

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS/ SPECIAL EDUCATION & TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK

Contact Phone Numbers for Arlington Public Schools Special Education Transportation

Director of Transportation

781-316-3503

Please call this number to report a student absence or change of schedule. Call anytime, day or night and leave a voicemail.

Be sure to include student name, school or program attending, driver name if available and am or pm transportation instructions.

Office Of Special Education

781-316-3530

Please call this number to contact your special education administrator for issues concerning student programs or behaviors or to update contact information and emergency phone numbers.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The Arlington Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, or disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or treatment in its programs and activities.

Dear Parent and Guardians:

This handbook has been developed for you. Its purpose is to provide you with important transportation information. Please keep this handy as your reference guide.

We have contracted with _____ Transportation Company to provide transportation for your child this year.

Their telephone number is _____. Your child's vendor will call you before school starts to discuss the details of pick-up and drop-off times at your home. Please discuss with your driver anything you think will help your child's transportation go smoothly and report any changes to your vendors main office.

If your child is ill or cannot go to school on a particular day, please call your transportation provider directly. Phones are usually in service by 5:45 am. Please give your vendor a 24 hr notice if possible when plans allow.

Student pickups and drop offs should be made from the home address only or a scheduled route bus stop. A secondary drop off address can be arranged with the Transportation office if it remains consistent on a weekly basis.

Student schedules may be subject to change with the discharge or addition of new student(s). Please be aware that traffic or weather related conditions might affect pick up and drop off schedules significantly.

Please feel free to contact The Arlington Public Schools Transportation Office at 781-316-3530 concerning any questions or problems you may have regarding the transportation services.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

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SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

The School Transportation Director will be responsible for all student additions, changes and requests. The Transportation Director will inform the vendor of any changes, additions, or deletions of students or routes. This does not apply to daily absences, which should be reported directly to your assigned vendor service.

The Transportation Director will be responsible to:

1. Arrange transportation for all students requiring special transportation through contracted services or use of The Public School's services.
2. Send a Student Emergency Information / Contact Form to vendors and to receive such form as issued by parents.
3. Provide parents the Parent Transportation Handbook which is available online at <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/administration/transportation/>
4. Receive and contact parents regarding issues while students are being transported.
5. Work with the Special Education Department to resolve issues related to behavioral or safety requirements.

VENDOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Vendor will be responsible to:

1. Contact new students/parents informing them of pickup and drop off times at least one day prior to beginning the route.
2. Inform the parent(s), Drivers and Monitors when changes are made that would either alter both old and new routes.
3. Inform the parents of all affected students on the vehicle if changes are made that affect pick up or drop off times.
4. Train Drivers and Monitors and provide information on all CORI checks.
5. Insure that Drivers and Monitors follow the calendar with regard to early dismissals and no school days.
6. Maintain a clean and safe environment for all students being transported
7. Make sure vehicle and driver are in compliance with all federal and state laws and regulations.

PARENT/CHILD RESPONSIBILITIES

We ask that you review the following vehicle safety and behavior responsibilities with your child.

1. Students are required to wear seat belts at all times, if vehicles are so equipped. It is the parent's responsibility to secure their child into a car seat/seat belt before vehicle leaves location. Students must not unbuckle their seat belts and attempt to disembark until the vehicle has come to a complete stop. Parents must provide their own child restraints, seats or booster seats if required. Vendors may offer child seats as a courtesy only when available.
2. Students shall be ready for pick up ten (10) minutes before the bus is due to arrive. Please wait with your child until the bus arrives. Due to time restrictions, drivers cannot be delayed by late student arrivals. If the student is not ready, the driver will continue on the route. Parents will then be responsible to transport their own student(s) to school.
3. Parents shall notify the Transportation Office and/or Vendor of any student absence or change of schedule. Please contact your vendor by 5:45 am to report absences. Please contact the Transportation Office and/or Vendor to resume transportation after any absence.
4. Students must never approach the vehicle until it has completely stopped.
5. Students shall not open the windows without permission. Students shall not throw anything out of the window. Basic school bus laws, prohibit students from extending any body part out an open window.
6. A parent or other authorized person must be at home to receive any special needs child or kindergarten aged student. Students will not be dropped off anywhere except at their own homes, unless other arrangements have been made in advance. Parents may choose two locations for one Am and one Pm address so long as they remain consistent daily. If no adult is available, the Driver will keep the child on the vehicle, finish the route and then return to the student's drop off location. Drivers are expected to contact the Vendor immediately with an expected return time so they can contact the Coordinator. The Coordinator will try to locate the parent or emergency contact person. If an adult is still not present upon return, the Driver will contact the Vendor again. Upon authorization from the Transportation Company or Transportation Office, the Driver may bring the student to the local police station or return student to their original program if staffing or time is available.
7. Drivers and Monitors, if available, are not allowed to leave the vehicle, so we require parents or other authorized persons assist the child on and off the vehicle if necessary.

