

Community I.S.D. Transportation Services

Frequently Asked Questions for the Transportation Department

Below is a list of **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS** to assist you with answers to the most frequently asked questions. Also, please review the Bus Rider Safety Handbook located on the Districts website. If your question is not answered, please do not hesitate to call our Transportation Service Center at: 972-843-8404

How do I find out my student's bus number?

There are several options to obtain your students bus information. If the campus has an open house or meet the teacher night transportation will have a booth to set up services. You can also look your students bus information up online.

What are the Transportation Department hours?

The Transportation Department is open from 5:30 am until 5:15 pm on school days. We are closed from 11:30 AM to 1:15 PM for lunch. Any message left during lunch will be returned the same day.

Which students are required to be provided transportation in Texas?

"The only students that your school district is required to provide transportation to are certain students receiving special education who would be unable to attend classes without special transportation services and certain students eligible under Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act who would be unable to attend classes without special transportation services." (Information provided by Texas Education Agency)

Who should I call if the bus does not arrive to pick up my child on time?

Your child should be at their bus stop ten (10) minutes before the scheduled arrive time, allowing a ten (10) minute window for traffic problems. When contacting our office for bus location, please have your child's bus number as well as the school, child's name and stop location. Route times may fluctuate during the first few weeks of school, so please be patient with us during this time.

Can the driver stop at my house to pick up or drop off my child?

Only certain students, whose needs are addressed through an IEP plan, are eligible for "curbside service." "Curbside" service is normally restricted to situations where a less restrictive environment is not possible or where medical issues require this type of service. For other students, service is provided in accordance with district guidelines, this might or might not be at your house.

Who should I report my address or telephone number changes to?

The school registrar should be contacted as soon as possible with all address and telephone number information changes. The registrar will put the information into the system allowing visibility to the Transportation Department. Transportation Staff cannot change your address information. It takes 24 hrs from when you update your address with the school before transportation can route your student to the new address. We encourage parents to update this info the day before they wish for it to start or arrange to transport your student the first day.

How will I be notified of a change to my child's stop time, stop location or bus number?

If the change in time is less than five minutes, the driver will notify the students of the change. If there is a change in stop location or bus assignment the Transportation Department will send written notification home with the students.

I got home late (in PM) and I cannot find my child. The school is closed and no one answers the phone at the school. What do I do?

Calling the Transportation department is usually the best option under these circumstances. The transportation staff can assist you in locating your child. Call 972-843-8404. For afterhours please contact your local police department.

I have a question regarding a bus stop location or pick up/drop time. Who should I call?

Please contact the Transportation department at 972-843-8404. The staff is trained to answer most of the service questions. If the person does not know the answer, they will know who to contact and have your call returned with the answer.

My child's bus is overcrowded. Can some children be placed on another bus?

School bus sizes are stated in terms of passenger capacity. It is assumed that elementary school-aged children will ride three (3) per seat. Every attempt will be made to limit middle and high school students to ride two (2) per seat. Even if the bus has three (3) elementary students or two (2) middle or high school students in each seat, it will seem crowded but it will not be over capacity. It is our goal and we are required to fully utilize all the space on all of the buses in our fleet.

I cannot see my child's bus stop from my house. How can I get the bus stop moved closer?

The bus stops are located at centralized locations that can be safely accessed by a significant number of students to minimize the time and mileage of a run. If you have a concern about your child's safety, you are encouraged to accompany your child to the bus stop. As a safety consideration it is safer to have several students wait at a stop versus an individual. Community ISD utilizes group stops where possible to cut down on the amount of ride time students are having to ride the bus. Students may also be required to walk further in newer subdivisions that have multiple houses under construction (active construction), as buses cannot fit down roads where there are vehicles parked on both sides, or if a subdivision is private and/or gated.

Why are the school bus seats spaced so close together?

The purpose of spacing school bus seats so close is to contain the child in a cushioned compartment with only a minimum amount of space between energy-absorbing surfaces.

In the 1970's the Department of Transportation and the National Highway Safety Administration determined that the safest and best arrangement for school bus seating would be a "compartmentalization" concept. Under this concept, seat backs are made higher, wider and thicker than before. All metal surfaces are covered with foam padding. They must also have a steel inner structure that springs and bends forward to help absorb energy when a child is thrown against it. The seat is required to be anchored to the floor so strongly that it will not pull loose during this bending action. The floor must be so strong that it will not be bent or torn by the pulling action of the seat anchors.

Finally, if the seats are too far apart, the child could be thrown too far before being cushioned and/or could be thrown outside of the bus compartment altogether. The rule today states that the seat back be no farther than 24" away from a defined point.

