Special Education Transportation Handbook
Grand Prairie Independent School District

Special Education Transportation Parent Handbook

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide parents with a source of information which addresses issues, responsibilities, and concerns within special education transportation.

The full scope of the special education transportation operation is much broader than can be contained in this booklet. It is not intended to be all inclusive, but rather an attempt to share important information with all parties associated with transporting special education students. Should you have questions that this booklet does not address, feel free to contact us (972) 343-4402.

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Special Education Transportation Parent Handbook

Responsibilities

The safe and efficient transportation of your child relies on the cooperation and efforts of the school staff, GPISD Transportation Office, the Office of Special Education, the bus driver and monitor, and you the parent. The following section outlines some of the various responsibilities of those involved.

1. Parent Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of the parent to:

- Assist the school by submitting accurate and timely information to be included on the Transportation Request Form and Student Emergency Information. Incorrect and untimely information delays the onset of transportation services.

- **CHANGE OF ADDRESS** – Parents must notify the Transportation Department and the Special Education Department of any change prior to **August 1st**, or expect a delay in service of up to one week.

- Inform the school administrator, bus driver and monitor of any medical condition or behavior which might affect the student's safety or health on the bus.

- Provide up-to-date emergency information to the school and GPISD Transportation Office.

- **Assure that an authorized person will be at the bus stop, on time, when the child is delivered.**

- Assure that the student meets the bus at the scheduled time. Buses are scheduled to arrive within a few minutes of the designated time each day. The bus driver is required to wait for **two (2) minutes** and cannot wait for a tardy student as this creates late pick-up times for other students.

- **REMOVAL FROM BUS ROUTE** – If a student fails to use the district’s transportation service for a period of three consecutive days without prior notice given to GPISD Transportation Office, the student will be automatically dropped from the bus route.

- **RE-START** – A parent must call the Special Education Office at 972-237-5345 and ask that their child “re-started.” If the parent knows in advance that the child will not be using transportation services for three or more consecutive days, the parent should report that information the GPISD Transportation Office at 972-343-4402 along with the date the service is to be re-started. If a parent has not given advance notice, the three to five school days waiting period to re-start bus service will be in effect.
2. Student Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of the student to:

- Obey the rules for bus riders to the best of their abilities.
- Respect the rights of the other student passengers.
- Be ready at the designated pick-up time.

3. Driver & Attendant Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of the bus driver, and monitor to:

- Notify the parent/guardian of the bus number and approximate time of pick-up and delivery.
- A notice will be left on the front door of the residence or given to the day care with information of the pick/delivery time.
- Be on time for the pick-up and delivery. The driver is not required to wait for a student for more than **two (2) minutes**. This procedure must be adhered to because of the number of students to be transported in a fixed period of time. If the driver arrives earlier than the designated time of pick-up, he/she must wait.
- Ensure the overall safe operation of the bus.
- Be prepared to provide appropriate first aid.
- Display appropriate care and patience.
- Be located in a position inside the bus that best meets the needs of all students (attendant).
- Maintain an emergency evacuation plan, listing each passenger, for use by medical personnel in the event of a vehicle accident.
- Be prepared to effectively and efficiently evacuate the bus in the event of an emergency.
- Understand and support the privacy and confidentiality of the families whose children they transport.
- Complete and submit a notice of unsatisfactory conduct to the designated school administrator if a behavior problem occurs on the bus.
- Report to the school administration and transportation supervisor of any significant changes in a child's behavior.
- Assist students on and off of the bus as required by their handicapping condition. At the school, it is the administrator's responsibility to make appropriate arrangements to assist the driver and attendant in loading and unloading students.
4. School Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of the school to:

- Work with the Special Education Office in the formulation of an Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committee (ARD) decision and the completion of an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Upon completion of the IEP, the Special Education Office will submit a transportation request to the GPISD Transportation Office [adela.palomo@gpisd.org].

- Update the information contained on the GPISD Transportation Request form when necessary.

- Assure that the students are ready for dismissal at the time established by the principal and the GPISD Transportation Office.

- Notify parents of schedule changes that may affect pupil transportation (i.e., early dismissals, inclement weather, etc.)

- Provide appropriate arrangements for those students needing assistance in boarding and discharging from the bus at the school.

- Refer requests by the parent or guardian involving alternate transportation arrangements to the GPISD Transportation Office. GPISD Transportation Office must be notified by the school principal or his designee when approval is given for the student to go home by another method. Notify the GPISD Transportation Office if the student arrives at school by means other than the bus and the student requires bus transportation home.

- Accept and act on discipline forms submitted to the campus by the GPISD Transportation Office. The principal or his/her designee is responsible for disciplinary action, including the suspension of the student's transportation service, when appropriate. Refer to SCHOOL BUS SAFETY REFERRAL.

