



Transportation Fleet Services

Special Services Division

***Parent/Guardian
Transportation Information
for
Special Education Students***

Transportation Fleet Services Office: 602-896-5270



4650 W. Sweetwater Ave., Glendale, AZ 85304
602-347-2600 • wesdschools.org

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Purpose

This document has been created to provide parents/guardians and District staff with a source of information that addresses responsibilities and procedures within special services transportation. The full scope of the special services transportation operation is much broader than can be contained in this document. The document is not intended to be all inclusive, but rather an avenue to share important information with all parties associated with transporting special education students. The District hereby reserves and retains the right to amend, alter, change, delete or modify any of the provisions of this document at any time, without notice, to best meet the interest of the District.

The following procedures were established by Transportation Fleet Services and in consultation with the Special Services Department to facilitate safe, effective and efficient transportation services. On occasion, Transportation Fleet Services receives requests from parents/guardians to deviate from these procedures. Transportation Fleet Services reserves the right to authorize or deny deviations from these procedures based on the need to provide an acceptable level of safety for all students on the bus, and an acceptable level of service for those entitled to special services transportation. Should you have any questions that this document does not address, feel free to contact Transportation Fleet Services between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday on school attendance days.

Washington Special Services Transportation Standards

Transportation services for special education students will be provided as required by state and federal laws. Special transportation will be determined on an individual basis as documented in the child's Section 504 or IEP plan.

Transportation provisions may include the employment of assistants, specially equipped vehicles, adaptive equipment such as safety vest, special procedures or accommodations in routing and bus stop locations. Drivers and assistants transporting students will be informed of any conditions that may require special care as indicated on your child's transportation plan. Transportation provisions may include parent transport with reimbursement at a rate determined by the District with parent agreement.

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1. Pickup/Drop-off Information

a. Curb-to-curb Service

- i. Under most conditions, Special Services Transportation provides curb-to-curb service. This means that the bus will pick up and drop off at the curb in front of the student's home or day care. The following are some of the exceptions to this procedure:
 1. The bus stop location may require the student to cross the roadway. When applicable, the bus assistant will escort the student across the roadway to and from the bus.
 2. Due to other conditions (i.e., dead ends, narrow roadways, apartment complexes), there may be a requirement to place the bus stop 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.
 3. Parents or a designated adult are responsible for assisting the student, to and from the bus, unless otherwise determined by the IEP team.
 4. Transportation Fleet Services does have the right to determine a student shall not be left alone at a bus stop.

b. Pickup/Drop-off Times

- i. Assigned pickup and drop-off times, at the beginning of the school year, reflect Transportation Fleet Services best estimate based on a number of variables. These are estimated times only. During the school year, as students are added or deleted from the routes, the actual pickup and drop-off times will change. If the time change is greater than five minutes, Transportation Fleet Services will notify the parents/guardians before these changes occur. Every effort will be made to give 48 hours notice.
- ii. Bus routes are scheduled to accommodate the arrival and dismissal times for each school and to maximize efficiency of transportation for all students transported to and from school. Transportation Fleet Services will not honor requests to lengthen or shorten a student's bus ride to accommodate day care or other schedules.

c. Pickup Procedures

- i. It is the responsibility of the day care staff, parent or guardian to have their child ready to board the bus at the pickup time provided by Transportation Fleet Services. All students shall be ready five minutes before the pickup time, as the bus may arrive within five minutes of the scheduled pickup time. Due to traffic conditions, the school bus may also run five minutes late.
- ii. Many students and classes are affected by bus schedules; therefore, drivers will wait two minutes after the scheduled pickup time and then proceed on their route, if the student does not board the bus.
- iii. Honking to alert students or parents of the arrival at a bus stop is not permitted except when the bus arrives more than 10 minutes late, in which case, one short honk is permitted. Buses will wait approximately 30 seconds if they are behind schedule by more than 10 minutes.

