

ECISD Transportation Guidelines

2026–2027 School Year

Purpose and General Standard

ECISD provides student transportation to eligible students in a safe, efficient, consistent, and fiscally responsible manner. Transportation is not automatically available to every student. Only students who meet applicable eligibility requirements, or whose transportation is required by law or by an individualized plan, will receive district transportation.

- Transportation eligibility is determined by federal law, Texas law and funding rules, ECISD Board policy, program requirements, and available district resources.
- A transportation request, campus enrollment, employee status, or prior-year service does not by itself establish eligibility.
- Transportation assignments may include centralized stops, shuttle locations, transfer buses, and more than one bus in order to serve students across the district.
- Routes, stops, buses, and schedules may be changed when needed for safety, enrollment, program placement, efficiency, staffing, capacity, or operational reasons.
- Standard home-to-school transportation is based on the student's approved primary home residence address recorded in the Focus Parent Portal. Transportation is assigned from the stop serving that approved home address to the assigned school and back to the same approved home-address stop unless another arrangement is legally required or specifically approved by ECISD.

1. Transportation Eligibility and Home-to-School Service

Home-to-School Eligibility and Approved Address

A student is generally eligible for regular home-to-school transportation when the student resides two (2) or more miles from the student's assigned campus, measured along the shortest route that may be traveled on publicly maintained roads, and the student is otherwise eligible under district policy.

- Families residing less than two miles from the assigned campus are responsible for transportation unless another legal or district-approved eligibility basis applies.
- Living within ECISD boundaries does not guarantee bus service to every address, campus, transfer program, or requested location.
- For standard home-to-school transportation, students must use the bus, route, stop, and schedule assigned by ECISD Transportation. Service is based on the student's approved primary home residence address on file in the Focus Parent Portal and is provided between the assigned stop associated with that approved home address and the student's assigned school, then back to the same approved home-address stop, unless another arrangement is required by law or specifically approved by the district. Students may not ride an unassigned route or use an unapproved stop without prior authorization.

Students Attending a Non-Zoned Campus or School of Choice

Students attending a magnet, School of Choice, transfer, or other non-zoned campus may be assigned to a designated shuttle or nearby ECISD campus for transportation. The parent or guardian is responsible for transportation to and from the designated location unless a different arrangement is required by law or documented in an IEP or Section 504 plan.

2. Individualized Transportation Services Under IDEA and Section 504

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), transportation may be a related service when it is required for a student with a disability to benefit from special education. In Texas, the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee determines, on an individualized basis, whether transportation is required and how the service will be provided. Eligibility for special education services alone does not automatically establish a need for transportation as a related service.

- The student's IEP must document transportation as a related service when the ARD committee determines it is necessary.

- The ARD committee may consider the student's disability-related needs, health and safety needs, mobility, behavior supports, equipment, supervision, accessibility, communication needs, route conditions, and ability to use regular transportation with or without supplementary aids and services.
- Transportation required by a student's IEP must be provided at no cost to the parent or guardian.
- The two-mile regular transportation standard does not limit transportation that an ARD committee determines is required as a related service.
- For a student with a Section 504 plan, the Section 504 committee determines and documents whether a transportation accommodation or service is necessary for the student to access the educational program.

Authorized Transportation Locations for Individualized Services

When transportation is required through an IEP, Section 504 plan, or other applicable law, service will be provided to and from locations authorized by the applicable plan, committee decision, and district transportation procedures. Depending on the individualized determination, authorized transportation may include:

- The student's approved primary residence address and the assigned school or instructional campus.
- A state-licensed or otherwise district-verified child care facility when the applicable committee determines and documents that location as part of the student's transportation arrangement.
- Travel between schools, campuses, or district facilities required for the student to receive educational, related, transition, or other documented services.
- A district-approved site for an instructional, nonacademic, or extracurricular activity connected to the student's educational program, such as Special Olympics at Ratliff Stadium, when transportation is necessary for participation and is documented or otherwise approved through the appropriate district process.
- Other locations specifically required by law or approved through the appropriate district process.