8. Drivers are not allowed to make unauthorized stops. They are to stop only at the stops listed on the route sheet or designated as school or home unless special arrangements have agreed on by the Director of Transportation.
9. Students will not in any way mark or destroy the vehicle or its contents.
10. Students may be assigned to specific seats by the driver or school staff.
11. Weapons of any kind are not allowed on the vehicle.
12. Students are not allowed to use profane, racist, sexist or abusive language or engage in any behavior that may threaten other passengers.
13. The type/size of vehicles used to provide your child's transportation might not be large enough to permit carrying large musical instruments or oversized class projects. In cases like these, parents are requested to transport their own students.
14. Students will cooperate with the driver in all matters regarding the NOISE LEVEL, NO SMOKING, NO EATING, and NO DRINKING policy on the vehicle.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY

1. Teacher and/or aides will be present when the students are dropped off or picked up.
2. Make sure seat belts/car seats are securely fastened and students are orderly.
3. Do not send students home with sharp objects, loose toys or other large items.
4. Review rules and regulations of passenger safety with the students periodically throughout the year.
5. Teachers should feel free to work with the driver and or monitor on possible solutions to behavior problems.

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY

1. Driver will become familiar with all routes prior to the start of school
2. Contact their supervisor when a student is no longer in need of transportation or has been absent for more than one day. The Vendor will then notify the Transportation Office.
3. Not make unauthorized stops. They are to stop only at the stops listed on the route sheet.
4. Guide the wheelchair, if HP equipped, into the vehicle and secure it in place.

5. Not leave student(s) unattended. When stopping to load or unload students, drivers will secure the vehicle in park, secure emergency brake, and follow proper boarding regulations. driver will not leave driver's compartment.
6. Not carry unauthorized persons in the vehicle.
7. Pull off the side of the road, if a behavior problem arises and it is a safety issue. The driver will instruct the students that the vehicle will remain stopped until the behavior is resolved. The driver should be clear, firm and direct with his/her instructions. S/he should state clearly what s/he wants the student to do. The driver will complete an incident report and return it to his/her Supervisor the same day. An incident report should be filled out each time a problem occurs. If there is a physical contact involved, (a student hits another student or driver) the driver must call the Vendor immediately. The driver should not remove any student from the vehicle. S/he should not refuse to transport a student unless directed by the Vendor. Under no circumstances should the driver or monitor discuss or decide punishment with the student or parent. In some severe situations, emergency services may be called to restore order and insure safety for all passengers. The Coordinator will call the student's school and principal or his/her designee will call the parent.
8. Stop the vehicle and contact the Supervisor or Emergency Personnel IMMEDIATELY, if the driver or monitor becomes aware of a student threatening harm to self or others. The Vendor should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible. The local police may be called when behaviors become out of control or present a danger to other passengers. The Coordinator will then contact the necessary people. The incident form must be filled out that day.
9. Notify the parent immediately if a student becomes ill on route to school and the student will be brought home and not to school.
10. Check entire vehicle after each route for students and/or personal belongings left behind.
11. Not block roadways in school areas or park in "no parking" zones.
12. Not play loud music while students are in the vehicle. Selection of radio stations must be age appropriate and not contain content that is potentially objectionable.
13. Observe proper language at all times. No swearing.
14. Will dress in an appropriate way to convey confidence and care to parents and/or staff.
15. Report all incidences/accidents to your Supervisor immediately as well as to the school personnel meeting the vehicle.

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING PROBLEMS/COMPLAINTS

1. The driver's immediate supervisor will contact the appropriate Administrator or Designee from the district.
2. The Transportation Coordinator will contact the necessary parties and work to solve the problem.
3. If necessary, a meeting will be held with all parties involved.

DISCIPLINARY POLICY

Proper student behavior is important. In order to maintain safety in the vehicles, students are expected to maintain proper behavior at all times. If safety is jeopardized because of improper behavior, disciplinary action will be taken.