d. Drop-off Procedures

- i. A parent or a designated adult must be at the bus stop to receive the child when delivered, unless the transportation plan specifically states that the child may be left unattended. The parent or designated adult should be at the bus stop 10 minutes prior to the drop-off time and is responsible for assisting the child from the bus into the home.
- ii. If your child cannot be left unattended, the transportation plan completed by your child's teacher will state that your child cannot be left unattended and list the individuals you identified as authorized to receive your child. This information is recorded on the bus driver's route sheet. The driver or assistant will ask the

individual to provide proof of identity until the relationship has been established. Substitute transportation staff has been directed to ask for identification.

e. Day Care Locations

- i. Transportation will pick up and drop off students at any day care location, within the school district boundaries. A student may have different day care pick up and drop off locations; however, the student must be picked up from the same address five days per week and dropped off at the same address five days per week. This service may be provided if it occurs on a consistent long-term basis and the service can be accommodated on an existing route.

f. Other Items

- i. A student may have different pick-up and drop-off locations; however, the student must be picked up from the same address five days per week and dropped off at the same address five days per week. To keep consistency with bus schedules, it is not our practice to provide transportation from more than one address or to multiple addresses. If you believe there are unique circumstances (example: joint custody issues), please contact Transportation Fleet Services for further review. Temporary address changes cannot be accommodated.
- ii. To change the bus stop location for your child, please contact his or her teacher.
- iii. Please note that bus stop changes may take up to five business days to process. There are a number of variables that influence the length of time to schedule a route for your child. These include data verification, the number of other new/revised transportation plans, route scheduling, route verification, and parent notifications on time changes affecting other riders, to name a few factors. Transportation Fleet Services roll out changes, additions and edits every Monday and Thursday. If your student's transportation has not been assigned, please do not deliver your student to school and expect the bus to return him or her to a new bus stop location unless you have been notified by Transportation Fleet Services that bus service to the new bus stop has been arranged.
- iv. Wednesdays are early release days. Students will be dropped off at their bus stop **90 minutes earlier** than the usual drop-off time.
- v. It is extremely helpful if space can be left at the curb in front of your home for loading and unloading purposes. Drivers are encouraged to avoid any backing, if it is at all possible.

g. Unclaimed Students

- i. Drivers are authorized to drop off students only at the designated bus stop. If the student is not to be left unattended and/or there is no authorized person to accept the student at the bus stop, the following steps will be taken:
 - 1. Driver is to notify dispatch of the problem.
 - 2. Dispatch will call the home or emergency phone number(s) (current information on hand).
 - 3. Driver will continue on the route while awaiting instruction from dispatch.
 - 4. If there is still no one to receive the student at the designated bus stop, the driver will either return the student to school or Transportation Fleet Services.
 - 5. If the student is not claimed within one hour after returning to school or Transportation Fleet Services, law enforcement and/or Child Protective Services may be called to assist the school in caring for the student by requesting the student be placed in protective custody.

h. Cul-de-sacs

- i. Cul-de-sac stops are considered unsafe, therefore buses are not routed into cul-de-sacs for the following reasons:
 - 1. Cul-de-sac stops create blind spots often causing students to enter or exit in a danger zone around the bus.
 - 2. Different styles and sizes of buses make maneuvering in a cul-de-sac difficult.

3. The rear of the bus has potential to swing around onto the sidewalk or parked cars.
4. Parked cars and other obstacles create road hazards that may not be seen until entering the cul-de-sac.
5. Maneuvering the bus in reverse creates safety risks for not only the children, but also property damage to vehicles, mailboxes and landscaping.

2. Loading and Unloading Students

a. Bus Stop

- i. The driver and/or assistant will load and unload students onto the bus, including meeting the student at street level. Under certain circumstances, the parent/guardian may be requested to assist with his or her child onto the bus.
- ii. Parents/guardians shall not send their child to the bus with food or drink (except water) to be consumed on the bus.
- iii. Children must be clean and fully dressed (including shoes and socks) in appropriate school clothing before boarding the bus.
- iv. To avoid the risk of injury to students or employees, students shall not be carried up or down the bus steps during loading or unloading. If a student cannot negotiate the bus steps with a reasonable degree of assistance, an alternate method of loading/unloading or transporting the student will need to be resolved among school administrators, parents/guardians and transportation.

