

# Student/Parent Transportation Handbook

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The school bus transportation handbook is intended for students and parents in the Iowa City Community School District, identifying policies and procedures for students being transported to and from school.

These policies and procedures have been developed to promote safety with cooperation from students, parents, bus drivers and school personnel. Parents are encouraged to review these policies and procedures with their child(ren) to become familiar with what is expected for safe and orderly transportation to and from school.

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# 1 STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

## 1. Contract Bus Services

The district has entered into a contract with North America Central School Bus (NACSB) DBA Iowa Central School Bus to provide school bus transportation services.

## 2. Requesting Transportation

Students moving to a new address or new students to the district should contact the school the child attends to arrange for transportation. All requests for transportation or changes to transportation are processed at the student's school first. The school then coordinates with the Transportation Office regarding service. Please allow at least 5 business days before transportation will begin.

### 1.2.1 Health Needs

Parents should notify your child's School Nurse of any specific health needs (asthma, seizures, diabetes, etc.) that may be pertinent for school bus transportation. This information will be kept confidential and shared only with school personnel and transportation personnel as needed.

If a student requires medical treatment while on a bus the driver will notify Iowa Central School Bus Dispatch to contact emergency medical services.

## 3. Routes and Route Changes

The district will inform the parent/guardian the school bus route information is ready to view in Infinite Campus prior to the beginning of each school year. Any change in routing resulting in a stop being moved or changed by more than 10 minutes will be communicated by letter or phone call to the parent/guardian giving at least 3 calendar days' notice of the change. In most circumstances, the school bus driver will hand deliver notification of the route change to the student.

## 4. Transportation Eligibility

### 1.4.1 Regular Education Students

The district shall provide transportation as required by the State of Iowa. Students in grades K-8 shall be entitled to transportation only if they live more than 2.0 miles from the school designated for attendance. Students in grades 9-12 shall be entitled to transportation only if they live more than 3.0 miles from the school designated for attendance.

When measuring distance to determine eligibility for transportation, distance shall be measured by using the shortest distance on public roads only. In general, school buses do not travel on private roads/lanes or in private subdivisions. Distance is measured from the student's driveway to the assigned attendance center's main entrance designated by the US Postal Service.

The district is not required to maintain seating space on a school bus for students who do not or will not regularly utilize the district's transportation service for extended periods during the school year. The student, or the student's parent or legal guardian if the student is less than eighteen years of age, shall be notified by the district before transportation services may be suspended, and the suspension may continue until the student, or the student's parent or legal guardian, notifies the district that regular student ridership will continue.

Exceptions will be made for those children requiring special education transportation.

Questions regarding school bus transportation eligibility should be directed to the District's Transportation Office at the Educational Services Center 319.688.1187.

### 1.4.2 Special Education Students

The district will provide transportation to eligible special needs students as determined by the student's Individual Education Program (IEP). Questions regarding special education transportation should be directed to the Director of Special Education at 319.688.1007. Assignment of associates to a school bus is determined by a student's IEP.

Parents of students (grades K through XS) on Special Education buses are required to be present at the bus stop while the child boards and exits the bus, unless noted differently in the IEP.

#### **1.4.2.1 Seat Belts/Child Restraints/Car Seats**

School buses manufactured before October 2, 2019, are exempt from child restraints unless a special needs child has an IEP that defines the use of a child restraint device.

If students are transported in 9-passenger or less family-type vehicles the law requires:

1. A child under 1 year of age and weighing less than 20 pounds shall be secured in a rear-facing child restraint system used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
2. A child under 6 years of age, who does not meet the description of "1 above", shall be secured by a child restraint system used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
3. A child at least 6 years of age but under 11 years of age shall be secured by a child restraint system used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions or by a safety belt or safety harness.

#### **1.4.3 Voluntary Transfer Students**

Students who have voluntarily transferred from their originally assigned attendance center are not entitled to transportation. Busing might be available under the Pay to Ride Program see section 1.11.

#### **1.4.4 Multiple Address Policy**

The district will provide transportation to only one bus per household which will need to be the same for AM & PM. Busing might be available under the Pay to Ride Program see section 1.11.

#### **1.4.5 Parent Providing Transportation**

In situations where transportation by school bus is impassable, service is not available or in special circumstances parents/guardians may be required to transport their children to the school designated for attendance. The parent/guardian will be reimbursed for such transportation service in accordance with Iowa code.

