



Information for Parents Receiving Special Education Transportation Services  
2023-2024

Dear Parent / Guardian,

Manteca Unified School District (MUSD) has prepared this letter to make sure you have the information you need about your student's transportation services. We need your assistance and cooperation to maintain safe, timely and reliable service. Your familiarity with this information, and adherence to these rules will be a big help in transporting your students safely and on time.

Sincerely,

Julie Fannin  
Director of Transportation

Manteca Unified School District-Transportation Department  
2271 W. Louise Avenue  
Manteca, CA 95337

209-825-3200 ext. 50444

### **Drivers and Qualifications:**

All drivers are required to be fingerprinted and a background investigation is completed by the Department of Justice. State law requires each school bus driver to have a valid School Bus Driver Certificate. All of our drivers must successfully complete extensive written and driving tests, receive first aid training, pass a physical examination on a regular basis, undergo testing to ensure they are drug and alcohol free, annually receive a minimum of ten hours of additional training and recertify for their special certificate every five years with California Highway Patrol.

Drivers attend regularly scheduled safety meetings and in-service training sessions that can include improving their skills in transporting students with special needs. Manteca Unified works to continually meet or exceed all requirements.

### **Safety Devices:**

The use of safety harnesses or other restrictive devices must be reviewed and approved through the IEP process. All safety devices must have a Fade Plan included for their use and written in the IEP. Students with transportation as a related service in their IEP should have Transportation goals in their IEP that builds confidence in their abilities and to achieve transportation independence in the Least Restrictive Environment.

### **Inspection of Equipment:**

To assure the use of safe equipment, all MUSD buses and vans are inspected daily by the driver, every 45 days by a mechanic, and buses are inspected annually by the California Highway Patrol. All buses are certified by the State of California and meet or exceed all federal and state safety requirements. All vehicles used to transport students are equipped with seat belts. Students will be required to wear them properly while riding the school bus. Seat belts are to remain fastened until the bus has stopped at the student's proper destination.

### **To Better Serve You ...**

The more information that is shared in an IEP with Transportation about your student's special needs and requirements, the more easily we can ensure your student has a successful bus ride. We respect your privacy and the sensitivity of information concerning your student's special needs. We request your cooperation in providing information that might impact on the safety of your students and other bus riders and to aid in providing a successful ride for all students.

### **Communications:**

Most of the communication you will receive will come from your driver. They will let you know where the vehicle will be stopping and at what time. They will also provide updates to you when the route is changed. Other communications will come from the Manteca Unified Transportation office.

**It's important that Manteca Unified has your current contact information in our database at all times.**

All communications from you must go through the transportation department's office. Do not contact or call the driver directly. If you transport your student to school, you must call the Manteca Unified Transportation department.

### **Moving, Telephone Number Changes:**

If you are moving during the school year or changing your telephone number, you must notify your student's school site as soon as possible, at least two (2) weeks before the change. Also be sure the Teacher and the Special Education Department is aware of any changes as a new Bus Service Request (BSR) must be created. Please do not send or take your student to school and expect the bus to bring your student home to a new address unless you have been notified that transportation has been arranged to and from the new address.

### **In the Event of Illness or Absence:**

In fairness to your student and other children, keep a sick student at home. Because they may become worse a few minutes or hours later, do not send even a mildly ill student to school. A student who is obviously ill will not be transported. Please notify the MUSD Transportation Department and the school of attendance if you do not intend to send your student to school. If a student becomes ill at school, the parent is responsible for transporting the student home. Do not call the driver on their cell phone. Drivers are prohibited by law to use their phones while enroute. ALL calls should go to the Transportation Office at 209-825-3200 ext. 50444. This ensures everyone has the right information in the event of a substitute driver. If, on one day, you transport your student to school, you must call MUSD Transportation department to confirm transportation home.

### **Medication:**

Student medications should generally be transported in the student's backpack. If, for safety or other considerations, the student should not transport their own medications, the medication should be given to the school site. Drivers are not to administer medications to any student. If a student may need medication while in the vehicle, an aide who is trained in the procedure shall ride with the student. If the aide is not available to ride the vehicle then the student will be denied transportation on that day.

### **Medical Appointments:**

Parents and guardians are responsible for transporting students to and from appointments. Inform Transportation at 209-858-3200 ext. 50444 if the students will not need a ride in the morning or afternoon.