3. Student Behavior

a. Procedures

- i. Transportation Fleet Services is responsible to provide safe transportation for all students who ride school buses to and from school and on school-related activity 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 that interferes with the safe transportation of students must be reported. Behavior problems involving special services students are dealt with in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws, policies and procedures. Any inappropriate behavior on the school bus will be reported by the driver to a school administrator or designee using the *Special Services Bus Misconduct Report* form. School site administrators or designees are responsible for any disciplinary action required to be taken.
- ii. To protect the safety (physical and emotional) of each individual student on the bus, students will have an expectation to be safe, orderly and respectful during transport. When student behavior escalates to an unsafe level, other actions will be taken. These include the following:
 1. The bus driver will park the bus in a safe location, and then notify dispatch of the situation and location.
 - a. The bus driver and assistant are given 10 minutes to de-escalate the situation.
 - b. Meanwhile, dispatch is in the process of contacting one or more of the following to assist with the student: parent, school, WESD security, police, and/or a transportation supervisor.
 2. Possible outcomes if situation continues after 10 minutes:
 - a. Parent may be requested to remove the student from the bus.
 - b. If the bus is near the student's school, the teacher, principal or designee may be requested to ride along with the student on route to school or home.
 - c. Depending on the severity of behavior, police or WESD security may be requested to meet the bus and transport the student home.

- d. A transportation supervisor may arrive on scene to assist with the student or transport them home.
- iii. When the behavior of a student on a special services bus creates an imminent danger to other students or adults on the bus, Transportation Fleet Services may call District security and/or 911 for police assistance.

4. Safety Devices

a. Seat Belts

- i. Although seat belts are not required on school buses, all Washington special services buses are equipped with seat belts. If your child requires a seat belt, please make sure the teacher adds this to the transportation plan.

b. Car Seats

- i. School buses are not required, by law, to use car seats for younger students. However, car seats and booster seats are available through Transportation Fleet Services for those students who need a physical support to sit appropriately. If your child requires a car seat, please make sure the teacher adds this to the transportation plan.
- ii. Parents are not allowed to supply their own car seat or booster seat.

c. Safety Vests

- i. A safety vest is designed for students who need extra assistance to remain seated because of safety concerns while on the school bus, or to provide upper body support for students with physical disabilities. The vest is equipped with a zipper in the back that, when properly attached, is not accessible to the student. The vest is attached to the bus seat, which prevents the student from standing or falling over. The student is able to move his or her legs, feet, arms, hands and head freely. The vest will remain on the bus when not being used by the student, unless other arrangements were made.
- ii. Transportation will only use a safety vest on a student after an IEP meeting has been completed and documented on the transportation plan.
- iii. Pictures of vest:



1. Front:



2. Back:

5. Other Items

a. Absences

- i. **Please notify Transportation Fleet Services when you do not intend to send your child to school, no later than 60 minutes prior to pickup time.** Transportation Fleet Services can be contacted by telephone at 602-896-5270 and then press 2, 24 hours/7 days a week. A voicemail system is available to receive your message after regular business hours.

b. Cologne/Perfume

- i. Please refrain from using cologne or perfume on your child, as other children or employees riding the bus may be allergic to these products.

c. Communication

- i. If you have a complaint or compliment regarding transportation, please do not ask your child's teacher to take care of this matter; contact Transportation Fleet Services.
- ii. Bus drivers or bus assistants are not to be used as messengers between home and school. Please write down any communication for school staff and enclose it in your child's backpack.

