

* INTRODUCTION

The Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission's responsibility is to provide Coordinated Special Education, Public, Non-Public, Vocational and Charter Transportation Services to students who attend a variety of programs in and out of district schools.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to clarify to parents, pupils, school administrators, local district child study teams, and transportation contractors, their responsibilities in contributing to the safety and efficiency of the transportation program.

*What Parents Can Expect from Transportation Companies

*Clean, safe vehicles, which are inspected and insured according to the State regulations.

*Drivers who are properly licensed, fingerprinted and familiar with the route.

* Drivers who are properly trained in safe driving methods, communications with parents and supervisors & confidentiality and control of pupils.

*Special equipment as required by law or bid specifications: seat belts, car seats, booster seats, safety devices, wheelchair lifts with safe and secure wheelchair restraints; and other items as required by approved specifications.

*Curbside pick-up and drop-off, as applicable.

NOTE: There is no regulation, which requires door-to-door pick-up of special education pupils.

*Safe transportation, which includes a timely pick-up at home and timely pick-up at school.

*Notification from Driver/Contractor when vehicle will be late because of driver illness or vehicle breakdown when time and circumstances permit.

*Notification of route adjustments, which alter pick-up or drop-off time.

*Drivers will not pick-up or drop-off a student other than at the contracted stops.

*Smoking or chewing tobacco will not be permitted on the vehicle by either student or driver.

*How Parents Can Help to Ensure Safe and Timely Transportation

* Have pupil ready when school bus arrives in the morning.

*Be sure someone is at home in the afternoon to receive the pupil on the return trip (if pupil is unable to be unsupervised).

The Division of Pupil Transportation has no legal requirement for a parent to be present when a child is discharged from the bus. However, it is parents responsibility to assure that a responsible adult is present to receive the student upon discharge from the bus. The transporters will take reasonable precautions to see that pupils are discharged safely, but it remains a parental responsibility to have an adult receive the child if they believe this to be necessary.

*Allow 15 minutes leeway in the actual pick-up time due to traffic congestion.

*Assist with boarding and unloading of special needs students (with wheel- chairs, leg braces, safety devices, etc.)

*Parents should not board the vehicle unless asked by the driver.

*Ensure that unauthorized passengers are not permitted to board the vehicle with your child.

*Ensure that the child is clean and not ill or agitated before boarding the vehicle.

*Do not permit the child to enter the school vehicle with food, toys, games, radio, cigarettes, etc. Other items such as projects or musical instruments should fit safely on the child's lap.

*Every effort should be made to deliver a student's medication to the receiving school and not by way of the school vehicle.

*Detailed medical directions and special permission from the CST Coordinator is required in order to have a student's medication transported to the receiving school by the school vehicles.

*Do not request the driver pick-up or drop-off at any location other than the pupil's residence or assigned bus stop as identified on the route specification.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD A PARENT CONTACT THE BUS DRIVER OR THE BUS COMPANY DIRECTLY TO REQUEST AND CHANGE IN PICK-UP OR DROP-OFF LOCATIONS

*Give driver current home, work and emergency telephone numbers and ask driver for the same.

*Notify driver or contractor, in a timely manner when child will not be attending school, or if child will only be traveling in the morning or the afternoon on a certain day.

*Speak with your child when he or she is involved in a transportation discipline matter. Make suggestions to the driver to help resolve the problem.

*If a child is not returned home within a reasonable time, parents should first call the Transportation Contractor.

*Parental concerns regarding transportation should first be discussed with the driver; the second level would be the Transportation Contactor. In the event the concern cannot be resolved at this level, parents should report the complaint to the Commission Transportation Office:

(908) 638 – 5906

Parents play a tremendous role in preparing their child for his/her busy school day.

*STUDENT CONDUCT ON THE BUSES

*Students being transported on any school bus or authorized vehicle are under supervision, direction, and control of the school bus driver and will be subject to discipline action if they do not abide by the rules of safety as outlined below:

*Will wear seat belts, as required by law.

*Will be seated immediately upon entering the bus in the seats assigned by the driver.

*Will not stand or move about while the bus is moving.

*Will refrain from loud, boisterous or profane language, as well as improper conduct.

*Will not be allowed to engage in any form of physical or verbal abuse toward other students or toward the driver.

*Will not open or close windows or doors without the permission of the bus driver.

*Will not leave their seats until the bus has come to a complete stop and the driver has opened the door.

*Will not smoke, chew tobacco, carry or use any drugs, or load bus with any objects that may be used as weapons on

any school vehicle.

*Will never throw articles from the bus windows.

In the event that the above rules are violated, the driver is responsible for submitting the standard bus conduct report to the principal of the school that the student attends. Violation of the above rules will result in a conference with the principal or his designee and administrative action will be taken in accordance with the outcome of that hearing. The receiving school principal is responsible for submitting, in writing, a report of the action taken to the Transportation Coordinator and the District Child Study Team. It is the responsibility of the principal to administer discipline and to give the driver a copy of the disciplinary report.

Bus rules must be followed to ensure the safety of all students.

***How Receiving Schools (Public and Private) Can Help to Improve Transportation**

*Provide each driver/contractor and the ESC with a school calendar.

*Notify driver/contractor at least 48 hours in advance of changes in daily scheduled hours, early dismissals and changes in school calendar. (Emergency situations to be handled as efficiently as possible.)

*Make minor concessions on arrival and dismissal time due to increased traffic and congestion in the area.

*Do not expect the driver to bring students into the school building.

*Maintain supervision of pupils arriving at

the school in the morning and while boarding the school bus for the trip home.

*On the return trip, monitor students to ensure that they are not boarding the school bus with food, toys, games, etc. If school projects are to accompany the student home, nothing larger than what will safely fit on the child's lap should be allowed on board the vehicle. Parents shall make alternative arrangements for larger items.

*Understand that pupils detained past regular dismissal time cannot delay the return trip.

*Secure emergency phone numbers so that, in the event of a delay or breakdown (and the parent cannot be reached), contact may be made with another responsible adult.

*Develop a school policy regarding student behavior on buses and consequences for infractions.

*Receive all discipline reports, exercising "Due Process Procedures" and take appropriate disciplinary action, as well as making notations on the disciplinary form of the action taken.

*Send copies of the completed disciplinary form to the Transportation Contractor and the Director of the Child Study Team (sending district).

*Encourage regular communication between teachers and drivers to relate problems that may require attention.

*Encourage the regular discussion of school bus safety in your school's classroom.

***Role of the District Child Study Team (CST)**

*Be responsible for providing the Commission Transportation Office with

pertinent medical and behavioral information, which may be critical to the safety and well being of the student.

*Be responsible for timely submission of complete and accurate information on the student transportation form. Late submission of transportation forms can significantly impact route efficiency.

*Be responsible for notifying the Commission of any required adjustments in specifications.

All changes are to be done in writing and through the formal application process.

***SUSPENSION OF TRANSPORTATION ON DAYS OF INCLEMENT WEATHER**

*If either the school district where the student lives or the school he/she attends is closed due to inclement weather, NO transportation will be provided on that day.

*If either the resident school district or the receiving school has a delayed opening/early dismissal due to inclement weather, the bus route will be delayed accordingly. If the route is shared amongst other school districts, the delay/early dismissal will be the latest delay and the earliest dismissal.

*The Commission believes, if YOUR district has decided that road conditions are too hazardous for travel, and then long distance travel is hazardous as well.

*Your bus company should contact you in this case. You may also contact them.



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**COORDINATED
SPECIAL
EDUCATION
TRANSPORTATION**