Transportation will not be provided to an alternate residence, private appointment, employment site, child care location, or activity solely for family convenience unless the location and service are legally required, documented in an applicable individualized plan, or otherwise approved by the district.

Changes to Individualized Transportation Services

- Parents or guardians must promptly report address, telephone, child care, medical, equipment, or schedule changes to the appropriate campus staff and Transportation Department.
- A requested change is not effective until it is reviewed, approved, and entered into the transportation routing system.
- Transportation staff may not independently add, remove, or materially change an IEP-required transportation service. Changes to the related service must be addressed through the ARD process, except for temporary operational adjustments that do not change the student's IEP service.
- When a student-specific safety, behavioral, health, or access concern affects transportation, the campus, parent or guardian, appropriate support staff, and Transportation Department will coordinate supports consistent with applicable law, the student's individualized plan when applicable, and the ECISD Student Code of Conduct.

3. McKinney-Vento and Other Special Programs

Students Experiencing Homelessness

Students eligible under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act may be entitled to transportation to and from the school of origin upon request and in accordance with federal law. Transportation arrangements will be coordinated through the district's McKinney-Vento liaison and Transportation Department.

Other District Programs

Transportation for bilingual programs, School of Choice, alternative programs, career and technical education, early education, and other district programs is based on program requirements, student eligibility, designated shuttle or transfer locations, route capacity, and available resources. Participation in a program does not guarantee door-to-door transportation or a direct one-bus route.

4. Child Care Facilities and Alternate Stops

Parents or guardians may request transportation to or from a state-licensed or district-verified child care facility or another district-approved alternate stop. Requests must meet all applicable eligibility, safety, routing, and approval requirements:

1. The location must be two (2) or more miles from the student's assigned campus unless another eligibility basis applies.
2. The location must be within an ECISD-approved service area and on or reasonably accessible to an established route.
3. The student must use the same approved location consistently. Split-day, rotating, or frequently changing arrangements may not be accommodated.
4. A child care stop may be added only when route capacity, safety, staffing, and efficiency allow. The district may require a minimum number of eligible riders at the location.
5. The request must be submitted annually and is not effective until approved by ECISD Transportation.

A minimum-rider or standard alternate-stop requirement does not control when transportation to a specific location is required by law or documented through an applicable individualized plan. Pre-K transportation is addressed in the Pre-K Transportation Guidelines below, including the approved exception for designated Pre-K services.

5. Pre-K Transportation Guidelines

Pre-K transportation is provided in accordance with ECISD program requirements, student eligibility, approved program locations, available transportation services, and district procedures. Enrollment in Pre-K does not automatically create transportation eligibility unless the student meets the applicable transportation or program requirements.

- For standard Pre-K home-to-school service, transportation is based on the student's approved primary home residence address recorded in the Focus Parent Portal. The student will be assigned transportation from the approved stop serving that home address to the assigned Pre-K program location and back to the same approved home-address stop, unless an approved child care arrangement or other legally required transportation arrangement applies.
- A parent or guardian requesting Pre-K transportation to or from a child care facility must use a state-licensed or district-verified child care facility that is approved by ECISD Transportation and located within an area that can be served by the applicable route.
- The approved home residence or approved child care location must be used consistently. Split-day, rotating, temporary, or frequently changing transportation locations may not be accommodated unless required by law or specifically approved by the district.
- Pre-K transportation requests and approved child care arrangements must be submitted and reviewed annually. A requested change is not effective until it has been approved and entered into the transportation routing system.
- Transportation is available for Pre-K students attending Carver Early Education Center, Lamar Early Education Center, Burleson Early Education Center, or the Odessa Y Learning Center. For these designated Pre-K services, ECISD may approve transportation to or from an eligible, approved child care facility under district Pre-K transportation procedures. The standard minimum-rider requirement for a child care stop does not apply to these designated Pre-K services when approved by ECISD Transportation.
- If a child attends Pre-K at another ECISD campus, the family will need to provide transportation. ECISD does not provide standard Pre-K transportation to elementary campuses serving Pre-K through Grade 5, unless transportation is otherwise required by law or documented through an applicable individualized student plan.
- Parents or guardians are responsible for having the student at the assigned pickup location on time and for receiving the student at the assigned drop-off location in accordance with ECISD age, safety, and release procedures.
- Pre-K routes remain subject to districtwide routing practices, including route adjustments, centralized stops when appropriate, transfers when necessary, and extended ride times based on distance, traffic, program location, staffing, capacity, and other operational conditions.