### **1.5 General Goals and Objectives**

The district provides Iowa Central with a list of all students eligible for transportation services. Iowa Central School Bus then establishes the bus route and stops along the route. The district will review all routes and routing procedures, including stop times annually. Routes are designed to achieve safety, maximum utilization, elimination of unnecessary mileage and duplication while assuring timely arrivals and departures within the framework of established school hours. Students will be assigned to a bus route based on their home address.

Students will be transported only on the route to which they have been assigned unless special alternate route requests have been made and approved with the school district. (For transportation to/from childcare provider see Pay to Ride section)

Only those students assigned to a bus route will be transported on a school bus. Students will not be allowed to ride another bus for purposes such as sleepovers, homework collaboration, after school activities, etc. Inviting friends to ride the bus is not permitted.

When possible, routes begin at the farthest point from the school or schools served and proceed on the shortest charted course. Exceptions may exist when it is determined more economical to do otherwise and/or when there are hazardous conditions. Every effort will be made to ensure riding time on the school bus is no longer than 60 minutes for students in grades K-8 and 75 minutes for students in grades 9-12. However, when circumstances arise and Iowa Code allows, exceptions to these ride times may be made.

### **1.6 Student Change of Address**

Students moving to a new address or new students to the district should contact the school the child attends with this information. Please allow at least 5 business days before transportation will begin.

## 1.7 Here Comes the Bus

Here Comes the Bus allows you to view your child's current school bus location and information about the route, including the scheduled arrival time to your child's assigned stop. The app can be downloaded from the Apple App Store or Google Play. The app requires parents/guardians to register and provide specific security information including a username, school district code (29216), password, your child's PowerSchool identification number, and last name for each individual student. Once registered, the app will allow parents to start receiving information on the location and timing of your child's bus.

## 1.8 Route Updates

To allow ample time for driver notification and, when applicable, parent notification of bus route changes, adjustments are usually made in the routing system several days prior to their scheduled start date. As a result, there may be instances in which Here Comes the Bus lists scheduled times that are not yet "live."

It is important to note that while Here Comes the Bus is a useful tool to better communicate current school bus information in real-time, it does not serve as official notice of a time change to a student's bus information. Any routing changes will still be communicated as outlined in the "Routes and Route Changes" section. Every effort will be made to minimize inconsistencies, but it is expected that students will wait by the curb of the property or the designated safe stop at least 10 minutes before their officially scheduled stop time as indicated in the "Bus Stops" section.

Parents wishing to verify their student's current bus information should contact the District Transportation Office at 319.688.1187 or Iowa Central School Bus at 319.688.1900.

## 1.9 Bus Stops

Students will be picked up and dropped off at their assigned stop only. The assigned stop will be the same stop both AM and PM except where special arrangements have been made. Students in grades K-12 will not be permitted to get off at a different stop unless the parent/guardian makes special arrangement with the will not be permitted to get off at a different stop unless the parent/guardian makes special arrangements with the district in writing 5 business days in advance to the request, exception to the timeline must be approved by the Transportation Department. Notes handed to the school bus driver are not acceptable. Approval from the District will be communicated to Iowa Central School Bus who will then communicate with the school bus driver. This will ensure that the parent has made the decision and avoids confusion and the chance of students getting lost.

Students will not be allowed to ride a different bus from the one they are assigned. Inviting friends to ride the bus is not permitted.

Students will normally not be asked to walk more than 5 blocks to a bus stop location.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for the conduct/safety of their student while going to and from bus stops and for students waiting at the bus stop. This does not relieve parents from the responsibility of supervision until such time as the student boards the bus or after the student leaves the bus at the end of the school day.

Students are to be waiting by the curb of the property or at the designated safe stop at **least 10 minutes before** their scheduled stop time and not in their house, on the front porch or in the garage. If the driver cannot see the student waiting, the driver will continue to the next stop. Too frequent and long stops cause delays in the fixed bus schedules, increase traffic congestion, and delay the arrival of students at school.

## 1.10 Attendant Support Transportation

The school district is allowed to exercise discretion in providing transportation to those students who are not otherwise entitled to transportation. Some areas in the district receive attendant support busing despite being within 2.0 miles for K-8 student and 3.0 miles for 9-12 students.

Attendant Support busing is reevaluated on an annual basis.

