

Transportation Information

Student School Bus Safety

Student safety is the primary concern of the Transportation Department. Statistics show that the most dangerous time for students is before and/or after they are on the bus. The Transportation Department considers the environment and age of the students when placing bus stops. We attempt to place every bus stop at a location with reasonable safety assurances for students. Parents must assume the responsibility for their students traveling back and forth from home to the stop.

Regular Service Parameters

- **Eligibility**

At the Board's direction, the Superintendent or designee shall permit students for whom the District does not receive state transportation funds to use District transportation, in accordance with time and space limitations and administrative regulations.

Transportation is available for children who live two miles or more from their home campus. The distance a student lives from their home campus is determined by measuring from the driveway of the student's residence to the nearest entry or exit of the school property using the shortest route on a paved public roadway. Buses will not enter private property, including gated communities. This distance for neighborhoods that cannot be entered by buses due to access issues will be measured from the front entrance of the neighborhood. The distance for streets that cannot be entered by buses due to access issues will be measured from the nearest corner accessible by bus. Students residing within two miles of their assigned school may have transportation available if their neighborhood qualifies as hazardous under the district's hazardous transportation rating system.

Special education students are eligible for transportation if need is established through the Admission, Review, and Dismissal process.

- **Pick Up Time Criteria**

Regular transportation attempts to arrive at every bus stop on time. Due to the variances between individual clocks, students are asked to arrive at the bus stop 5 minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time. Buses will load students and depart the stop. Regular buses do not wait for late students under most circumstances. Special needs transportation follows much the same criteria but will wait up to 2 minutes at the stop for the student to load. All buses will wait 7 minutes at the school in the afternoon for students to board. Students are expected to proceed immediately to the buses. All bus drivers are instructed not to stop or open the door for late students due to safety concerns having students too close to moving bus wheels.

- **Rules for Student Conduct on School Buses**

Rules for student conduct on school buses are available in all student handbooks. The following list is posted in all buses:

Observe same conduct as in the classroom.
All personal items are to remain in backpacks.
Be courteous. Use no profane language.
Do not eat or drink on the bus.
Keep the bus clean.
Cooperate with the driver.
Do not use tobacco.
Do not be destructive.
Stay in your seat.
Keep head, hands inside bus, and feet on the floor.
Keep aisle clear at all times.
Bus driver is authorized to assign seats.

- **Students wishing to get off at a different stop, ride a bus other than their assigned bus or not a bus rider.**

At times, a student may wish to get off at a different stop, or ride a bus with a friend. Any similar requests must be made in writing to the campus office by the morning of the date of the change. The written request must include the name of the student with whom he/she wishes to ride as well as a contact number for the parent. The requesting student must be currently receiving bus privileges in order to ride on another bus. Any changes must be approved by Transportation.

Bus Route Criteria

- **Route Design**

Bus routes are created to enhance student safety while maximizing vehicle efficiency. Stops are created that allow students to wait off the main roadway for the bus if at all possible. Stops are also created to minimize students walking in highly traveled roadways for long distances. Stops are not placed in dead-end streets whenever possible to minimize bus accidents while backing. Backing is a very dangerous maneuver for a school bus. Stops are spread as far apart as criteria will allow, decreasing the number of stops each bus will make on its route thus minimizing riding time for the students.

Elementary students may be required to walk up to 1/4 of a mile to a bus stop. Secondary students may be required to walk up to 1/2 of a mile. Bus routes are designed to limit student ride time to no more than 45 minutes one-way if at all possible, however, most students ride under 30 minutes one-way.

The above design criteria are for regular students only. Students in special programs are subject to different design criteria. This criterion is explained in the Special Needs Service Parameters below.

- **Bus Stop Location**

Iola ISD creates bus stops using the following criteria:

Provide students with the ability to stand off the roadway while waiting for the bus. Locate the stops to maximize visibility for both students and traffic (100' minimum visibility).

Avoid locations that expose students to traffic hazards and reduce the number of hazards for students crossing the street.

Place the stops in locations away from non-traffic hazards such as active railroad tracks or commercial areas.

Place the stops away from corners if possible to better control traffic in the area immediately around the bus.

Avoid stops in cul-de-sacs to minimize accident risks caused by buses backing up to turn around.

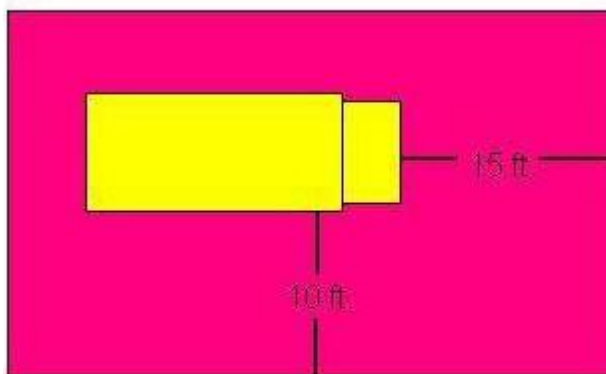
Place stops on streets with as little traffic as possible.

Create at least a 10' buffer zone between students and the bus both in the neighborhoods and at school to keep students from being struck by the bus.

- **Bus Ridership Capacities**

School buses are rated by manufacturers to have capacities based on three riders per seat. Iola ISD has adopted a maximum ridership per bus at 3 riders per seat at elementary levels, 2 1/2 riders per seat at middle school levels, and 2 1/4 riders per seat at high school levels.