### **Student Behavior:**

Manteca Unified School District is committed to helping your students ride to and from school in a safe and orderly manner, respectful of the rights of all passengers. We need your support for these basic requirements, listed below.

From time to time, we may call upon you to help us in the effort to encourage your student to behave responsibly in the vehicle. We request that you share any information with our management and the driver that can help to encourage positive behavior in the vehicle.

**Five Basic Behavior Requirements:**

- Listen, and follow the driver's instructions.
- Hitting, fighting, touching other riders or the driver, or throwing objects, is not permitted.
- Stay properly seated with seat belt fastened and/or in other equipment
- Speak softly and do not use abusive language.
- Food and drink cannot be consumed while in the vehicle.

**Behavior and Incident Reports:**

The driver will always work with each student to obtain the behavior needed to transport all students safely and successfully. When, in the judgment of the driver, a student's behavior interferes with safety, order, or the rights of others, the driver will determine if the behavior should be documented and reported to the IEP team. These reports are an essential link to schools and parents to let them know what is happening on the vehicle. The team can then make informed decisions to provide appropriate instruction and guidance to the student to enable them to be successful while being transported to and from school.

**Counseling and Consequences:**

Your driver has been trained in a variety of techniques that are designed to promote positive behavior in the vehicle. If your student's behavior constitutes a minor violation of the rules, the driver will attempt to encourage a positive change in behavior through various techniques. In some cases, the driver may assign seats to one or more students in order to maintain a safe and appropriate environment. If the negative behavior does not change, an incident report or bus citation will be documented.

### **Pick-up and Drop-off of Students:**

All children must be ready for pick-up at least five (5) minutes before the scheduled pick-up time in the morning. Bus drivers are NOT allowed to honk their horns at bus stops. A parent or guardian must be home in the afternoon and prepared to meet the vehicle at least five (5) minutes before the scheduled drop off time. Transportation services must operate on a schedule in order to get all students to school or home on time. In the morning, the vehicle should normally arrive at the scheduled time and the driver will only wait 2 minutes for the student to load the bus. If the student is not out within 2 minutes, the driver will move on and not return to pick-up the student. For drop-off, the driver should normally arrive at the scheduled time and the driver will only wait 2 minutes for a parent/guardian to receive the student. If no one is there to receive the student, the student will then be returned to the school site. In the event the school site is closed, the student will be returned to the MUSD Transportation Department. If the Transportation Department is unable to contact the parent/guardian, the police will be contacted, and the student will be released to the police department.

### **Bus Stops:**

Under guidelines established by the California Highway Patrol, MUSD establishes stops for pupil transportation programs operated under the jurisdiction of the district. Manteca Unified has decided that students with special needs should not cross the street when moving between the bus and home. The vehicle will be routed to drop the student on the right side at the closest, safest stop nearest the student's destination address. Transportation is only provided from locations within the district boundaries. Service is not provided to homes or day cares outside the district for any reason. Transportation to different addresses on different days of the week is not allowed. Not only is it a hardship for every other student, and their families, as their schedule changes depending on the day, but it is also confusing for schools and Transportation, which can affect your child's transportation.

### **Audio and Video Surveillance Systems, GPS:**

For your student's protection, we have installed video and audio surveillance systems on most of the vehicles your child may ride in. Available recordings will be reviewed by the Administration when concerns are raised about activities in the vehicle. Recordings can be overwritten in as little as 3 days and always within 10 days. For safety and monitoring, vehicles are equipped with GPS tracking systems. Available logs from these systems allow us to check where a vehicle was at any point in time on the route.

### **Routing Changes:**

Parents should be prepared for changes in vehicles, routes, drivers and time of pick-up and drop-off throughout the school year and from year to year. Overall route travel and pickup times will vary from route to route, and on the same route, depending on school and students who are currently assigned to the route. The routes are constructed to safely and efficiently meet the needs of all the students. Routes must operate on a schedule to ensure everyone arrives at school or home in a timely manner. We are unable to accommodate requests to pick up or drop off a student at a specific time. After an initial adjustment period at the start of school or upon reorganization of routes, the pick-up and delivery time should be consistent for a given set of students. Unfortunately, routes may run later during days of unfavorable weather conditions such as fog and rain, during uncontrollable traffic delays or other events beyond the driver's control.