## 1.11 Pay-to-Ride

### 1.11.1 Program Details

- The program is provided on a space -available, time-available, first-come, first -served basis. Participation is limited according to capacity as determined by the district and is available to students in grades K-12.
- The program is only available on existing bus routes and at existing stops. No additional routes and or stops will be provided for pay-to-ride students after the deadline.
- Buses provided specifically for special education students are not eligible for this program.
- Bus stop locations and times are assigned by Iowa Central School Bus.
- Availability of seats and location of bus stops is subject to change based on changes in enrollment, boundaries, and other factors determined by the District or Iowa Central School Bus and can occur any time. When changes to routes or stops occur, families utilizing pay-to-ride busing will be notified at the same time that the families of eligible students are notified.
- Students must be picked up and dropped off at their assigned location only. Pick up and drop off must be at the same location.
- Requests for a change in a student's bus stop will only be honored if the student's address has changed.
- No guest students will be allowed to ride along with pay to ride students.
- All students riding the bus are subject to the rules and regulations of conduct and safety established by the District and Iowa Central School Bus. The District and Iowa Central use video cameras on school buses as a means to maintain a safe environment for students and staff.
- Payments can be made online via the district's website. Fee is charged on a per year basis.
- Refunds will be granted for any unused full trimester purchased for the current school year.
- No refunds or rate adjustments will be made for days buses cannot operate because of weather or other circumstances beyond the control of Iowa Central School Bus or the district.

### 1.11.2 Payment and Fees for Service

- Pay to Ride is per student, per year, round trip. The fee is determined by the student's lunch status.
- Full payment must be made no later than the due date to be considered, for a bus roster, for the start of the school year.
- Applications will be accepted after the due date while capacity remains on existing routes. (Note: Students will only be assigned to existing bus stops and routes; buses will not be re-routed to accommodate requests.)
  - Students are not eligible to ride until payment is received and application is approved.

### 1.11.3 Application Process

1. To apply for pay-to-ride busing, please download the following form: [2023 - 2024 Pay to Ride Application](#)
2. Payments can be made online: [MySchoolBucks](#)
3. Mail or bring your application to the following address:  
Iowa City Community School District  
Transportation Department  
1725 N Dodge St  
Iowa City, IA 52245
4. Iowa City Community School District will begin processing applications upon receipt, in the order they are received. Each application and payment will be kept on file until it is determined the student is eligible for a seat on the bus.

## 1.12 Students Responsibilities / Expectations

School bus transportation is a privilege and should not be taken for granted. Anything that happens on the bus to divert the driver's attention from his/her job immediately endangers the safety of the riders. All expectations outlined below are also applicable to students riding the bus for district field trips and athletic events. Student refusal to adhere to the following responsibilities may result in transportation privileges being withdrawn.

The student's responsibilities (including safety precautions) are as follows:

1. Students shall be at their designated pickup location **at least 10 minutes prior** to the time scheduled for the bus to arrive. The bus will not leave the stop before the designated pickup time.

2. Students who must walk some distance along the roadway to and from the designated bus stop shall walk on the left side facing oncoming traffic.
3. Students are to stay off the roadway and avoid horseplay at all times while waiting for the bus at the designated stop.
4. Students who must cross a roadway when boarding or leaving a bus must go to the front of the bus at least 10 ft. (or 10 giant steps) and always wait for the bus driver's signal before crossing the roadway; and always look both ways to make sure no vehicles are passing the bus. The driver shall see that the way is clear before signaling students to cross. Students must never cross behind the bus.
5. Students are to wait until the bus has come to a complete stop before attempting to enter or leave.
6. Students must keep all objects and body parts (head, arms, and legs) inside the bus at all times and refrain from throwing objects out the window or in the bus. Students are not to yell out windows at passing persons or vehicles. Windows shall be lowered at the driver's discretion.
7. Students must remain in their seats while the bus is in motion at all times and keep the aisles clear.
8. The use or possession of alcohol, tobacco or look-alike substances, eating, drinking, and chewing gum or cell phone usage (to include talking, texting, browsing the internet, taking pictures, or recording video) is prohibited on the bus.
9. Students are not allowed to bring skateboards, scooters, sleds, pets, or large musical instruments on the school bus. Items must be secured in a book bag, backpack or held on the student's lap. Non-secured items, given certain traffic situations, may become airborne, setting the stage for an accident and/or injuries.
10. Students wishing to listen to music or audio must use headphones.
11. Students shall conduct themselves in an acceptable manner at all times. Fighting, vulgarity, rude or abusive behavior, damaging the bus or other improper conduct shall not be tolerated.
12. Students may ride only the bus to which they are assigned. Inviting friends to ride the bus will not be permitted.
13. Students will be picked up and dropped off only at approved stops.
14. Students should remember they are still on school time and should use school manners while riding the bus.

