

# Special Transportation Services Guidelines

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## **INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF STUDENTS REQUIRING SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

It is sometimes necessary to arrange special transportation for students. In doing so, we strive to guarantee that all students receive the proper care and consideration for their safety and well-being on the bus. To make sure that such care is provided, it is necessary for all individuals to work together—students, parents and caregivers, schools, bus drivers and assistants, Special Services and the transportation department. The following guidelines are for students riding the special services buses. District policies can be found on the Westonka website.

### **How is transportation arranged for my student?**

Once the completed forms are received from Special Services by the transportation department, every effort will be made to route your student as quickly as possible. Because of all the people that need to be notified it may take up to five working days to arrange the ride. If it is five working days or less before school starts in the fall, a bus route may not be arranged by the start of school. In this case a parent/caregiver may be asked to provide transportation for a maximum of five school days

### **Will my student always be riding the same bus at the same time?**

As much as possible, we try to maintain continuity for the students. However, students will be added and deleted from their programs throughout the school year; therefore, time and delivery may change periodically. The transportation department will be notified of any of the changes made. Another change that may occur is the loading time of the student. The pickup and delivery times should fall within a 10-minute window of your scheduled pickup/delivery time (ex: pickup time is 8:30 a.m.—the bus should arrive between 8:25 and 8:35 a.m.). We understand that the first week of school is an adjustment for the students and we will be a little more lenient toward their times. However, after the first week, if the student has not come out at their designated time, the bus will move along. If your child is not going to be riding the bus that day please notify the transportation department by 6:00 a.m.

### **Can my student be picked up and/or dropped off at an alternate address?**

Students may be picked up or delivered to another location, such as a baby-sitter's home or child-care center. This applies to daily situations and not to one time or infrequent circumstances that may arise. The alternate address must be in the general area of the student's home and within the school district boundaries. If an emergency should arise, the parent is responsible for having another adult meet the bus to accept the student. The transportation department must be notified if this will be occurring so we know the student is being dropped off in safe hands.

### **Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities**

1. Notify Special Services and transportation immediately with any changes to the student's information.
2. All students must be properly dressed for the weather and ready to board the bus at least five minutes prior to his/her scheduled pickup time. Buses will not wait at a stop later than the scheduled pickup time; neither will a bus leave prior to the scheduled pickup time. Tight routing of the Special Services buses does not allow time for the buses to wait, telephone or blow their horns. You will need to transport your student to school if your student misses the bus at the scheduled pickup time.
3. Notify the transportation department if the student is taken to school after the a.m. pickup. This alerts the driver to take the student home in the p.m.
4. Have your student's belongings properly labeled.
5. Know the bus number and the name of the school/program your student attends.
6. Parent/Caregiver is responsible for assisting the student from the house to the bus in the a.m. and from the bus to the house in the p.m. The school bus driver/assistant will be ready to assist the student on and off the bus. This also applies to students in wheelchairs.
7. Wheelchairs must be equipped with a lap belt and fully functioning brakes.
8. Meet your student when he/she is returned home. If an emergency arises that prohibits you from being there on time, contact the transportation department immediately and ask your emergency contact to meet the bus. If your emergency contact cannot be reached, your child may be taken to the Public Safety Department.
9. If your student becomes ill at school, soils him/herself by urinating or defecating, or for some other reason cannot be transported by bus, you will be expected to transport your student to/from school.

**Note: Students must be ready to board the bus 5 minutes prior to scheduled pick-up.**

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## Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities (continued)

10. You can keep your student safe on the bus by working with him/her on acceptable behavior. All students are expected to follow the bus rules.
11. Keep sidewalks clear of snow and ice to make the movement of your student to and from the bus safer and easier.
12. Work with the driver and the school when safety concerns arise. Immediately report problems with the bus service to the transportation department.
13. Notify the transportation department anytime your student will not be riding the bus. Three consecutive days without notice may result in the suspension of bus service. It may be reinstated by contacting the transportation department and allowing up to five days to re-route.

**Notify transportation in advance any time your student will not be riding the bus either morning or afternoon by calling transportation at least one hour prior to your scheduled time.**

## School Bus Driver and Assistant Responsibilities

School bus drivers are professional drivers with special training. They are responsible for the safe transportation of the students and to keep on schedule. If there is no bus assistant, the driver performs the assistant's duties.

1. The driver will make a daily attempt to pick up the student at his/her scheduled time. After that attempt is made, the driver will not return to pick up the student that day. The driver has commitments to other students and other schools.
2. Assist in the loading and unloading of your student, if necessary.
3. Ensure that seat belts, child restraints and wheelchairs are secure.
4. Maintain discipline and see that students remain in their seats and report any problems to the school.
5. Report all discipline problems immediately via a Student Conduct Report. The report will be submitted to the transportation department and the proper school authority for investigation and appropriate consequences. Depending on the severity, consequences could include suspension of bus riding privileges.

The school bus assistant works with the driver to make sure all students are safe on the bus. They are provided where most needed for safety and are not present on every bus. Their responsibilities are as follows:

1. Bus assistants work with students in the area in & around the bus. They cannot assist a student beyond the curb.
2. Administer first aid, if necessary, according to the principles of the Good Samaritan Law 604.05 and seek emergency medical assistance when required.
3. Report all accidents and injuries to the transportation department.
4. Maintain the emergency health information of your student on the bus and become familiar with the special needs and problems of your student.
5. Communicate with you and the school staff about your student.
6. Participate in additional training for dealing with discipline & the special conditions of the student on their bus.

## Transportation Department Responsibilities

1. Schedule and assign students to special services transportation buses.
2. Use the information from the Emergency Health Bus Form when transporting your student.
3. Provide the specialized bus equipment when transporting your student.
4. Process any concerns you may have.
5. Serve as a liaison between parents/caregiver, school and bus driver when misunderstandings arise.
6. Assist in providing in-service training for drivers and assistants.
7. Take steps to arrange supervision of your student with the Public Safety Department in the event the department is not able to contact you or your emergency contact.

## Additional items to keep in mind:

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

Should you move during the school year, you must contact transportation and the school's Special Services department at least a week in advance to ensure that your student's school bus service will not be interrupted.

### HOME-TO-SCHOOL-TO-HOME MESSAGES:

Transportation personnel will not be responsible for delivering messages, notes, etc. between the home and the school. The parent and school personnel will have to communicate directly with each other.