Also visit the district website: www.slps.org

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation
Transportation Office
6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Monday through Friday
314.721.8657

Refer to your child's bus card for the appropriate bus/cab company:

Bus Companies

Missouri Central South 314.762.0318
Missouri Central Brown 314.887.9140

Cab Companies

County Cab.....314.995.6720
Laclede Cab314.652.4435
Metro West Transport.....314.427.3456
United Cab314.241.8294
EMT314.781.6400

SCHOOL VIOLENCE HOTLINE **1.866.748.7047**

The School Violence Hotline was established by the State of Missouri through a grant from the Department of Public Safety and is staffed Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. The goal is for the Hotline to become a centralized reporting and referral mechanism to assist local schools and law enforcement agencies in the identification of actual or potential acts of violence in our schools and the intervention to prevent or minimize those acts. Make a call to report threats against students, teachers and schools.

