

Services for Students Receiving Special Education Transportation

2023-2024



Birdville Independent School District

6205 Broadway Ave • Fort Worth • Texas • 76117 • 817-547-5830

“your child arrives at school and returns home safely with care and thought given to his/her individual needs.” Our success is a result of our commitment, skill, knowledge, understanding, and ability to communicate. All drivers and assistants participate in frequent in-services training to expand and improve their driving skills and upgrade their knowledge of helping children with special needs.

In order to qualify for Special Needs Transportation, the campus ARD (Admission, Review and Dismissal) committee must determine that transportation is needed as a related service. The Transportation Department must have the “Transportation Request Form” completed after the ARD (Admission, Review and Dismissal) meeting; this authorizes Special Needs Transportation as a related service.

The following procedures were put together by the Special Needs Transportation Department to facilitate safe, effective and efficient transportation for students riding special needs busses. On occasion, transportation receives requests from parents/guardians to deviate from these procedures. Transportation 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 Needs Transportation.

AS A PARENT, YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT OUR MISSION BY:

- Attending your child’s ARD (Admission, Review and Dismissal) committee meeting and annual reviews
- Assist the school by submitting accurate and timely information to be included on the Transportation Application, and if applicable, the alternate Bus Plan. Incorrect and untimely information delays the onset of transportation services.
- Inform the school attendance office of any change of address or telephone number as soon as this information is available. If the address change requires rescheduling, 3 working days may be needed to establish a new route and time schedule.
- Ensuring an authorized person is home when your child is picked up in the morning and brought home in the afternoon. Buses are scheduled to arrive within a few minutes of the designated time each day. The bus driver is required to wait up to three minutes and cannot wait for a tardy student as this creates late pick-up times for other students.
 - If your student is to be left with anyone other than a parent or legal guardian, that person(s) name must be on the Transportation Application, otherwise, the student will be taken back to the school.
- Having your child ready to board the bus within five (10) minutes of the scheduled time each morning.

Beginning Special Needs Transportation

- Upon receipt of the Transportation Request Form, students will be assigned to a route best suited to the student's needs and location. This process requires a **minimum of 3 days before the student can ride for the first time.**
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- **Step 1:** The Department of Transportation receives the Transportation Request Form stating required actions involved in the safe transport of the student.
- **Step 2:** The Transportation Coordinator or the supervisor will assign the student to a route best suited for the student and BISD.
- **Step 3:** The updated route data and Transportation Request Form will be given to the Driver/monitor. The Driver/monitor will review the updated route and student information.
- **Step 4:** The driver will test drive the route. This familiarizes the driver with the route assigned. The driver will report any necessary adjustments to the Route Supervisor and/or the Safety Supervisor. A second test drive may be necessary.
- **Step 5:** Upon finalization of the route, the Driver/monitor will contact the parent/guardian. The Driver/monitor will introduce themselves by phone, confirm pick up and drop off locations and times, and answer any questions the parent/guardian may have.
- **Step 6:** If necessary, the Driver/monitor will install equipment required for the safe transport of the student.
- **Step 7:** The student will begin transportation services.
- **Step 8:** The parent/guardian receives the Parent/Guardian handbook (hereinafter called "Handbook"). The Handbook contains an Authorized Receiver Form and a Student Rider Contract which must be completed and returned to the Driver/Monitor within 3 days of receipt.
- **Step 9:** As dictated by student changes, pick up or drop off times may be adjusted. The Driver/Monitor will notify Parents/Guardians throughout the school year.

Notify the Transportation Office at **817-547-5831** as early as possible when your child will not be attending school. An answering machine is provided so that you may leave a message after hours if necessary. **Failure to ride three (3) consecutive days will result in termination of service until the parent/guardian calls the Transportation Office and reinstates the service.**

Transportation Procedures

Address Changes

We are unable to accommodate address changes without an updated ARD. With this in mind, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the school Diagnostician to request an updated Transportation Request Form. There will be a 3 day wait from the receipt of the updated Transportation Request Form to arrange for route changes before the student will be picked-up or dropped-off at the new address.

Pick-Up / Drop-Off - Curb-to-Curb Service

Whenever safely possible, we will provide right-sided curb-to-curb service. Simply put, we will pick up the student at the curb directly in-front of the designated pick-up location. Conversely, we will drop off the student at the curb directly in-front of the designated drop-off location. Drivers/Monitors will assist students off the bus. However, for the safety of other students and drivers/monitors, we do not assist the student to and from the door of their house during pick up and drop off. This responsibility lies with the parent/guardian.