6. Extended Ride Times, Transfers, and Service Expectations

Ector County covers a large geographic area, and ECISD serves students and programs across a wide service area with limited buses, drivers, monitors, and other transportation resources. Because of distance, route design, student distribution, program locations, traffic, staffing, and available capacity, some ECISD routes may have extended ride times and may require centralized stops, shuttle locations, transfer buses, or multiple route segments.

Families should understand that ECISD cannot establish a maximum ride-time guarantee for every route. Extended ride times may be necessary because of the size of the county, student locations, required transfers, traffic, staffing, capacity, and the need to serve eligible students across multiple campuses and programs.

- ECISD will make reasonable operational efforts to transport eligible students safely and as timely as practicable; however, the district does not guarantee a specific ride time, direct route, particular bus or driver, exact stop time, or exact arrival time.
- Ride times and transfer arrangements may vary throughout the school year based on distance, route design, traffic, road conditions, construction, weather, enrollment, staffing, vehicle capacity, program location, and student transportation needs.
- Extended ride times and transfers may occur on any ECISD route. The use of a transfer bus, shuttle, centralized stop, or multiple route segments is a normal routing practice when necessary to safely and efficiently serve eligible students across the district.
- When a student has an individualized transportation requirement under applicable law or an educational plan, ECISD will implement the documented transportation service while considering student-specific health, safety, access, and support needs.
- Published pickup and drop-off times are estimates. Families should be prepared for reasonable variation and, on some routes, extended ride times, especially during the opening weeks of school, after routing changes, during periods of heavy traffic, or when staffing and operational conditions change.

7. Faculty and Staff Children

ECISD employment does not create transportation eligibility for an employee's child. Faculty and staff children must independently qualify under the same laws, Board policies, program rules, and eligibility standards that apply to all students.

- A child will not be added to an otherwise ineligible route, transported to an employee's worksite, or assigned to a route serving another campus solely because the parent or guardian is an ECISD employee.
- Exceptions will not be made for employee work schedules, convenience, child care arrangements, or lack of personal transportation when the student does not otherwise qualify.
- No employee may direct or pressure Transportation staff to place an ineligible student on a bus. Unauthorized ridership may create safety, capacity, accountability, and liability concerns.

8. Bus Stops and Family Responsibilities

- Bus stops are established by ECISD based on safety, efficiency, student population, roadway conditions, visibility, route design, and available resources.
- Centralized stops may be used to serve multiple families and reduce route time.
- Parents or guardians are responsible for ensuring that students safely reach the assigned stop and are present before the scheduled pickup time.
- Parents or guardians are responsible for receiving students at the assigned stop when required by age, district procedure, or an applicable individualized transportation plan.
- Personal hardships, work schedules, infants at home, temporary illness, lack of a vehicle, or preference for a closer stop do not automatically require a stop change.
- Stop-change requests will be reviewed for eligibility, safety, capacity, route impact, and efficiency. Not all requests can be accommodated.

