



## Parent Guide for Transportation Of Students with Disabilities



The Purpose of this handbook is to provide parents with an informational source that addresses the issues, responsibilities and concerns relating to special needs transportation. The full scope of the special needs transportation operation is much broader than can be contained in this booklet; it is not intended to be all inclusive, but is an attempt to share important information with everyone who has a role in transporting students with special needs. Working together, we can create an effective transportation team which will help provide our students with a safe, timely and comfortable ride to and from school.

## **Information For The Transportation Department**

It is extremely important for the transportation department to know as much as possible about what is required to safely transport your child. Complete and thorough information is critical to safe transportation. Our transportation department will insure that all personal information regarding students is maintained in *strict confidence* in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

In consideration of other students assigned to the bus, the driver is not permitted to change or modify a bus route.

Drivers who transport students with special needs receive additional training to assist them in performing their duties safely. The training includes information about the law, sensitivity, general awareness, confidentiality requirements, evacuation drill procedures, medical emergency procedures, equipment operations, health concerns and more.

Help us provide safe, comfortable and efficient transportation for your child by following the guidelines in this handbook. If at any time you have questions or concerns please give us a call.

Thank You from the Transportation Team!

## **SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES**

First and foremost, all appropriate forms ***MUST*** be completed and submitted to Exceptional Student Services (ESS) as per the Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Rules for the Operation, Maintenance and Inspection of School Transportation Vehicles 4204-R-4.00, section 4.06 - *School district and service providers shall ensure that documentation outlining transportation related services and requirements, including required use of Child Safety Restraint Systems and medical and behavioral information as it relates to student transportation, is available to applicable school transportation vehicle operators and paraprofessionals prior to providing transportation services.* Therefore, the transportation department is unable to safely schedule any transportation until all proper documentation has been received and approved.

The scheduling process includes: form approval, route modification and driver notification and training. This process takes from 3 to 5 business days *after* receipt of all proper documentation, so please plan accordingly.

For emergency purposes Parents/Guardians must notify the school of *any informational changes* such as: new phone number, residence/address change, new medications, etc. The school will notify the transportation department of changes via email for the bus's emergency records. Please allow 3 to 5 business days for any address changes to go into effect. Note: bus stop locations will vary based on the topographical area of the new residence.

In the interest of each student, transportation will attempt to assign all stops so that students requiring special transportation are transported with their peers in order to provide the best possible, least restrictive environment.

Curbside service shall be provided for students once the students' needs have been reviewed and determined by the IEP Team, ESS Department and/or the Transportation Department and warrant an accommodation. All other services shall be placed at the closest neighborhood bus stop as determined by transportation.

Students become the responsibility of the school system from the time that they board the bus until they are delivered to their designated stop.

Students will only be permitted to ride their assigned school bus to and/or from their school except in an emergency situation, in which case the transportation dispatcher needs to be notified as soon as possible.

Transportation is provided in the state of Colorado for the benefit of the student and not for the benefit of the parent/guardian.

### **Pick-Up Information**

Students will only be picked up at their assigned stop. Transportation will notify the parent/guardian of the specific pick-up and drop-off times. Planned route times may vary by 5 minutes due to weather, traffic or unforeseen circumstances. The transportation dispatcher will attempt to contact parents of students with special needs for delays of more than 15 minutes. Time changes may also occur throughout the year, as students are added or deleted to bus routes. Parents and schools will be notified of route changes at least 3 days prior to a route or time being changed.

Students must be ready to board the bus at least **5 minutes** prior to their scheduled pick up time. Drivers are not permitted to use the school bus horn to notify the parent/guardian of their arrival. Students should be visible and ready to board the bus once the bus door is opened. If no one is visible at the stop, at the scheduled leave time, the driver will proceed to the next stop and *will not be able to return if*

*your student misses the bus.* Please make sure your student is ready to immediately board the bus at the bus's arrival time.

The parent/guardian of a student that will not be attending school for the day should contact the transportation dispatcher at **(970) 328-2570**, as early as possible, no later than 1 hour prior to route pick up time, so that the driver and aides are properly notified. Parents that fail notifying transportation dispatcher for more than 5 days risk losing transportation privileges.

When it is necessary, the parent/guardian is responsible to escort the student to the bus in a timely manner and assist the student with any possessions until the student is safely seated and the possessions secured.