- Administration or Teacher must be available at the campus to accept an undeliverable student.

5. Office of Special Education Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of the Office of Special Education

- Assist the GPISD Transportation Office in getting appropriate updates from the schools at the end of each school year.

- Submit timely and accurate updates to the GPISD Transportation Office at the end of each year to assist in routing and scheduling for the following year.

6. GPISD Transportation Office Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of the GPISD Transportation Office to:

- Submit timely and accurate updates to the GPISD Office of Special Education at the end of each year to assist in routing and scheduling for the following year.
• Assign each eligible student to a bus.
• Determine bus stop locations according to the handicapping condition of the student and the accessibility of the residence.
• Route, schedule and tier special education buses. The routing and scheduling plan will ensure the safest and most effective use of the vehicle.
• Address concerns from parents, school administrators, drivers and attendants, and the motoring public regarding special education transportation.
• Provide the appropriate training and screening for bus drivers and attendants.
• Establish and enforce transportation procedures, rules, and regulations.
• Inspect all buses in accordance with all state and local statutes and regulations.
• Provide assistive devices as needed, including, but not limited to vests, harnesses, car seats, and booster seats.

Procedures

The following procedures were established by the GPISD Transportation Office to facilitate safe and efficient transportation for special education students. **Beyond the onset of the school year, a minimum of three (3) working days or a maximum of five (5) working days may be needed to establish a new route and schedule any pick-up/delivery changes.**

1. Pick-Up/Drop-Off

   • **RE-START** – A parent must call the Special Education Office at (972) 237-5345 and ask that their child be “re-started.” If the parent knows in advance that the child will not be using transportation services for three or more consecutive days, the parent should report that information to the GPISD Transportation Office at (972) 343-4402 along with the date the service is to be re-started. If a parent has not given advance notice, the three to five school days waiting period to re-start bus service will be in effect.

   **Curb to Curb Service**

   Under most conditions special education transportation provides curb to curb service. This means that the bus will pick-up and deliver at the curb in front of the student's home or day care. The following are some of the exceptions to this procedure:

   • Due to road conditions (dead end roadways, dirt or gravel roadways, or narrow roadways) it may be necessary to place the pick-up/delivery site at a safe location away from the home or day care. Every effort will be made to locate the stop as close as possible to the home or day care. When an escort is appropriate it will be the responsibility of the parent or their designee to escort the student to and from the pick-up/delivery location. The bus driver or attendants are not responsible to escort the student to or from the home.
• **REMOVAL FROM BUS ROUTE** – If a student fails to use the district’s transportation service for a period of three consecutive days without prior notice given to GPISD Transportation Office, the student will be automatically dropped from the bus route. The GPISD Transportation Office will be responsible for calling the respective campus if a student is dropped from service.

*Multi-Family Residence*

• Condominium and apartment managements on occasion deny school buses access to their parking lots. In these cases the pick-up/delivery will be placed at a safe location close to the student's home or day care.

• It is the responsibility of the parent to provide remote controls to operate a gate at a residence.

*Student Delivery*

Drivers are permitted to discharge students only at the school or designated delivery address. When there is no authorized person to accept the student at the drop-off, the following steps will be taken:

• **UNDELIVERABLE CHILD** – In the event your child is “undeliverable” (no authorized adult at the delivery address to receive the child when the bus attempts to deliver the child), the child will be returned to the school campus. The parent then will be responsible for transporting the child home. A letter will be sent to the parent in this situation arises. If the child is “undeliverable” a second time, other alternatives for the transporting of your child must be considered, i.e., the parent taking responsibility of transporting the child to and from school.

• If there is no authorized person to receive the student at the delivery location, the driver will return to the school and leave the student with a responsible school Administrator or Teacher.

• The parent will be responsible for transporting the child home. Other alternatives for transporting your child must be considered, i.e. the parent taking responsibility of transporting the child to and from school.

• If this should frequently occur, transportation services may be suspended pending a conference with the parent or guardian.

2. **Loading/Unloading**

*At the Pick-Up/Delivery Location*

It is the responsibility of the driver and monitor to load and unload students at the pick-up/delivery location. Parents and child care providers are strongly encouraged to communicate to the GPISD Transportation Office any information about the student that would help facilitate safe loading and unloading. Parents and child care providers should be careful not to interfere with the driver or attendant while they are performing their duties.
• Parents/guardians should not send students to the bus with food or drink to be consumed on the bus.

• In an attempt to hold the student’s bus riding time to a minimum, the transportation department has adopted the following procedures:
  o The bus driver will (1) **honk the horn** in front of the child’s home; (2) **wait exactly two minutes** and (3) **then proceed** with the bus route. **Exception:** If the student is ill and will not need bus service for that day only the parent will need to call Adela, in transportation, at 972-343-4402.