My child left a jacket (books, instrument, etc.) on the bus. How can he get it back?

The drivers must check their bus after each run. Items left on the bus by students will be held by the driver and may be claimed by the child. Fragile, expensive items are taken off the bus in the evening for their protection, but the driver will bring them back on the bus the next morning to be claimed. If an item does not get claimed the driver will turn it into the schools lost and found.

What happens to my Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st & 2nd grade student if there is no authorized person at the bus stop?

The child will be returned to his/her elementary campus, where it will then be the parent's responsibility to come and get them. After your student's been returned to the campus five (5) times, bus riding privileges will be suspended on the take home service. Your student may continue to ride the bus to school only. If the student is returned after 4:30 pm they will be returned to transportation. In the event 5:30 pm arrive and we still cannot contact a guardian we will involve the local authorities.

What if I want my child to get off the bus at another address other than my house?

Students are only permitted to ride to and from their registered address on file with the school. For safety of all students we do not allow students to ride to other destinations. In the event an emergency arises the campus principal can grant a onetime bus rider pass. No hand written notes will be accepted. All emergency bus passes are tracked at transportation; if they become frequent the student's bus pass privileges will be revoked for the remainder of the year. School bus transportation is defined from the state as to and from the student's house no other locations qualify.

Why did you suspend my student from riding the bus?

Behavioral expectations on the school bus are much like those in the classroom. Then, factor in the mobility of that "classroom" and traffic, added noise and the size of the "classroom" and you have a potential catastrophe if there are not clear expectations and enforcement. The behavioral expectations on the bus revolve around the individual rights of every person on the bus, including the driver and the collective rights of students and driver as it pertains to Safety. Anything that jeopardizes the safety of individuals on the bus is viewed as a serious violation.

Drivers have bus rules and/or expectations posted on the bus. When there is an infraction, a referral is turned into the campus, which is responsible for contacting the student and parent to solve the lack of compliance with bus expectations. The transportation department is solely responsible for consequences based on the incident as described by the driver and student. Most buses have video cameras, which are used to verify incidents. Our goal is never to deny any student transportation to and from school, but we must maintain safety and compliance for all students.

Why can't you come further into my sub-division?

School buses range length from 35-45 feet and 9 feet wide. The length is what limits the school bus to be maneuvered in cul-de-sacs and tight places. Long buses cannot maneuver the same circle without backing the bus, which is avoided in routing if possible. Residents sometimes park trucks, boats, and trailers on the streets. Students leave their bicycles, skateboards, and basketball backboards on the streets. Although our drivers are trained to be able to Parallel Park their buses, some sub-divisions are not designed with school bus transportation in mind. Please know that we will design bus routes to be safe and convenient to the majority of students within the limits of time and physics.

Why does my student have a seat assignment?

Seat assignments are a positive way for the ride to be consistent and safe. It is also our policy for students to be assigned to a specific seat. This aids the driver with discipline and learning each student's names at the beginning of the school year.

How do you decide when it is too dangerous for school buses to transport students to school due to inclement weather? Who decides? How is the public notified?

The district works closely with local emergency response agencies, as well as representatives with the National Weather Service, to monitor condition when the threat of severe weather is possible. In addition, members of our Transportation Department are on the roadways in the early morning hours, assessing bus routes for any possible dangers.

The superintendent, along with staff representing operations, transportation, safety and security, and communications, assesses information gathered from local agencies, the National Weather Service, and personal observations to determine the best course of action. In many cases, making the call to alter the normal school schedule can be difficult simply due to the fact that weather is unpredictable, and that the weather conditions can differ from one side of the district to another. Ultimately, the decision to cancel school, or have a delayed start is made in the best interest of student and staff safety.

Special Needs Transportation

How can I receive transportation for my special needs student?

The parent must contact the students assigned campus to set up an appointment to review their students Individual Education Plan (IEP). After it has been determined that the student would benefit from being transported apart from the mainstreamed students, the teacher will complete and send a special needs transportation request to our office for processing.

How long does it take to set up transportation for my special needs student?

Three to five (3-5) days are needed to obtain all emergency information, process routing information, contact drivers and communicate with parents and other professionals involved. However we strive to complete this process within 24 hours from receiving the IEP

Why can't last minute changes be granted?

Safety is our main goal and concern. We can only transport special needs students to the location stated in the students' IEP. If you need a location updated please reach out to the campus your child attends.

Why can't my regular education student ride the same bus with my special needs student?

Special needs transportation is granted in accordance with a student's needs as a related service to the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Students who receive an education without an IEP are provided transportation through conventional means.