

Special Education Transportation Questions & Answers

Students with disabilities, according to IDEA, have thirteen major categories of disabling conditions:

**AUTISM
DEAF/BLIND
EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED
HEARING IMPAIRED
LEARNING DISABILITIES
MENTAL RETARDATION
DEAFNESS**

**MULTIPLE DISABILITIES
OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT
SPEECH IMPAIRMENTS
TRAMATIC BRAIN INJURY
VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS
ORTHOPEDIC IMPAIRED**

The Americans With Disabilities Act considers three categories of people with disabilities:

- 1. A person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of that person.**
- 2. A person who has a record of such an impairment; and**
- 3. A person who, while not actually disabled, is regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities may include: caring for oneself, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, and working.**

This handbook is designed to provide parents, guardians, teachers, school staff members and administrators with a source of information regarding special needs transportation in the El Paso Independent School District. It is arranged in a question and answer format to address information that is requested most often regarding special education transportation services. For specific questions not included in this material, email Dr. Robert Hemphill, Jr. in the Special Education Department at rxhemphi@episd.org or call (915) 881-2524.

1. What are PARENT responsibilities regarding special education transportation?

- Assist the school by submitting accurate and timely information to be included on the Special Education Transportation Form (#129580). This form must be completed during an ARD meeting. Incorrect and untimely information delays the onset of special education transportation services.
- Provide any requested medical documentation in order to be eligible to receive specialized transportation services.
- Provide up-to-date emergency information to the campus administrator.
- Ensure that the student is ready to meet the bus at the scheduled pick up time.
- Ensure that an authorized person will be at the bus stop, on time, when the student is dropped off.
- Inform the campus administrator of any change of address or telephone number as soon as this information is available.

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

2. What are **STUDENT** responsibilities regarding transportation services?

- Obey all rules regarding the El Paso Independent School District's Student Code Of Conduct.
- Obey the Transportation Department's rules for students riding the bus.
- Respect the rights of other student passengers.
- Be ready at the designated pick up location and time.

3. What are the responsibilities of the **SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT?**

- Work with the campuses, parents and the Transportation Department to ensure that students with disabilities have a safe and efficient delivery of special transportation services.
- Provide periodic training sessions to school personnel about policies and procedures regarding special education transportation services.
- Address concerns from parents, guardians, campus administrators, and community leaders regarding special needs transportation.
- **Notify Parents** of district wide schedule changes that may affect student transportation services for students with disabilities (i.e., inclement weather)
- Maintain a database of students eligible to receive special education transportation in the fall, spring and extended school year/summer school sessions.
- Assist the Transportation Department by ensuring campuses submit their annual ARD transportation request forms by the designated deadline.
- Notify the Transportation Department of any legal or procedural changes within the Special Education Policies and Procedures that would affect transportation services.

4. What are the responsibilities of the **BUS DRIVER & MONITOR/TRANSPORTATION?**

- In addition to transportation operations, notify the parent and guardian of the bus number and approximate time of pick-up and drop-off.
- Be familiar with each student's disability and any special considerations in providing transportation services.
- Understand and support the privacy and confidentiality for the families whose students he/she transports.
- Address concerns from parents, guardians, campus administrators, bus drivers, monitors and community leaders regarding special transportation.

5. What are **SCHOOL** responsibilities regarding special education transportation?

- Work with all stakeholders in the formulation of an Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committee (ARD) decision and the completion of an Individualized Education Program (IEP). If the student is eligible for special education transportation services the campus administration must complete the SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION Form (129580) and send the appropriate copies to the **Transportation and Special Education Departments.**
- Involve the Transportation and Special Education Departments in any special transportation arrangements that may be necessary.
- **As per Bulletin 1 of the Transportation Department: Students are to be at the bus loading zone on time. STUDENTS ARE TO BE ESCORTED TO THE BUS LOADING ZONE and BE UNDER SUPERVISION UNTIL THE BUS DEPARTS.**
- Provide the Transportation Department with information regarding any medical condition or behavior which might affect the student's safety or health on the bus.
- Submit a list of students who need special education transportation for the upcoming school year to the Special Education and Transportation Departments .
- Submit to the Special Education and Transportation Departments timely and accurate updates at the end of each school year to assist in routing and scheduling for the following year.
- Ensure that the students are ready for dismissal at the time established by district policy.
- **Notify parents** of schedule changes that may affect student transportation (i.e., early dismissal, inclement weather, etc.)
- Refer requests by the parent or guardian involving alternate transportation arrangements to the Transportation Department.
- Provide appropriate arrangements for those students needing assistance in boarding and discharging from the bus at the school.
- Accept and act on discipline referrals submitted by the bus driver or monitor. The principal or his/her designee is responsible for disciplinary action, including the suspension of the student's transportation privilege, when appropriate.
- The **SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION BUS REQUISITION** Form (PAD) must be completed for ALL FIELD TRIP REQUESTS, include the campus budget account number, be signed by the campus administrator AND SENT TO THE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT. Every campus has IDEA-B funds to pay for CBI transportation. However, if there's a question send Dr. Robert Hemphill (SPED) a list of the names of students, their teachers, paraprofessionals and the destination address for the CBI transportation request. CBI must be documented in the student's IEP.
- **DO NOT** use the SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION Form (129580) for Field Trips or CBI (Community Based Instruction) travel requests.

