

Parent/Student Transportation Manual



Eustace Independent School District



SAFETY IS OUR FIRST PRIORITY



To Parents and Guardians:

It is necessary for parents and guardians to support school safety rules and help their youngster to abide by them for their own safety as well as for the safety of others. Student management on the school bus is probably the biggest problem facing school bus drivers today. As in the classroom, student management on the bus is an important issue. There are, however, some differences. Unlike the classroom teacher, the school bus driver has her/his back to the students. Unlike the classroom teacher who has 20-30 students the bus driver has 50-80 students. A bus driver must control thousands of pounds of steel, glass, and rubber as s/he drives through traffic in varying road conditions. The school bus driver is constantly aware, that a single lapse in concentration could result in a serious accident and possible injury or death to students on board the bus or to persons off the bus. To avoid distractions it is imperative that the students be under control at all times. It is essential to communicate to students the importance of good behavior on the bus. It is imperative that students hear this from parents and teachers as well as the transportation department staff.

Parents are encouraged to do the following:

- Stress the importance of remaining seated and reasonably quiet while the bus is in motion.
- Stress the importance of following the directions of the bus driver.
- Advise their students that Red Flashing lights cannot stop oncoming vehicle. Students must take direction from the bus driver as well as look one more time before crossing the roadway.
- Reinforce that their student be at the bus stop five minutes prior the scheduled picked time.
- Escort Kindergarten students to and from the bus stop.
- Discuss safety hazards involved in throwing anything out of window or in putting any part of their body out of the window
- Support the district's policies and procedures as they are established to ensure student safety.

Positive communication is also necessary to operate the transportation system. Parents need to communicate with the department staff and the drivers need to speak with parents if there are questions or behavior management problems. Parents need to let the transportation department know if there is a problem or perceived problem by identifying the day it happened and the bus #. Also bus drivers need to know if students have any medical problems that may need to be addressed while on the bus or personality conflicts with other students so that seating can be assigned. Parents, teachers and the transportation staff must all set a positive example for our students.

BUS CONDUCT RULES

The Transportation Department staff is looking forward to a safe, efficient, and effective year working as a team with parents and students. In order to maintain high safety standards, it is important that everyone works together. Please remember the bus driver is in complete charge at all times; students will not question the driver's authority. For safety and consideration of others, students must follow these Board of Education-approved rules:

- Be on time and board the bus safely.
- Walk to your seat; sit facing forward; keep feet on the floor; remain seated at all times; share your seat willingly. (Up to three students are expected to sit on one seat)
- Keep aisles clear. All items you take on the bus must ride on your lap.
- Keep all body parts and belongings inside the bus.
- Leave the bus safely, through the front door; be sure the bus driver can see you.
- These items are not to be transported on school buses
 - Pets or other animals
 - Glass containers or fragile items
 - Aerosol cans
 - Radios or boom boxed
 - Large band instruments
 - Balloons
 - Other items that can become projectile
- Food and beverages are not to be consumed on school buses.
- No dangerous or harmful objects.
- No drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.
- No fighting, kicking, punching, pushing, pinching, spitting, arguing, teasing, or taking anyone's property
- No obscene or offensive language
- No shouting, screaming, or other loud noises. Talk in normal tones.
- No cutting, puncturing, or tearing bus seats. Do not cause damage to the bus, inside or out.
- No throwing objects at or in the bus, no littering.

Students who fail to follow safety or behavior rules will receive a Bus Conduct Report that must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the campus principal before the student can ride the bus again. Generally, the first conduct report is a warning. Serious misbehavior or further reports of misbehavior will bring disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion. The following behaviors will result in an automotive suspension of bus riding privileges:

- Lighting matches, lighters, or other flammable items on the bus.
- Exiting the bus while it is in motion.
- Assaulting a student or staff person.

Students who damage a bus will be charged for repairs, including parts and labor. Riding privileges may be suspended until damages are paid for. If you have questions, please call the Transportation Center at 903-425-7521.