- Due to road conditions (i.e., dead end, dirt / gravel or narrow roadways), there may be a requirement to place the pick-up/drop-off 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. The bus driver or monitor is not responsible to escort the student to or from the home or day care.
- In rare instances, the pick-up/drop-off location may require the student to cross the roadway. When applicable, the bus driver or monitor will escort the student across the roadway to and from the pick-up/drop-off location.

Parking Lots/Apartments

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

Alternate Drop-Off

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

- The driver will notify dispatch and deliver other students on the bus and then return to the home to drop off the student. If no one is home the driver will return to make a 2nd attempt to deliver the student home. If no one is still not at home the student will be returned to school. If an alternate address is on file, the driver will attempt to discharge the student to an authorized person at the alternate site.

- If contact has not been made with the parent/guardian by Transportation the local police department will be contacted and student will be taken into custody.
- If this should occur, transportation services may be suspended pending a conference with the parent or guardian.

Pick-up Times

- Assigned route pick-up and drop-off times at the beginning of the school year reflect the transportation operation's 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 pick-up and drop-off times will change. Either transportation or the bus drivers should notify the parents/guardians before these changes occur.
- 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.
- Students should be ready to board the bus at the scheduled time. In order to maintain our schedule, bus drivers have been instructed to only wait at the pick-up locations for 3 minutes past the regularly scheduled time before leaving.

Important Note: During pick-up and drop-off it is against Transportation policy to honk, use back-up beepers, strobe lights or phone calls notifying Parents/Guardians of actual bus arrival.

****Failure to ride three (3) consecutive days will result in termination of service until the parent/guardian calls the Transportation Office and reinstates the service.

If the student has moved, the new address must be submitted to the school before Transportation can begin from the new address. Transportation services will begin 3 days after new address verification is completed by from the school.

Drop off Times

Authorized Receivers of Students

For the safety of your child, it is necessary to maintain current and accurate information regarding those you designate to receive your child. For this reason, we require an Authorized Receiver of Student form to be completed for each person authorized to receive your child, including each parent and guardian.

At the time of drop-off, the Driver/monitor may ask the receiving party to see their photo ID. The ID will be compared to the Authorized Receiver on Students Form. In the event the ID can't be verified, the student will be returned to the student's school.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify Transportation in writing should any changes occur or authorizations revoked. Please use a new form for each Authorized Receiver. Additional forms may be obtained by asking the Driver/monitor or contacting the office.

Authorized Student Receivers must be available for drop off at school bell dismissal times. Again, depending upon external, uncontrollable factors, your student could be the first student delivered when normally he/she is last. If the authorized student receiver is unavailable when we arrive the student will be returned to the student's campus upon completion of the route. Parents/Guardians will be required to pick up their student from his/her campus. Parents/Guardians will be required to present a picture ID.

If your student has been returned to their campus 3 times, we will request an Emergency ARD meeting to discuss other options for drop off. If this does not correct the issue, Child Protective Services will be contacted. CPS will be asked to investigate the situation.

If at any time, your student will not be riding the bus, we ask that you contact Dispatch at **(817) 547-5831** as soon as possible to ensure routing adjustments can be made. Additionally, if the student requires one-way transportation (i.e. afternoon drop-off only or morning pick up only) we ask that you notify Dispatch.

Day Care Centers

We understand that day care centers provide an important link in your student's educational experience. However, it is imperative Parents/Guardians be aware of our policies regarding day care centers. We strongly encourage Parents/Guardians and center staff to review policies prior to the first day of attendance at the facility.

As with home curb-to-curb service, we will not exit the bus to retrieve or escort a child during pick-up. It is the center's responsibility to bring or take the student to the bus. Procedures allowing the student to walk from the center to the bus without the assistance of an adult, should be established between the parent/guardian and center directly. Drivers/monitors will document arrival time and waiting time upon leaving without student. We will not return to pick-up the student.

Day care centers must be available to meet the bus at school dismissal times. Depending upon external, uncontrollable factors, your student could be the first student delivered when normally he/she is last. If the day care center does not meet the bus within 2 minutes of arrival, the driver will radio Dispatch for telephone assistance. If contact cannot be made, the student will be returned to the student's campus upon completion of the route. We will notify the day care center of the situation and ask that Parents/Guardians pick-up the student at the student's campus. Drivers/monitors will document arrival time and waiting time upon leaving with the student.

Loading/Unloading

To ensure the safety and security of all students on Birdville ISD buses, parent may not board a school bus at any time.

At the Pick-Up/Drop-Off Location

It is the responsibility of the driver and monitor to load and unload students at the pick-up/drop-off location. Parents and child care providers are strongly encouraged to communicate to the bus driver and monitor 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 monitor 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.