The Driver has full authority as well as responsibility for control of the conduct of students while they are on the bus. Students must not be doing anything to annoy or distract the Driver. Drivers should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times.

The procedures that follow will apply in most cases when the Driver believes the misconduct has created a safety hazard on the vehicle.

Some instances may warrant **IMMEDIATE ACTION:**

1. The driver will handle any minor infractions through discussion with the student(s). The driver may wish to speak with a parent. If the problem cannot be resolved, the driver will fill out an incident report. The driver will note the specific violation and give it to their Supervisor who will fax it to the Transportation Office and the office of the program site.
2. A second violation may require a meeting with the parents, driver, appropriate school and/or the student. The parents **must** be present. **Temporary loss of transportation privileges may result.** If this occurs, the parent will be required to provide transportation to and from the student's program.

3. Additional or more serious infractions could lead to longer periods of suspension from transportation or loss of services. Again, parents may be required to provide transportation. In all cases, the Student Services Director will be notified.
4. It is important that the driver and parents maintain a polite, and trusting relationship.
5. If a student becomes a threat to the safety of the driver or other passengers, parents or school staff will be called to remove said student from the vehicle. If necessary, emergency services will be called for assistance.

Failure to maintain appropriate behavior may lead to suspension from transportation.

The Special Education Director and The Director of Transportation will make the decision if the student will be suspended from the transportation vehicle.

SNOW CANCELLATION/DELAY POLICY

We urge parents to use their own discretion when sending students on snowy or icy days. Please arrange to be home or have another person at home to receive your child in case of an early dismissal in bad weather. The following guidelines have been established for use for students from all districts participating in this cooperative transportation effort.

1. **SNOW CANCELLATIONS:** Your child will **NOT** be transported if the town in which you reside cancels school OR in the case of out-of-district students, the town in which the program is located cancels school.

2. **DELAYED OPENINGS:** If the school your child attends decides to start school one or two hours late, the student will be picked up approximately one to two hours later than usual. All half day or early release programs will be cancelled during any delayed opening. School will be dismissed at the regular time. Please check with your vendor regarding their snow day policies. They may have different policies when transporting students as a collaborative.

3. If school is cancelled early, a parent must be prepared to be home to receive their child.

As a parent, you may decide not to send your child to school on a day with delayed openings. Please call your Driver as early as possible if this decision is made.

It is possible that delayed openings may cause some minor delays with traffic etc.; however, we ask you to be patient with this procedure since we want to provide safe transportation for your child.

VEHICLE BREAKDOWN POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. The driver will contact the Vendor as soon as possible. The driver will remain with the students at all times.
2. The dispatcher will work to solve the problem by providing another vehicle in a reasonable amount of time.
3. The dispatcher will notify the parents, receiving school/program and The Transportation Office in a timely manner.

ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

1. When an accident occurs, contact the Transportation Officer/Supervisor immediately.
2. The Transportation Company will notify the necessary parties.
3. After an accident, do not leave the vehicle unless an unsafe condition exists until the proper authorities have arrived.
4. Make sure all necessary information is exchanged between the drivers involved in the accident.
5. If the vehicle is in a minor accident, the driver must report the accident to the receiving school in order for the student to be seen by the school nurse.
6. Fill out the accident form as required by the Transportation Company and return to your Supervisor. The Supervisor faxes the accident report to the school system and notifies the parents of the accident.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Q.** What happens if a student is absent for just one day?
 - A. The parent should call the Transportation Office as well as the Vendor directly as soon as they know the student will not be going.

2. **Q.** What if the student does not need a ride home for just one day?
 - A. The parent should call the Transportation Office as well as the Vendor directly as soon as they know the student will not need a ride home.

3. **Q.** What if the student gets sick at school and needs a ride home?
 - A. The contact person at the school calls the parent to arrange for pick up at the school.

4. **Q.** Can the driver drop off a student at a different location or a friend's house if they receive written permission from the parent?
 - A. No, the driver can only alter the pick up or drop off location with the prior approval from the Transportation Coordinator. Parents, put a request in writing to the Transportation Office, who will/will not approve the request.

5. **Q.** Can students get dropped off at school or at home alone?
 - A. A staff person, parent, or a designated adult must meet students unless the Transportation Coordinator receives the signed "Home Alone Waiver" and information is properly relayed to the Vendor. **On the Emergency Form, there is a question-Can the student be dropped off alone (no one home) and the parents answer yes or no. At the bottom of the Emergency Form, the parents sign.**