All students are subject to the district's code of conduct.

Transportation Responsibilities Policy Statement

DISTRICT

It is the District's responsibility to:

- Develop safe and appropriate bus routes and schedules.
- Designate safe bus stops.
- Determine the mile computation as required by the board of education policy.
- Provide appropriate student information to bus drivers.
- Provide vehicles that meet or exceed the requirements of state laws pertaining to vehicles utilized to transport school students.
- Provide appropriate insurance coverage.
- Hire certified and qualified staff
- Provide on going training for the transportation department staff
- Recommend to the Superintendent when schools should be closed due to inclement weather.
- Develop and administer disciplinary procedures for students who exhibit inappropriate bus riding behaviors.

PARENT

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to:

1. Have the student(s) at the bus stop at least five minutes ahead of the scheduled stop time.
2. Make arrangements to have an appropriate person at home at the designated drop-off time if needed.
3. Take their youngster home if they become ill at school.
4. Deliver medication directly to the school.
5. Keep animals away from the loading area.
6. Take responsibility for the safety of students to and from and at the bus stop.

STUDENTS

It is the student's responsibility to:

1. Obey the driver at all times
2. Board the bus promptly
3. Talk in a normal tone of voice
4. Keep hands to themselves
5. Stay in their seat facing forward while bus is in motion
6. Use appropriate language
7. Refrain from eating or drinking on the bus
8. Refrain from carrying large or questionable objects on bus
9. Refrain from defacing the bus
10. Place all carry-on items on ones lap
11. Allow three people to sit in each seat (secondary and elementary)

IF ALL ELSE FAILS

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE WILL OCCUR

When a student has a behavior problem on the bus and none of the non-punitive plans work the bus conduct report will be utilized.

The Conduct Report has five steps and is outlined herein with guidelines:

First Notice: Is a warning that the student named has been Involved in the incident described. Parent/Guardian will be notified by the school about the behavior problem(s). Student returns white copy of the conduct report signed by the parent to the campus principal before the student can ride the bus again.

Second Notice: Will bring disciplinary action and possible suspension of bus riding privileges from one to (3) three days. If a suspension is levied the parent/ guardian will be notified before the suspension in the form of a bus conduct referral. The student must return the signed copy of the Bus Conduct Report to the principal before he/she rides the bus again.

Third Notice: Will bring a suspension of bus privileges for up to (5) five days. Parent/guardian will be notified before the suspension. Parent/guardian should make arrangements to meet with the campus principal to see if some corrective measures have been worked out. Student must return the copy of the Bus Conduct Report signed by the parent to the principal before the student can ride the bus again.

Fourth Notice: Will follow the same procedure as the third including a suspension of riding privileges of up to 10 days as well as other punishment, depending on the misconduct. The student must return the signed copy of the Bus Conduct Report to the principal before he/she rides the bus again.

Fifth Notice: May be suspended for up to the remaining of the semester as well as other punishment, depending on the misconduct. The student must return the signed copy of the Bus Conduct Report to the principal before he/she rides the bus again.

- Any unsafe, dangerous behavior can result in extreme discipline measures and a denial of bus riding privileges without going through the normal progression of light to harsher punishments
- Serious misconduct that actually endangers the physical safety of other passengers or the driver shall be reason to bypass the above steps with the driver having the authority to remove the student from the bus or call for law enforcement assistance. In such cases the Transportation Director and the Campus principal will be notified as soon as is practical in case they decide to locate take the student home or to school whichever is deemed appropriate.

Policies

POLICY #1

WHERE BUSES CAN TRAVEL

Eustace public schools transportation policy has included the following criteria for roads traveled by buses.

- Be at least 20 feet wide
- Provide a location for change of bus direction with a minimum of backing.
- Have adequate shoulders to allow the bus to pull off the roadway
- Be kept clear of snow, sleet, ice, vehicles, and other obstructions that would prevent safe travel of school buses. Have centralized bus stops for pick-up and take-home students
- Bus stops may not be on any private property.
- Bus stops must be clearly and continuously visible to motorists approaching and following buses for at least 400 feet on road ways over 35mph and a 200 ft. visibility for roadways 35 and under.
- Stops must be at least 50 feet from an intersection.
- Stops must be at least 200 feet apart.
- Students may be required to cross a 2-lane road but never 3 or more lanes of traffic.