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 safety vests. The bus driver and monitor have the ultimate responsibility to check these restraints before leaving the school. Only the driver and monitor should load, unload, and secure students in wheelchairs.

Wheelchairs with and Without Students

As a general rule, wheelchairs are not left on the bus during the day when the student is not being transported. Only under unique circumstances would transportation entertain this arrangement. Transporting a wheelchair without the student often affects the driver's ability to properly serve other wheelchair students on subsequent bus routes, or interferes with shuttles being conducted during the day.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to make sure the device is safe and in proper working order for use on the wheelchair lift and the bus. Every piece of the equipment must be properly attached and in good working condition.

Policies and Procedures

BISD Transportation is responsible for the safety of all students who ride school buses to and from school. In the absence of a teacher or school administrator, the school bus Driver/Monitor is responsible for ensuring that students behave in a safe and responsible manner.

Any continued behavior that interferes with the safe transportation of students must be corrected and reported. Behavior problems are handled in accordance with applicable policies and procedures. Any inappropriate behavior on the school bus will be reported by the

Driver/Monitor to our Transportation Supervisors using the Bus Conduct report and/or incident report form.

Parents will be contacted and provided with copies of the School Bus Conduct Report Form within 1 day of issuance.

The report will be provided to the campus administrator. School administration will review the incident and assign appropriate consequences and will notify the parents and Route Supervisor of the assigned consequence.

For the safety of each student, at no time will drinks or food be allowed on the bus unless it is approved by the Transportation Supervisors or school administrator, ARD form.

Small toys, books, radios with head phones, cell phones, etc. are allowed as long as such items do not interfere with other students or the safe operation of the bus. This situation will be reviewed on a case by case basis if problems arise. Parents/Guardians and the school will be notified if this privilege is revoked.

Backpacks will be separately secured on the bus.

Student Behavior

BISD Transportation is responsible for the safety of all students who ride school buses to and from school. In the absence of a teacher or school administrator, the school bus Driver/Monitor is responsible for ensuring that students behave in a safe and responsible manner.

Any continued behavior that interferes with the safe transportation of students must be corrected and reported. Behavior problems are handled in accordance with applicable policies and procedures. Any inappropriate behavior on the school bus will be reported by the Driver/Monitor to our Transportation Supervisors using the Bus Conduct report and/or incident report form.

Parents will be contacted and provided with copies of the School Bus Conduct Report Form within 1 day of issuance.

The report will be provided to the campus administrator. School administration will review the incident and assign appropriate consequences and will notify the parents and Route Supervisor of the assigned consequence.

When the behavior of a students on a special needs bus creates an imminent serious danger to other students or adults on the bus, the driver should immediately call the office and transportation and we will call 911 if warranted.

For the safety of each student, at no time will drinks or food be allowed on the bus unless it is approved by the Transportation Supervisors or school administrator, ARD (Admission, Review, Dismissal) form.

Small toys, books, radios with head phones, cell phones, etc. are allowed as long as such items do not interfere with other students or the safe operation of the bus. This situation will be reviewed on a case by case basis if problems arise. Parents/Guardians and the school will be notified if this privilege is revoked.

When needed, for the transportation of physically challenged children a safety vest may be required.

Backpacks will be separately secured on the bus.

Car Seat & Star Seats

By law, the State of Texas requires the use of car seats and star seats in cars, trucks, and multipurpose vehicles. Car Seats are not required on school buses.

The following guidelines are followed regarding car seat use on BISD school buses:

- Infants who weigh under 20 pounds and are less than 1 year old will be secured in a rear-facing infant car seat.
- Students who weigh from 20 to 40lbs pounds and are 26" – 40" in height should ride in a forward-facing car seat.
- Early Childhood and Pre-School students do not require a car seat.
- Students needing support to help them remain seated may need a car seat/Star seat due to a disability.
- Students riding in a small school bus (school bus weighing less than 10,000 lbs) will wear a seat belt.

Safety Vests

A Safety Vest may only be used at the direction of the Birdville Transportation Department after consultation with the school staff and parents and is ARD approved.

- A safety vest is designed for students with behavioral or emotional disabilities who need to be restrained because of safety concerns while on the school bus. The vest is equipped with a zipper in the back that, when properly attached, is not accessible to the student. This safety vest is also designed to provide upper body support for students with physical disabilities.

Bowel and Bladder Accidents

This is an issue where the developed procedures are designed to protect the health and dignity of all individuals riding the bus. Bus drivers and attendants are instructed by transportation to not accept students for transport with soiled clothes from bowel or bladder accidents.