If the driver feels it is unsafe to transport a student due to behavior, they will not permit that student to ride the bus for the safety of the student, other students and the driver. Dispatch will be notified that the student is being left with an appropriate person before the driver will leave.

The transportation of medical equipment, such as oxygen tank, suction machine, etc., shall be done only after a written safety protocol has been completed at the IEP meeting which includes a transportation representative. Should an IEP meeting take place without a transportation representative present, a separate meeting will be necessary to determine appropriate transportation requirements.

### **Drop-Off Information**

Students may be dropped off to an adult, other than their parent or guardian, provided that their name is on the accommodation form, they are **18 years of age or older** and present a photo ID.

Note: Students may be dropped without supervision provided that the information is on the authorized accommodation form indicating parent or guardian's permission.

In the event that a parent or authorized person cannot meet the bus they must contact school and arrange to pick up their student at school. In the event of an emergency and a parent or authorized person cannot meet the bus and their student is already in transit the parent shall contact the transportation dispatcher at **(970) 328-2570** to make other arrangements *as soon as possible!* Should the parent or other authorized person not meet the bus, the procedures below will be followed:

- ❖ The driver will contact the dispatcher and let them know that no one was at the stop to receive the student.
- ❖ The driver will continue on the route.
- ❖ After completing the remainder of the route the driver will return the student to school for parent pick-up.
- ❖ The dispatcher shall attempt to contact the parent, the school office, the school principal and finally the Health and Human Services Department in order to deliver the student.
- ❖ In the event that the parent misses the students pick up more than 3 times, the transportation department will contact the ESS department to determine if transportation should continue for the student.

### **Students Assigned to Regular Ed Route Bus**

Students with special needs may be assigned to a regular route bus based on the following:

- ❖ Be eligible for transportation
- ❖ Student can go to/from the regular designated bus stop independent of supervision
- ❖ Can board the bus independently, follow bus rules and requires minimal supervision

### **NON-AMBULATORY STUDENTS**

Students who are non-ambulatory must board the school bus via a wheelchair lift seated in a wheelchair. Drivers are **NOT PERMITTED** to lift or carry a student. Students who use a walker or require minimal assistance may be assisted on/off the school bus via the stairwell or by using a wheelchair and lift. Transportation personnel will conduct an assessment to ensure the safety of the student and driver for the specific level of assistance required. Students may only be transported in an approved, secured wheelchair or school bus seat.

All equipment provided by the Parent/Guardian must be in safe and good working order in order to be transported on a school bus. A transportation official will need to inspect the equipment prior to placing it in service. Wheelchairs must be equipped with a lap belt which secures the student properly. Tires must be fully inflated and brakes must hold the wheels securely. Trays must be removable and properly stored on the bus. All students using a wheelchair must be assisted when loading/unloading by a Parent or Guardian at the assigned home site or by a school staff member at the school site as drivers are unable to leave their bus when other students are on board. Parents or staff that wish to be trained on the operation of the bus's' lift equipment should contact the

transportation training department at (970) 401-9470 to schedule a time for training. Please note that waiting for training may delay the transportation start date.

**Parents/Guardians and School Officials assisting wheelchair students must:**

- ❖ **Open the lift door and secure it with the door cable to prevent door from swinging.**
- ❖ **Always load the student on the wheelchair lift facing away from the bus.**
- ❖ **Secure all wheelchair brakes on all wheels prior to using the lift.**
- ❖ **Electric power must be turned off before the wheelchair is placed on the lift. Power shall remain off until the wheelchair is offloaded from the bus.**
- ❖ **Stand to the side of the lift (not on the lift) and hold onto the arm of the wheelchair while the lift is in operation.**
- ❖ **Replace the lift switch properly, then close and secure the lift door once the wheelchair is off of the lift.**

### AMBULATORY STUDENTS

Students that have been identified as needing a safety vest securement for transport will be required to wear the vest at all times unless or until it is determined that the student is able to ride in a safe manner as witnessed and agreed up by both the IEP team and the transportation department. Transportation officials may make a determination at any time that a student will require a safety vest for safe transportation. If a determination is made that a safety vest securement is required, transportation will notify the school as well as the parents of the safety requirement. Special needs students in a **Pre-school** program **will** be required to wear a safety vest or seat all times.

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Dear Parents,

Please fill out the information below and return this page to your driver or the transportation office.

I have read and understand the **Parent Guide for Transportation of Students with Disabilities** handbook.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank You!