9. Student Conduct and Safety

The school bus is an extension of the school setting. Students must:

- Follow instructions from the driver, monitor, and other ECISD staff.
- Remain properly seated while the bus is in motion and use installed restraint systems as directed.
- Keep hands, feet, objects, and belongings to themselves and out of the aisle.
- Use respectful and appropriate language.
- Avoid eating, drinking, tobacco, vaping, drugs, weapons, fighting, bullying, harassment, and unsafe behavior.
- Avoid distracting the driver or interfering with the safe operation of the bus.
- Ride only the assigned bus and enter or exit only at the assigned stop unless authorized.

Discipline and Removal from Transportation

Bus misconduct will be addressed under the ECISD Student Code of Conduct and applicable transportation procedures. Consequences may include warning, parent conference, assigned seat, behavior intervention, suspension from transportation when legally permitted, or other disciplinary action, depending on the seriousness and frequency of the conduct.

- Serious misconduct or conduct that presents an immediate safety threat may result in immediate removal from the bus pending administrative review.
- When transportation is suspended and the student does not have a legally required transportation service that must continue or be addressed through an applicable individualized process, the parent or guardian is responsible for transportation to and from school during the suspension period.
- When transportation is required by an IEP, Section 504 plan, or other applicable law, ECISD will address safety, behavior, discipline, and any proposed change or interruption to transportation in accordance with the applicable legal requirements and the student's individualized plan. Transportation staff will not independently discontinue a legally required service solely through the regular bus-discipline process.

10. Registration, Communication, and Service Changes

- Parents or guardians must complete annual school registration, maintain the student's approved primary home residence address in the Focus Parent Portal, and select transportation by the district's published routing date.
- Late or incomplete registrations may delay transportation for several days or weeks while the student is reviewed, routed, and assigned.
- Coming to the Transportation Office does not move a student ahead of other pending eligible students.
- Families must maintain a current and accurate primary home residence address, telephone numbers, email addresses, emergency contacts, and authorized pickup information in the Focus Parent Portal and other district-approved systems.

Address changes may require eligibility review and route reassignment before transportation can begin from the new location.

- Bus information will be communicated through district-approved systems. Families should monitor district messages and the parent transportation application.
- Routes and times may be adjusted throughout the year. ECISD will provide notice when practicable, but immediate changes may be necessary for safety or operations.

11. Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know whether my child qualifies?

Complete annual registration and the transportation request. ECISD will review the student's approved primary home residence address in the Focus Parent Portal, assigned campus, program, and any other applicable legal or individualized transportation requirements.

Can my child ride a bus to a different address?

Standard transportation is based on the student's approved primary home residence address in the Focus Parent Portal and the assigned stop associated with that address. Transportation to another address or location is not automatic and must meet applicable eligibility and routing requirements or be required by law, documented in an applicable individualized plan, or otherwise approved by the district.

Why does my child transfer buses or have an extended ride time?

ECISD serves a large geographic area and many districtwide programs with limited transportation resources. Extended ride times, transfer buses, shuttles, centralized stops, and multiple route segments may be necessary on any route to safely and efficiently serve eligible students.

Can an employee's child ride to the employee's campus?

Not unless the student independently qualifies for that transportation assignment. Employee status does not create an exception.

How are transportation-related behavior or safety concerns handled?

Safety concerns are addressed under the ECISD Student Code of Conduct, district transportation procedures, and applicable law. When a student has transportation requirements documented in an IEP, Section 504 plan, or other individualized plan, any change or interruption to that required service will be handled through the appropriate legal and district process rather than solely as a loss of regular transportation.

Who should I contact about an individualized transportation need?

Contact the student's campus or the appropriate program representative. Transportation staff implement approved transportation arrangements and may provide operational information; individualized educational or legal determinations are made through the appropriate district process.

Legal Authorities Referenced

These guidelines are intended to align generally with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (including 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.34, 300.107, and 300.117), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Texas Education Code transportation provisions, Texas Education Agency transportation guidance, ECISD Board policy, and the ECISD Student Code of Conduct.