SCHOOL BUS DANGER ZONES



Never enter the danger zone when the bus is in motion

The most dangerous time for a student riding the school bus is the loading and unloading process. It is critical that students are visible to the driver and out of the bus danger zones when the bus is in motion. This rule applies to loading and unloading both

in the neighborhoods and at schools. If students are crossing the street, they should move immediately out of the danger zone and proceed at least 15 feet in front of the bus before crossing the street.

Students failing to obey the posted bus conduct rules will be subject to progressive discipline by the driver and school. The driver will remind the student of the infraction and ask for the student to obey the rules. If the student refuses to obey the rules the driver will either move the student to another seat in the bus and/or write the student a referral. Student discipline generated by a referral is handled by school administration.

Special Needs Service Parameters

We are pleased to provide quality educational services for your children. Our mission in Special Needs Transportation is to ensure your child arrives at school and returns home safely with care and thought given to his/her individual needs. Our success is a result of our commitment, skill, knowledge, understanding, and ability to communicate. All drivers and assistants participate in frequent in-service training to expand and improve their driving skills and upgrade their knowledge of helping children with special needs. In our system, everyone works hard to communicate needs and changes. When changes occur, routes must be revised and time changes communicated to all parents. Please plan to transport your child to and from school the first three (3) working days if the Admissions, Review, and Dismissal Committee (ARD) and/or placement changes occur after school begins in August. After the ARD, the driver will call you within three (3) working days to:

Introduce him/herself and the attendant; Tell you how and when you can reach them; and Establish times and location for your child's pick-up and drop-off.

As a parent, you can help support our mission by:

1. Attending your child's ARD committee meetings and Annual Reviews.
2. **Completing the Special Needs Transportation Information Sheet.**
3. Ensuring a responsible person is home when your child is picked up in the morning and brought home in the afternoon. (Drivers assume responsibility at the door of the bus in the morning and will not release the child until they see a responsible person listed on the ARD after school.)
4. Having your child ready to board the bus within five (5) minutes of scheduled time each morning.
5. Calling 936-394-2361 X 189 and making an appointment to speak with the driver rather than delay them in route to transport other students.
6. Teaching your child to follow the bus rules. (A copy will be provided to you.)
7. Notifying the Transportation Office 936-394-2361 X 189 as early as possible when your child will not be attending school. Failure to ride 2 consecutive days without proper communication will result in termination of service until the parent/guardian calls the Transportation Office and reinstates the service.
8. Sharing information with the driver and/or assistant regarding changes in schedule, medical status or major personal disruptions that would seriously affect your child's behavior.
9. Communicating in writing any medical information, medication or student health status changes which would affect your child's transportation.

10. Being open to information from the driver or attendant regarding their observations and concerns.
11. Making sure your child goes to the restroom before boarding the bus.
12. Maintaining consistent day care. (Frequent changes adversely affect bus schedules for all students assigned to the bus.)
13. Remembering that students in wheelchairs must have properly operating lock brakes, foot rests, arm rests, and a safety belt.

Frequently Asked Questions for Special Needs

1. What happens if I'm not home to receive my child after school?

If no one is home to receive your child when the driver arrives, the driver will continue with the route, keeping your child on the bus until the other children have been transported, then the driver will return the child to his/her campus. Students that must be returned to school more than 3 times (not necessarily in consecutive order) will be taken to the Police Department where Child Protective Services will be contacted.

2. Why does it take up to three days to begin transportation services for my child?

When a new student is added to or dropped from a driver's list, the time of pick-up and drop-off changes for all students. Parents need information as quickly as possible to adjust to changing pick-up and drop-off times. The driver also needs information about their children before transporting them. The three working day lead between notice and start of transport allows for necessary information processing.

3. Why must my child be on the bus so long?

Curb-to-curb service requires the drivers to go to multiple locations (as many as 10 - 15) spread out over a large geographic area, and transport students to locations that are sometimes far away from the child's home attendance school. Our goal is for no student to be on the bus for more than 60 minutes each way.

4. Whom do I call when I have questions or concerns?

If you have questions or concerns about transportation services for your child, please call the Transportation Department at 936-394-2361 X 189 or go to www.iolaisd.net

5. Who do I call to make changes in my child's transportation?

Student info should be given to the home campus who will then inform transportation of the changes.

The Texas Education Agency provides funding guidelines to school districts to evaluate areas within 2 miles of schools. The guidelines are:

A. Regular Students – those regular and special education students who do not require special transportation services (as addressed under subsection "B" of this section) [TEC, Sections 25.036, 34.011, and 42.155(b)(1) and (d)] 1. Eligible student riders (including transfers as addressed below) must: a. legally reside two or more miles from their campus of regular attendance as measured along the shortest route that may be traveled on public roads [hereinafter, "two-or-more-mile student"]; or b. legally reside in a designated area within two miles of their campus of regular attendance which, as determined by the respective district's board of trustees (see subsection "A 5" of "section "II" for related requirements), would subject them to hazardous traffic conditions if they walked to or from school [hereinafter, "hazardous-area student"]

5. Student rider eligibility should be determined in accordance with the following: a. All distance measurements should be made in a reasonably accurate and consistent manner using the shortest route that may be traveled on public (not private) roads between an established prominent landmark at the respective student's campus (preferably, the flag pole or main entrance to the campus) and the private road/driveway or walkway/main entrance to the student's legal residence. However, local district policy regarding student rider eligibility criteria may be more restrictive, such as establishing a two-mile radius or longer walking distance from the campus. b. Where one-way streets, no through streets, prohibited turns, or other comparable traffic restrictions exist along the route to or from school, the distance measured from home to school could differ significantly from the distance measured from school to home. In such instances, the longer of the two distance measurements may be used to establish rider eligibility for transportation allotment purposes.

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