### **Personal Hygiene:**

For those students still being toilet trained, please be sure the student has used the restroom before boarding the vehicle. Students who are not clean will not be permitted to board. It is impractical and unsafe for a driver to allow a student off the vehicle at a place other than their designated stop or school of attendance to use the facilities.

## **Wheelchairs:**

Wheelchairs must be easily secured on the bus without any modifications to the vehicle. Wheelchair students are typically expected to ride in their wheelchair while on the bus. It is unsafe to transport students with their lap trays attached due to the potential of severe injury in the event of an accident. All lap trays must be removed and stored separately during transport. If a parent picks up a student at school but leaves the wheelchair, the parent must transport the student to school the next morning. We will bring the student and wheelchair home in the afternoon. We do not transport empty chairs if the student is not also on the bus. No student is to ride a wheelchair lift without being seated and secured in a wheelchair.

### **Wheelchairs must:**

- Be inspected daily
- Have a seat belt securely attached to the frame (no Velcro)
- Have functioning brakes preventing all movement
- Have functioning anti-tip bars and foot pedals
- Have fully inflated tires, no worn tread
- Be mechanically sound, no broken/missing parts
- Have locking pins (if applicable)
- Have a battery compartment secured to the chair and free of leaks

Students in wheelchairs not meeting these requirements may be denied transportation service due to the potential danger to themselves or other students.

### **Closest, Safest Stop:**

If a student has been designated as needing 'curb to curb' transportation services, the stop is usually placed at or near the student's home. There are some cases, however, where this is not possible or legal. These include, for example,

- Where the student lives on the wrong side of a one-way street
- Within 200 feet of a railroad



- Where there is no place for a vehicle to safely pull to the curb. This includes instances where the speed limit is greater than 25 miles per hour, which prevents the vehicle from being able to legally double park.
- On narrow and/or dead-end streets where the vehicle cannot safely turn around
- Apartment complexes and gated communities

In these cases, a team from the Transportation Department will determine the closest, safest stop near the student's home. The student will need to be waiting at that stop in the morning at least five (5) minutes before the published arrival time. If the student does not have a "WAIVER" then the parent or guardian must be waiting at the stop in the afternoon at least five (5) minutes before the published arrival time in the afternoon.

### **Type of Vehicle:**

Manteca Unified will assign one or more different types of vehicles to transport your student. The type of vehicle used will depend on multiple factors including, but not limited to, student and school locations, bell times, etc. The service, or vehicle, used is determined solely by Manteca Unified School District.

### **Transportation Waivers:**

Transportation waivers are not issued by the Transportation Department. If a parent/guardian wishes to obtain a waiver for their student to be released from the bus independently, the request needs to be made through the Special Education Department and approved by the Director of Special Education.

### **Bus Evacuation Training:**

All transported students are required to receive training in how to evacuate their vehicle in case of an emergency at least once a year. During this essential training, the student learns how the process works, what is expected of them and what it feels like. All physically able students will be asked to exit the vehicle through a door other than the one they normally use to enter and exit. The training is usually held at a school site and staff are typically available to assist.

### **Personal Articles:**

Each item a student takes to school must be clearly marked with the student's name. Manteca Unified is not responsible for personal electronics, cell phones, or any other belongings, even if their presence has been specified in an IEP. In case of lost items, check with your school site or the driver.

### **Prohibited Items:**

The following are not permitted on a school bus: animals (except service animals specified in an IEP), glass containers, balloons, skateboards, scooters, and laser pointers. Prior permission from Transportation is required to transport large articles.

### **Late Routes:**

Routes may be running late from time-to-time due to circumstances beyond our control (i.e., traffic, weather, student behaviors). Buses will always run late the first few days of school, or if the route has a new driver, as students, drivers and parents start building a routine and start getting to know each other.

### **Concerns:**

Manteca Unified School District is dedicated to providing the safest, most reliable school bus transportation possible for your student. We have set processes and procedures in place to ensure you receive the best service possible from us. We encourage you to call or email us about any concerns you may have to help us identify any service problems and create solutions for them.

Questions or concerns regarding service can be directed to the Transportation Director at: [jfannin@musd.net](mailto:jfannin@musd.net)

Transportation Department: 209-825-3200 ext. 50444

Special Education Department: 209-858-0837