d. Emergency Use of Restroom

- i. We have established three options if a student needs to urgently use the restroom and cannot wait until they get home.
 - 1. The first choice is to drive to the nearest WESD school site or Transportation Department.
 - 2. The second choice is QT or Circle K if the nearest school site is closed or too far away.
 - 3. The third choice is to take the student home, first, if this would be faster.
- ii. The student will be accompanied by the bus assistant when the student is off the bus at any location.

e. Late Bus

- i. If the bus is more than 10 minutes late, contact Transportation Fleet Services at 602-896-5270 and Press 5. We also make every attempt to contact parents when the bus is running more than 15 minutes late.

f. Medication

- i. The driver and assistant are not authorized to administer or transport any type of medication. These items shall be provided to the school directly by the parent or guardian or vice versa. Any special medical circumstances will be determined by the IEP team.

g. Siblings

- i. Special services transportation is provided through an individual student determination as documented in the student's Section 504 or IEP plan. We receive several requests for siblings to ride the bus with their special needs brother or sister attending the same school. If non-special services students are attending a school other than their home school of residence under open enrollment then transportation is the parents' responsibility. The routes for students receiving specialized transportation are at capacity and designed to meet the needs of that group of students. Siblings do not have a transportation plan and are not on the designated passenger list, presenting potential safety issues. When a special needs or 504 plan student is going to be absent, parents are required to notify the transportation office of that absence which results in the driver skipping that stop. Drivers cannot make that stop if the student on their official roster is not riding the bus. As a reminder, transportation under Open Enrollment is the responsibility of the parent and must be understood when applying for and being granted admission under Open Enrollment. We regret with buses at capacity and the other concerns listed above, we will no longer be able to provide transportation to siblings of special services students.

h. Sick Students

- i. Drivers will return students to their home if they become ill or they are obviously infected with a contagious condition, such as pink eye or lice, while in-route to school.

i. Soiled Students

- i. Drivers will refuse to transport, for health reasons, any soiled student who is brought to their bus for boarding. If the parent can clean the student within a reasonable amount of time, the driver shall wait. If not, the driver shall continue

on the route. The same bus or another bus can return at a later time after the student has been cleaned.

j. Travel Times

- i. Washington Elementary School District is the largest elementary school district in the state. Our large service area makes it necessary for some students to have long bus rides. Travel time will vary from route to route. We attempt to ensure that each student rides the bus no longer than one hour in each direction between home and school.

k. Wheelchairs

- i. The safest possible lifts and tie-down equipment have been purchased for the transportation of your child. Your help is also needed to maintain safe transportation of wheelchairs. If a wheelchair is not safe for transport (example: inoperable brakes, loose chair, lack of seat belt and/or postural support belt, etc.), we will refuse to provide transportation until the wheelchair is fixed.

6. ESY and the Next School Year

a. Extended School Year (ESY)

- i. If your student is involved in Extended School Year Services, the routes will be developed once Transportation Fleet Services has a full listing of all students attending summer sessions. Parents/guardians will be notified of pickup/drop-off times by Transportation Fleet Services.

b. Next School Year

- i. The routes for the next school year are developed during the summer months based on the transportation request forms supplied to Transportation Fleet Services from Special Services and the schools. These forms must be completed before school ends. If this form has not been received by Transportation before school ends, the student may not be included in the initial development of the routes. Once the new school year begins, and the transportation form is provided to Transportation Fleet Services, the student will then be added to the appropriate route. Due to the workload at the beginning of the new school year, the student may not be scheduled for transportation until the second week of school.
- ii. Each parent/guardian needs to ensure the transportation request form has been completed properly at the school prior to the last day of school. Transportation Fleet Services will collect these forms from each school, prior to the end of the school year, for the summer. If the student's home address changes or any other changes occur during the summer, the school must be notified to ensure the student has been placed on the correct route for the new school year.

We hope this information helps clarify any questions that you have regarding Special Services Transportation. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Transportation Fleet Services at 602-896-5270 or Special Services at 602-347-2632.