On some routes, the bus passes the same area twice. Students will board their bus on the side of the road they live on: they are not allowed to cross a busy road to board.



POLICY #2

BUS STOP REVIEW PROCEDURE

For the most part routes are computerized and then manually checked to ensure they meet the letter of the law. Some times bus stops are changed for one of the following reasons:

1. No students live at the residence
2. The stop does not meet the legal requirements
3. The stop is not safe

Bus stop reviews will be performed August 15 —October 15 of each year by a team of two to four people to include law enforcement (if needed), director of transportation, route planner, garage operations manager and others. After October 15, changes will be made only in emergency or unforeseen circumstances.

POLICY #3

ABOUT USING BUS STOPS...

Please be aware of these Eustace Public Board of Education guidelines for student transportation and bus stops. Students may be required to walk up to a distance of ½ mile. Distance is measured on public roadways only and does not include personal or private drives. **Safety of students to and from the bus stop and at the bus stop is the responsibility of the parent.**

- All students, unless they have special needs, should be at their assigned bus stop **five minutes** before the pick up time and **must be visible to the bus driver**. The law states buses can stop and display overhead warning lights only when students are present if no student is in sight; the bus will not stop.
- If the bus is late due to weather, construction, or road conditions, the Transportation Department apologizes and thanks you for your patience.
- All students must have one permanent pick-up location and one permanent drop-off location.
- For reasons of student safety and time constraints, a multiple pick-up/drop-off schedule is not possible. **If a responsible person does not meet a kindergarten or younger student, the student will be returned to his/her school for the parent to pick up.**
- All students will ride their assigned buses at all times except in an emergency such as a family death or accident
- Due to bus capacity and student loads, it is not possible to transport students to other locations for meetings, babysitters, parties, appointments, jobs, etc.

POLICY #4

SCHOOL CLOSING AND DELAYS

When schools must close or delay...

The Transportation Department works with the superintendent to make the difficult decision to close or delay schools. To allow time to advise staff and the community every effort is made to decide by 5:15 a.m. and relay the word via radio and TV stations. Sometimes this is not possible due to fast moving weather changes. You may listen to radio stations WBAP 820am or KCKL 1410am, 95.9fm or watch NBC channel 5 on your television to receive the latest school closings. The primary consideration in closing or delaying is student safety. Issues assessed include wind chill index of -30 degrees or lower; icing on roads, bus windows, and bus mirrors; thick fog snow conditions; and lack of power, heat, or water in school buildings. Parents may choose to keep student home if they believe it is unsafe to send them to school due to inclement weather or bad roads. For an excused absence, the parent must notify the student's school.

Thick Fog
Snow



Icy Road
Rain

**School Closing
And
School Delays**

POLICY #5



BUS STOP PROCEDURES



Drivers shall instruct students about the following safety procedures:

- Students shall move away from the side of the bus after leaving the bus.
- Students are not to rush the bus.
- Students are not to get the mail the roadside mailbox until the bus has departed.
- If your pupils must cross the road, they shall be instructed to:
 - Move at least 10 giant steps in front of the bus before starting across the roadway.
 - Those students that must cross shall wait for the proper signal from the driver.
 - Stop at the traffic side of the bus, look left, right and left, and cross only when approaching traffic is stopped.
 - Walk.
- Drivers shall count the number of students that leave the bus to cross the roadway and count again before leaving bus stop to account for all crossing students.
- Students are to be at the bus stop 5 minutes prior to pickup time.
- Students are required to wait a minimum of 20 feet from the edge of the roadway, in an orderly group, and remain there until the bus has come to a complete stop before loading.