If a bowel or bladder accident occurs during the bus trip, drivers and attendants are instructed not to attempt cleaning up the accident in route, but to proceed to the scheduled stop at school

or home. After unloading the student at the stop, the driver and/or attendant will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting any affected surfaces on the bus utilizing the body fluid cleanup kit.

Medication and Other Items

Drivers/monitors are not authorized to handle any type of medication for the student. Notes or other papers should be put into the student's back pack. If asked, we will deliver notes or other papers but we will not be held responsible for the loss or mis-delivery of such items.

Documents of importance should be provided to the Parents/Guardians or the school directly. We will not transport items which can't fit inside the student's back pack.

Parents / Guardian on the Bus

We understand the first few days of riding the bus can be challenging for students and we want the bus experience to be a fun one. It is with this in mind, we encourage parents/guardians to walk their students onto the bus for the first few days of riding. However, after the first week of aiding the children in acclimating to the bus, non Birdville staff will **not** be permitted on the bus, to include parents/guardians.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Drivers/Monitors will work with management and safety Supervisor to ensure proper evacuation procedures in accordance with each student's ability and need. Such procedures will be modified and recorded as needed. Written plans will be maintained with the Driver/Monitor. Plans will be reviewed with students on a continuing basis.

BISD Issued Special Needs Student Equipment

All Special Needs Drivers/Monitors have received specific training on equipment we use, ensuring the safe operation of equipment for students.

All equipment is consistently checked for quality and safety. We have implemented rigorous cleaning schedules and have maintenance records on file in accordance with industry standards.

It is with this level of care and detail we ask that extreme care be given to equipment. Please note it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to pay for damages that occur to any and all equipment when damage is the direct result of student or parent/guardian actions.

All BISD issued equipment must be returned to the Transportation Department when a student withdraws or at the end of the school year. It is the Parents/Guardians responsibility to pay for lost or unreturned equipment.

Wheelchair Track Straps

To ensure a safe and pleasant ride, wheelchairs are secured and in place on the bus using wheelchair track straps. Wheelchair track straps prevent the chair from moving or falling over during bus operations.

Lap Trays

Lap trays will be removed by parents before boarding the bus during pick-up. Teachers will remove the lap tray before boarding during drop-off. Lap trays must be separately secured on the bus.

Quick Straps/Gray Straps

All types of electric wheelchairs require an additional safety mechanism, 2 extra wheelchair straps. Depending upon wheelchair type, either a purple or blue strap set will be added to all wheelchairs.

Car Seats

To facilitate safe travel for students under the age of 4/under 40 pounds, students with physical challenges requiring additional upper body support, and small students, BISD provides car seats/star seats and integrated seats for use while on the bus.

Safety Vests

A safety vest is designed for students with behavioral or emotional challenges who need help remaining in their bus seat.

If a student has been assigned to wear a safety vest, the student must wear it while on the bus. It is the parent/guardian responsibility to ensure the student is in the safety vest at pick up time. Teachers will ensure the student is placed in the safety vest for school pick-up.

Walker

If a student uses a “walker” to assist in their mobility, it will be moved to a safe area and will be separately secured on the bus.

Wheelchair Lifts

Transportation has several different types of wheelchair lifts in our fleet. Weight limits of lifts vary by manufacturer. To ensure safe transportation, we may ask for wheelchair specifics.

Confidentiality

Transportation is committed to the privacy of both the student and parent/guardian. Our drivers/monitors attend extensive confidentiality training annually. Refresher training is provided throughout the school year.

Student and parent/guardian information maintained on-site is secured in the office of Transportation, protected under lock and key. Access to this information is strictly limited and monitored.

During transport, our Drivers/Monitors are required to keep with them student documentation. During non-transport times, Driver/Monitor files are locked and access is strictly monitored.

Transportation policy strictly prohibits discussions, writings, and/or other means of communication regarding students in an inappropriate manner by any Transportation employee. Disciplinary action will be enforced if this occurs.

On the behalf of the Special Needs drivers and monitors we hope that each student, parent and guardian have a safe, happy and successful school year.

Extended Year Service (EYS)

- If your student is involved in EYS (summer school), the routes will be developed as soon as transportation as a full listing of students attending EYS. Parents/guardians will be notified of pick-up and drop-off times after the routes have been run by the driver for effectiveness and efficiency.

This handbook has been put together to provide parents/guardians information that addresses responsibilities and procedures within special needs transportation. Our sincere hope is that this handbook will contribute to a clearer understanding of special needs transportation services. The handbook is not intended to be all inclusive, but rather an avenue to share important information. Should you have any questions, please feel to contact us at **817-547-5830**.

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