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## Information for Principals and Schools

The Student Transportation for Academics and Responsibilities (STAR) Program is a StarMetro, City of Tallahassee and Leon County Schools pilot program to encourage area students to use public transportation for school, work, extracurricular activities, or other responsibilities free of charge.

Building on the successes of past student ridership programs, the STAR Program is a coordinated community approach to engaging and training area youth in the benefits of sustainable transportation, while securing their access and use of our community's public transportation service.

### Who can participate in the STAR Program?

- StarMetro's STAR Program provides unaccompanied 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students within Tallahassee/Leon County free transportation on fixed route buses **with a STAR card and a signed program agreement/code of conduct on file.**
- The STAR Program will provide K-5<sup>th</sup> grade students within Tallahassee/Leon County free transportation on fixed route buses **ONLY if the student is accompanied by a 6<sup>th</sup> grade or older sibling, legal guardian, or parental designee, has a STAR card and a signed program agreement/code of conduct on file.**

### How do students get into the STAR Program?

- To qualify for the program, a signed program agreement form **must be on file with StarMetro or Leon County Schools** and the student must have a valid STAR card. **Registration includes parental signature and use of student picture on card.**
- **All Leon County Schools K-12 Students (including LCS charter schools) must register for the program through Leon County Schools/Parent Portal.** LCS District Office will issue STAR Program cards through inner school mail to the school Principal for timely distribution to students.
- All non-Leon County Schools K-12 Students (homeschool, etc) must register for the program through the City of Tallahassee/StarMetro [www.talgov.com/starmetro/STAR.aspx](http://www.talgov.com/starmetro/STAR.aspx)



- Registration will remain open all year and all cards **will expire upon graduation.**
- ***To participate in the fare-free program, students will be required to have and use their cards beginning October 1, 2022.***

### **How does a student use their STAR Card?**

- Upon boarding the bus, the student **MUST** swipe or scan their valid card.
- An operator may request visually confirming if the card is valid.
- If a card is not valid, a student will be directed to the LCS or StarMetro website to apply for the program.

### **Difference between former fare-free K-12 system and the STAR Program:**

- The STAR program is an **opt—in** program for parents and students. They must sign the program agreement form and code of conduct to participate.
- Code of conduct is mirrored on LCS School Bus Code of Conduct and other industry standards.
- To ride-fare free students need to **use a valid STAR card** instead of showing school ID.
- Program is designed to help ensure the safety of the students and provide mechanisms of support in cases of emergency or other transportation related issues.

### **STAR Program Disciplinary Action/Process:**

If a student does not show a valid STAR card after being advised/warned three times, the student will be asked to pay \$.60 for their ride and instructed to apply for a card.

Highschool students (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade) who do not have cards after repeatedly warned **will not be transported.** Elementary/Middle School students who do not have cards after repeatedly warned will be contacted by StarMetro through their school point of contact.

If a student refuses to adhere to code of conduct policies, the student may lose their fare-free privilege.

Depending on the infraction, age, transgression and capacity on the bus, a Supervisor may request the student's contact information (parent name/number and school attending) for follow up or request their STAR card to get their contact information from StarMetro database or LCS.

Depending on the infraction, age, transgression and capacity on the bus, a Supervisor may issue a Disciplinary Action leading to possible suspension from program.

LCS security office will be contacted for all LCS student related issues (K-12<sup>th</sup>). **922-KIDS open 24/7** even on holidays. LCS security office will help connect any policy infringement to the appropriate SRO or work with StarMetro on other issues and measures.

