

The Commuter Parent's Road Map: Navigating Your Teen's Columbia Experience

Your teen is about to embark on an incredible ride through Columbia's Pre-College Program—but as a commuter student, they will have a unique road map for their experience. From navigating transportation to making the most of campus life, a little preparation goes a long way in ensuring a smooth and enriching journey. This guide is your GPS for everything you need to know—so buckle up, follow the signs, and get ready to send your student off with confidence!

First Stop: Mapping Out Transportation

Getting to Columbia University is a breeze—whether by train, bus, or car.

If your student is taking public transit, the 1 train, M4, M104, and M11, among others, drop them right at Columbia's gates on 116th Street and Broadway. A MetroCard or OMNY payment will be their golden ticket—don't forget to send them off with one. Columbia also offers [shuttle services](#) from specific locations—just a quick flash of a student ID gets them on board. While this is a great resource, students are responsible for their own safety while using these services.

For those driving in, while the program does not provide parking, local paid parking lots are available [here](#). And don't forget to check out our [campus maps](#) to get Columbia-ready before the first day!

Next Stop: Smooth Check-In

First days don't have to feel like rush-hour traffic! Stay ahead by keeping an eye on emails from our Pre-College team, which will guide you through everything from enrollment forms to ID photos.

Pro tip: **Bookmark emails from our Pre-College office** to quickly find key details when needed.

On check-in day, commuter parents and guardians are welcome to accompany their students. Be sure to bring a copy of your child's government-issued ID! Check-in takes place at [Alfred Lerner Hall](#) on the morning of the first day of classes, where students will get their Columbia ID, welcome swag, and a chance to connect with other commuters.

Cruising Into the Classroom

With check-in complete, it's time for students to shift gears and head to their first class. They should bring note-taking materials and any items listed on their syllabus. Remind them to log in to their [CourseWorks](#) for course information.

Parents who want to stick around can explore the many coffee shops and cafés on or around campus. Here's a [list](#) of some great cafés to check out!

Detour to Fun: Activities for Commuters

The Columbia experience doesn't end after class! Commuter students can join afternoon and early-evening activities, including Commuter Connection events like the Cultural Food Festival, Speed Friending, and Wellness Fest—fun ways to connect and unwind.

Students will receive updates about these activities in their emails and on Canvas [CourseWorks](#) throughout the program. Your student may stay on campus until 6:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday. On Fridays, they can participate in select late-evening events with a parent or guardian's permission—just send us an email to confirm.

Note: Commuter students are not permitted to participate in weekend activities or enter residence halls.

Refueling: Meal Options

No one wants a hungry commuter! Here are a few great dining options for your student:

- [Ferris Booth Dining Hall](#) (inside Lerner Hall) offers a variety of meal choices, including vegan, gluten-free, and vegetarian options. Commuter students must pay with a debit or credit card—consider a Visa gift card if you'd rather not hand over your credit card.
- **Food trucks** line Broadway and Amsterdam from 110th to 120th Street, serving everything from halal to Mexican cuisine.
- **Local restaurants and cafés** provide another great option. Students are allowed to leave campus for meals but must follow campus boundary policies. Here's a [list](#) of some great places to check out!

Staying on Track: Campus Boundaries

Safety is our priority, and students must remain within designated campus boundaries:

- ◆ **North/South:** 110th to 120th Street
- ◆ **East/West:** Amsterdam Avenue to Riverside Drive

Students **may not enter Riverside Park or Morningside Park** and are not permitted to take the subway while on campus for the day, except when commuting home. While our team enforces these rules, **it's up to parents and guardians to set clear expectations about safety and boundaries with their children.**

No Overnight Stops: Housing Policies

The commuter program is designed for students who travel to and from campus daily—housing is not provided.

Students must live in a residence with **direct adult supervision** (family members or close family friends above the age of 25). Unsupervised housing—such as hotel rooms, Airbnbs, or hostels—is not allowed.

For a smoother experience, we recommend a commute of no longer than one hour each way to help students stay energized and engaged.

Final Destination: An Incredible Experience

With these tips, your teen is ready to hit the ground running at Columbia Pre-College! From navigating campus to making the most of commuter resources, this journey is all about growth, independence, and an exciting taste of college life.

Enjoy the Ride—We're Here to Help!

Every great journey comes with a few twists and turns, but don't worry—you're never navigating this road alone. If you ever hit a bump or just need extra guidance, our team is always ready to assist.

Feel free to call or email us at 212-853-7400 or hsp-office@columbia.edu—we're here to help ensure your teen's and your Columbia experience is smooth, exciting, and unforgettable.

Safe travels, and see you at check-in!