### **1.13 Discipline**

The procedures to be followed for infraction of student responsibilities outlined above are:

1. Upon first violation the driver verbally acknowledges infraction.
2. Upon second violation an "Unsatisfactory Bus Conduct Report" is written, the driver talks to the student privately and/or assigns a special seat. The written report is sent to the principal who forwards a copy to the parents.
3. Upon third violation a second "Unsatisfactory Bus Conduct Report" is written and sent to the principal. The principal meets with the student. Students are informed that they are now on a 6-week probationary period and any violation will result in suspension from riding the bus. Notes from the meeting are recorded on the "Unsatisfactory Bus Conduct Report" and a copy is sent to the parents.
4. Upon fourth violation a third "Unsatisfactory Bus Conduct Report" is written and sent to the principal. The principal meets with the student, calls the parents and the student is suspended from riding the bus immediately (next morning) for up to 5 days.
5. Violations occurring after the 6-week probationary period will be treated as a fourth violation (see #4 above).
6. Violations occurring during the 6-week probationary period will result in student being suspended for a period of time to be determined by the principal

When the behavior by a student is such that it becomes an immediate threat to the safety of other riders the student may be suspended without going through steps 1-3 above.

### **1.14 Damages**

Any damage to a bus by a student, or students, will be billed to the parent or guardian who will be responsible for payment and the student will have bus riding privileges suspended until payment is received in full.

### 1.15 Seat Assignments

School bus drivers will assign seats for all students (K-12) a few weeks after the school year begins.

### 1.16 Bus Accidents

When a school bus or any Iowa Central School Bus vehicle transporting students is involved in an accident, Iowa Central School Bus shall contact the District Office immediately. Iowa Central School Bus shall then call and/or email the parents of each student on the vehicle. Iowa Central School Bus will complete the appropriate accident report and file accordingly with the district.

### 1.17 Late Buses

Weather, traffic, maintenance difficulties and unforeseen incidents may be responsible for delays in the arrival of school buses. In the event your bus does not arrive at the designated time, please allow 10-15 minutes before calling Iowa Central School Bus at 319.688.1900. If a school bus is running more than 30 minutes late before or after school, Iowa Central School Bus will attempt to contact the parents as well as the building Principal of each student to let them know the estimated bus arrival time.

### 1.18 Cameras on Buses

The district administration has authorized the use of video recordings on school district buses. The video cameras will be used to monitor student behavior to maintain order on the school buses to promote and maintain a safe environment. Students and parents are hereby notified that the content of the video recordings may be used in a student disciplinary proceeding. Video recordings are handled in accordance with District policy and procedures.

The following notice will also be placed on all school buses equipped with a video camera: "For your safety, you may be recorded by a video surveillance system which may also include audio recording."

### 1.19 Complaint Process

Parents should contact Iowa Central School Bus Contract Manager, Justin VanHorn, to report concerns/problems with bussing at 319.688.1900. If a parent is unable to resolve the matter with the Contract Manager, the next step is to contact the District's Transportation Office at 319.688.1187.

### 1.20 School Cancellation or Early Dismissal

Every effort will be made to make cancellation or delay of school decisions by 6:00 AM. However, weather conditions may be such where this is not possible. As soon as this decision is made an announcement of school cancellation or delay is made on local television and radio stations, on the district website ([www.iowacityschools.org](http://www.iowacityschools.org)) as well as through a phone messaging system that will call parent's home, work or cell phones when school is cancelled, delayed or dismissed early. **Please make sure your child's school has the correct phone numbers for notification.** The final decision as to when conditions are unsafe to operate school buses will be made by the superintendent or designee. Decisions to dismiss school early will be made by 11:00 AM, if at all possible.

### 1.21 Emergency Numbers

Parents should provide at least 2 emergency contact numbers to the student's school. These numbers will be kept on file and only used to contact parents if necessary.

### 1.22 Key Contacts

Justin VanHorn, Iowa Central School Bus Contract Manager-319.688.1900

Esme Davis, District Transportation Manager-319.688.1187 Nick Proud, Chief Human Resource Officer-319.688.1000

#### Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of the Iowa City Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact Eric Howard, Director of Equity & Employee Relations, 1725 N. Dodge St., Iowa City, IA 52245, (319) 688- 1000, [howard.eric@iowacityschools.org](mailto:howard.eric@iowacityschools.org)