Always Obey Your Bus Driver

POLICY #6

CROSSING PADDLE PROCEDURES

Cross with the paddle....

For student safety, Eustace Public Schools has a crossing guard. The guard is used when students cross the road to get to the high school or from the high school to the middle school. The crossing guard uses a crossing paddle that is a red (“stop”) sign. Students learn this at Kindergarten Roundups and in early elementary programs.

Before crossing the road, students always should check one more time after getting the “cross with caution” signal. All students of all ages are to follow the crossing paddle procedure.

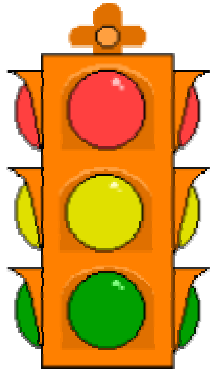


POLICY #7

IMPORTANT FACTORS PERTAINING TO SCHOOL BUS EVACUATION DRILLS

- A. Safety of children participating is of utmost importance and must be considered first. It is not the purpose to see how fast a school bus can be evacuated, but rather to serve as an educational process of how and what to do in case of emergency and to do it safely.
- B. Written notice to parents shall be distributed:
 - a. A written notice should be given to all parents informing them that their children will be required to participate in an emergency bus-evacuation drill at least twice each school year under supervision of school personnel.
- C. Consideration should be given to those students who are not physically able to participate due to:
 - a. Illness
 - b. Physical defects
 - c. Previous injury
 - d. Overweight
 - e. Any reason that would run the risk of further injury to the student.
- D. Do not permit children to take lunch boxes, books, etc., with them when they leave the bus. Getting the children OFF in the shortest time possible and in an orderly fashion is the objective of a school bus evacuation drill.
- E. Pupils should go a distance of at least 100 feet, or 40 paces, from the bus and remain there in a group until given further instructions.
- F. Passengers should also be reminded monthly about the various safety features of a school bus. They should know where to find the first aid kit, fire extinguisher and two-way radio. Include instruction on use of roof hatches, emergency windows and doors.
 - a. Flat, level ground should be selected if possible; free from loose material such as gravel or sand.
 - b. An area large enough to allow ample room for all doors to be used and a suitable place for the children to assemble 100 feet or 40 paces from the bus.
 - c. A record-keeping system must be maintained, similar to those kept for school fire drills.
 - d. **WARNING: DO NOT USE ANY WINDOW TYPE EMERGENCY EXIT DURING DRILLS! USE ONLY FLOOR LEVEL DOORS!**





MOTORIST REMINDER: USE CAUTION AROUND SCHOOL BUSES

Drive with care; Eustace ISD buses on the road!

Eustace public school buses will be on the road from 6:30-9:30 a.m. and 2:20-5:00 p.m. every school day. Motorists are reminded to use caution around school buses and remember the School Bus Stop Law!

1. Vehicles must stop when a bus is stopped and displays the overhead alternating red flashing lights. Vehicles must be no closer than 20 feet in front of or behind the bus.
2. Prepare to stop when you see flashing overhead amber lights or red warning lights on a moving bus.
3. Proceed with caution when you see flashing yellow hazard lights (on lower bus body).
4. Because buses were manufactured in many different years, Eustace public school's bus equipment varies. As you meet or follow a Eustace public schools bus, watch for these lights and equipment:
 - a. **Four-light system:** Only overhead red warning lights. Prepare to stop when these lights flash. Stop when the bus is stopped and red lights are flashing.
 - b. **Eight-light system:** Overhead amber and red lights. Prepare to stop when overhead amber lights flash. Stop when bus is stopped and the red lights are flashing. Red lights flash when bus door is open.
 - c. **Eight-light with stop-arm system:** Overhead amber and red lights plus a stop sign arm on driver's side of the bus. Prepare to stop when overhead amber lights flash. Stop when bus is stopped and the overhead red lights are flashing. Red lights flash and stop sign arm swings out when bus door opens. When safe and practical to do so, buses will pull to the right shoulder to allow waiting traffic to pass.

SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORTATION

It is the goal of the transportation department to provide all students with safe, efficient, quality transportation. This includes the thousands of students with disabilities who need to get to and from school each day that are looking to the district as one who will help with their needs. Federal law, 34 CFR Part 300.16, commonly called Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), provides a number of directives regarding transportation for these students.

These include:

- Travel to and from school and between schools
- Travel in and around the school building

The IEP?

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is just that. It is a plan for each student with special needs which creates an opportunity for the teachers, parents, administrators, and related services personnel, including transportation, to work together regarding the education of the student. For the transportation department, this means that questions must be asked regarding applicability.

Specialized equipment (such as adapted buses with lifts), if required to provide special transportation for a student with a disability IEP meetings can sometimes throw an unreasonable burden upon the transportation provider. It is always wise to have someone from the transportation department at the IEP meetings so that necessary items can be discussed. There is a continuum chart which describes some of the options to consider when transporting a special needs child.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWER

SPECIAL NEEDS FOR TRANSPORTATION

Q. Is transportation required for all students with disabilities?

A. Public agencies must provide transportation to disabled students in two situations. First, if a public agency provides transportation to the general student population to and from school, the public agency is responsible for disabled students, including providing transportation for a disabled student to any special education program in which it has placed the student. Second, if a public agency does not provide transportation to the general student population, the issue of transportation for students with disabilities must be decided on a case-by-case basis. If a public agency determines that a disabled student needs transportation to benefit from special education, it must be provided as a related service at the cost to the student and his or her parents. Under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Part B), the term “related services” includes “transportation, and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education.” 34 CFR and between schools, regardless of whether the school is located in or outside of Eustace Independent School District; travel in and around school buildings; and specialized equipment. 34 CFR 300.16 (b) (14). In all instances, each student’s need for transportation as a related service and the type of transportation to be provided are issues to be discussed and decided during the evaluation process and individualized education program (IEP) meeting and the transportation arrangements agreed upon should be included in the disabled student’s IEP. If the IEP team determines that transportation is a related service, including it in the IEP for a particular student because it is required to assist that student to benefit from special education, the public agency must provide transportation to the student at public expense.

Q. Is a school district required to provide tokens or monies to secure public transportation for students with disabilities when it does not provide the same for non-disabled students?

A. See our response to question 1 above. Accordingly, unless otherwise specified in the disabled student’s IEP, transportation must be provided for disabled students under the same terms and conditions that it is provided for the general student population. Therefore, unless specified in their IEP as a related service, EISD is not required to provide tokens or monies for transportation to disabled students if it does not provide the same for non-disabled students.

Q. What is meant by “specialized transportation”?

A. The term “specialized transportation” is not used in the Part B regulation. Under 34 CFR 300.16 (b) (14), transportation includes “travel to and from school and travel between schools; travel in and around school building; and specialized equipment (such as special

or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps), if required to provide special transportation for a child with disability”.

We assume that you are inquiring about the meaning of “specialized equipment” in conjunction with EISD’s obligation to provide transportation as a related service to students with disabilities. Although the regulations constitute an exhaustive list. EISD is responsible for providing the equipment that is necessary to provide special transportation for a disabled student as designated in the student’s IEP.

Q. If transportation is to be regarded in the same manner as other related services, are goals and objectives required on the IEP?

- A. The annual goals and short-term instructional objectives in a disabled student’s IEP must provide a mechanism for determining whether the totality of services provided pursuant to the student’s IEP – including special education, related services, and supplementary aids and services – is appropriate to the student’s unique needs. Whether goals and objectives are required in a student’s IEP for transportation provided as a related service depends on the purpose of the transportation. If transportation is being provided solely to enable the student to travel to and from school, in and around school, and between schools, no goals or objectives are needed. If, however, instruction will be provided to enable the student to increase his or her independence or improve his or her behavior or socialization during travel, then goals and objectives must be included in the student’s IEP to address the individual student’s need to increase independence or improve behavior or socialization.