*At the School*

When it facilitates a smoother transition to and from the bus, school personnel are encouraged to help load and unload ambulatory students from seats equipped with any of the following restraint devices: seat belts, car or booster seats, or a safety device. The bus driver and attendant have the ultimate responsibility to check these restraints before leaving the school. Only the driver and attendant should load, unload, and secure students in wheelchairs.

3. **Bus Evacuation Plan**

Special education students who are able to get on and off of the bus unassisted or with little assistance are expected to participate in bus evacuation drills. Drivers that transport non-ambulatory or orthopedically handicapped students are expected to maintain an up-to-date bus evacuation plan. The plan should contain the following:

• The exact roles of the driver and attendant during an evacuation.

• Identification of children who have special medical conditions, such as brittle bone syndrome or attachment to a respirator needs to be considered in planning for an evacuation.

• Determination of whether or not students should be removed from their wheelchairs during an evacuation.

• Seating location of all passengers on the route.

• Brief description of the physical disability of each passenger.

• Exact location of every emergency exit on the regular bus used on the route.

• Exact location of emergency equipment on the bus - extinguisher, first aid kit, etc.

4. **Student Behavior**

It is the school system's responsibility to provide safe transportation for students who ride school buses to and from school and on school-related trips. In the absence of a teacher or school administrator, the school bus driver is responsible for ensuring that students behave in a safe and responsible manner. Any behavior which interferes with the safe transportation of students must be reported. This policy applies to all students for whom bus transportation is provided by the GPISD School System. Exceptions are made for special education students whose behavior is a result of their handicapping
condition. Behavior problems with special education students are dealt with in accordance with applicable Federal, State and local laws and regulations. Notwithstanding the exceptions, the procedures outlined in the policy are applicable to special education students. Specifically, drivers and attendants are to use the SCHOOL BUS SFAFTY REFERRAL report to refer inappropriate behavior to school administrators, and, when applicable, administrators are to follow a progressive discipline procedure.

Dangerous Behavior on the Bus

The following are GPISD Transportation Office guidelines for bus drivers responding to unsafe behavior on the bus:

- Any unsafe behavior should be reported to the school administrator as soon as possible. A SCHOOL BUS SAFETY REFERRAL report should be submitted as a follow-up.
- When the behavior of a student on a special education bus poses a potential or imminent danger to others on the bus, the driver should immediately call the GPISD Transportation Office.

5. Restraint Devices

Car Seats & Booster Seats

By law, the State of Texas requires the use of car seats and booster seats in cars, trucks, and multipurpose vehicles. They are not required on Type 1 school buses. Therefore, there is a degree of flexibility in determining the appropriate type of seat and/or seat arrangement to be used by each student on the bus.

Most small children with disabilities can be comfortably and securely restrained in conventional car seats and booster seats. Many larger children with disabilities that affect their ability to sit upright without support can use a safety device installed in school buses.

The following guidelines are generally used to determine the appropriate seat to use for each student:

- Infants who weigh under 20 pounds should be in a rear-facing infant car seat.
- Toddlers who weigh from 20 to 40 pounds and are 26” - 40” in height should ride in a forward-facing car seat.
- Children who weigh 40 to 60 pounds may ride in a forward-facing booster seat.

Safety Device

These safety devices may only be used at the direction of the Individualized Education Program after consultation with the school staff and parents.

- A safety device is designed for students with behavioral or emotional disabilities who need to be secured while on the bus. The safety device is equipped with a zipper in the back that, when
properly attached, is not accessible to the student. The safety device is attached with a strap mounted to the bus seat.

The GPISD Transportation Office is committed to providing safe and efficient transportation services for special needs students. It is our sincere hope that this handbook will contribute to a clearer understanding of special education transportation services.

The GPISD Transportation Office hopes that each student has a safe and successful school year.
GRAND PRAIRIE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOL BUS SAFETY REFERRAL

Student’s Name: ______________________________________  Grade: __________
School: _______________________________________________  Date: ___________
Route: ______________________  Time: _________  □ AM  □ PM
Driver: _______________________________  Bus #: ______________

The purpose of this report is to inform you of the disciplinary incident involving this student on the school bus. You are urged to help us in correcting this matter by discussing the incident with this student.

DRIVER’S REPORT

__ Destruction of Property  __ Disobeys Driver
__ Eating or Drinking  __ Failure to Remain Seated
__ Fighting / Pushing / Tripping  __ Hanging Out Window
__ Improper Boarding or Departing  __ Other
__ Profane Language  __ Rude, Loud, Annoying Conduct
__ Smoking  __ Throwing Objects

SPECIFIC DETAILS:

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Send Copy to Campus Administrator (Principal Designee)