Is a special education student guaranteed transportation?

Transportation service is provided by law as a related service, if it is specified in the student's IEP.

May a student be dropped off at a location different from the morning pickup?

Yes, this can be done on a consistent basis upon request (day-to-day changes, however, cannot be accommodated).

Is curb service available?

Those students whose handicapping condition (s) does not permit them to go to a designated bus stop may be picked up at the curb outside their residence as directed in the IEP.

When a student moves to another school zone within the district, will the same bus continue the transportation service?

Probably not. Another bus route may be involved.

Can a safety vest or car seat be provided?

Yes, they can be provided when needed and as per the student's IEP.

What happens if there is no authorized person to accept the student at the primary drop-off location other than the school?

The driver will make a second attempt to drop-off the student at his/her drop-off location. If contact has not been made with the parent or guardian by the Transportation Department, the student will be taken back to his/her school and left in custody of the campus administration. If the parent or guardian does not arrive to pick up the student in a timely manner, the El Paso Police Department will be contacted to take custody of the student.

What about Loading and Un-Loading Students at pick-up/drop-off locations?

The driver and/or bus monitor will load and unload students at the pick-up/drop-off location. Under certain circumstances, the parent or guardian may be requested to assist with his/her student, only. Parents and guardians are strongly encouraged to communicate to the driver and/or monitor and information about the student that would help facilitate safe loading and unloading.

To facilitate a smoother student transition on and off the bus, designated school personnel are encouraged to help load and unload ambulatory students, especially the ones in safety vests and car seats. As other needs may arise, the bus driver may request other types of assistance.

What should be done when a student becomes a behavior problem on the school bus?

The bus driver will report all unsafe behaviors to the campus administrator as soon as possible using the student discipline referral form.

When the behavior of a student on a special needs bus creates an imminent serious danger to other students or adults on the bus, the bus driver should immediately call 911 for police assistance. After calling 911, the bus driver will call the transportation department to inform them of the situation and the bus location.

What if there is a medical emergency on the school bus while in transit?

The bus driver should immediately call 911 for medical assistance. After calling 911, the bus driver will call the transportation department to inform them of the situation and the bus location.

Are there bus evacuation procedures during emergencies?

Yes, the bus driver and monitor are responsible for ensuring each student fully understands what actions are to be taken if required to evacuate the bus during an emergency. The driver will call 911, if necessary. After calling 911, the bus driver will call the transportation department to inform them of the situation and the bus location. The Transportation Department will notify the parents and guardians of all the students on the bus, and campus administrators as necessary.

How is special transportation handled for Extended School Year/Summer Activities?

The routes are developed once the Transportation Department has a full listing of all students attending summer sessions. Parents and guardians will be notified of pick-up/drop-off times by transportation.

How is special transportation handled for the new school year?

Routes for the new school year are developed during the summer months. Campus administrators must complete a Special Education Transportation Form (129850) for students eligible to receive special transportation. **Students may not be included in the initial development of the bus route if the Special Education Transportation Form is not completed in a timely manner by the campus administrator.** Elementary campus administrators must ensure that they have completed the Special Education Transportation Form for **fifth graders going to grade six** in the Middle School and campus administrators from Middle Schools must complete the Special Education Transportation Form for **eight graders going to grade nine** in the High school.

EACH PARENT/GUARDIAN NEEDS TO ENSURE THE TRANSPORTATION FORM HAS BEEN COMPLETED PROPERLY AT THE SCHOOL PRIOR TO THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL.

If the student's home address changes or any other changes occur during the summer, the Transportation Department **MUST** be notified by the campus administration to ensure the student has been placed on the correct route for the first day of the new school year.

Where may I find additional information regarding transportation for special education students?

Refer to the El Paso Independent School District's Transportation Department Bulletin # 1.