

Transportation for Students who Receive Special Education Services

Parent Guide

BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES:

Who is Eligible for Transportation as a Related Service?

Decisions about a student's need for transportation as a related service are made by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team. While most students with disabilities are able to access transportation available to all students, transportation as a related service may be required when the student's program placement is not in his or her home school, or when the student requires modifications and accommodations to get to and from school. For students enrolled in special education, the IEP Team, including parents, will determine if a child needs transportation as a related service. Only students whose IEP Teams determine that they need home pick up or drop off services (a.k.a. curb-to-curb transportation), are eligible for this type of transportation.

Parent Choice vs. IEP Team Decisions: If parents choose to apply for a voluntary transfer (not an IEP Team decision) to a school other than the student's home school and the district approves the request, transportation as a related service is not provided. The process outlined above must be followed.

How the IEP Relates to Transportation: IEP Team discussion about transportation is documented in the IEP under the section, "Supplementary Aids and Services". Under the "Transportation" subheading, the IEP facilitator will check "Yes" or "No," for transportation services, depending on the Team's decision. If "Yes" is checked, the IEP facilitator will type information into the IEP section titled, "Describe Special Transportation Needs." The information will include everything the student needs to ride the bus safely and successfully as decided by IEP Teams, which can include:

- Modifications
- Accommodations
- Special seating
- Specific equipment needed such as wheelchair lifts, safety vests (harnesses), car seats (note: car seats must be mentioned in IEPs for preschool students if they are necessary; they are not automatically provided), seatbelt buckle guards.



IMPORTANT NOTE: placement in any special education district program or provision of related services, including transportation, must be determined by your child's IEP team.



- Special instructions for field trips
- Special instructions for behavioral needs
- Special instructions for developing emergency evacuation plans (see **EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES** section)
- Additional adult supervision

The information above is transferred to the APS Student Transportation Form see “Role of the School” section.

APS STUDENT TRANSPORTATION FORM

Regular School Year:

A hard copy of the Student Transportation Form is completed with the parents at the annual IEP. The section labeled, “Must be completed by Program Support Specialist/Designee” is completed by your school’s Head Special Education Teacher. He or she will ensure information from the “Supplementary Aids and Services” and “Transportation” sections of the IEP is entered in these sections on the transportation form:

- Additional Information driver/attendant should be aware of regarding above checked items and/or other particular conditions
- Assistive Device
- IEP Mandates

Parents sign the hard copy and the school keeps it on file. Using the information from this form, an electronic Student Transportation Form is completed and submitted in the Student Transportation Services (STS) electronic system beginning March 1st of the school year prior to the year the service will begin or continue; forms should be entered no later than June 15th. If the necessary information does not fit into the space on the electronic form, “see attached” will be entered into these sections and an attachment with the information will be given to STS and school bus contractor. The Head Special Education Teacher at your child’s school is ultimately responsible for this work. A new Student Transportation Form must be submitted for each eligible student every school year.

ESY (Extended School Year):

For students whose IEP Teams have determined the need for ESY and transportation, a separate copy of the ESY Student Transportation Form must be completed. ESY electronic transportation forms can be entered beginning February 1st by the Head Special Education Teacher or sponsor teacher for students attending ESY the following summer. As during the regular school year, Head Special Education Teachers are ultimately responsible for ensuring this work is completed.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Role of the School Staff: The IEP Team facilitator or Head Special Education Teacher at your child’s school completes a hard copy of the APS Student Transportation

Form and has parents sign the form at the IEP or after March 1st for the following year; forms should be entered no later than June 15th. The child’s sponsor teacher may also complete the form. The Head Special Education Teacher at your child’s school is ultimately responsible for completing and submitting the electronic Student Transportation Form for the regular school year and for the Extended School Year (ESY). *APS Home – Transportation – School Bus Rules: Special Needs Transportation*

Role of the Principal: School administrators ensure that all IEP requirements are being implemented, including student transportation services. If your child is experiencing continued problems on the bus, principals can be notified by parents so the problems can be addressed appropriately.

Role of APS STS: STS can immediately view the information entered by the school in the STS electronic transportation system. STS does not receive a copy of the IEP. For each student, STS sends a printed transportation form, a map of where the student lives, and any attachments to the school bus contractor at the beginning of the school year or when the student begins receiving transportation services. Transportation services should begin three to five school days after the Head Special Education Teacher has completed the electronic form. If implementation of transportation services will be delayed for more than five days, STS will contact parents/guardians and school personnel (usually the Head Special Education Teacher, or the person who completed and submitted the electronic form).

Role of School Bus Contractor: After receiving the information listed above from STS, the designated school bus contractor initiates transportation services and assigns the student to a driver. Depending on that contractor’s procedures, either the bus driver or bus contractor office staff will build the route. The bus driver and/or attendant will notify the parent of the:

- service start date
- pick up and drop off times
- bus contractor name and contact information
- bus driver name
- attendant name (if applicable)
- bus number assignment

Role of the Parent/Guardian: The parents/guardians of student(s) whose IEP Teams have determined the need for transportation services should:

- Work with the Head Special Education Teacher or child’s sponsor teacher to ensure the Student Transportation Form is completed. Forms can be completed and submitted into the STS electronic system beginning March 1st for service to begin or continue the following year. For students whose IEP teams have determined the need for ESY, forms can be entered beginning February 1st, for service the following summer.

- Allow STS at least three to five working days from the time the information is submitted to implement any changes in pick-up and/or drop-off locations.
- Have your child ready to board the bus at the assigned pick-up time.
- Communicate with STS, not the school, when exceptional situations arise which call for a deviation from established bus service (e.g., the student needs to be dropped off at a different address temporarily).
- Transport your student in the event of bus suspension.
- If it is indicated on your child's APS Student Transportation Form, "Student CANNOT be Left Unattended," make arrangements to have a responsible person meet the bus every day you will not be there.
- In the event the student does not plan to attend school on a specific day, notify the bus contractor in advance (one full school day, if possible) or signal the bus when it arrives and let the driver know.

APS Transportation Handbook - 12. Parents'/Guardians' Responsibilities

Role of the Student: All students in the district are expected to follow APS rules. Rules for **all** students in APS can be found in the APS Student Transportation Handbook, and APS Student Behavior Handbook. The APS Student Behavior Handbook includes specific information about transportation for students who receive special education services. These resources can be found:

APS Student Transportation Handbook: View online at <http://www.aps.edu/transportation/student-transportation-handbook>

APS Student Behavior Handbook: View online at <http://www.aps.edu/service-center/documents/studentHandbook.pdf>

If your child is experiencing continued behavior problems on the bus, contact your school principal so the problems can be addressed appropriately.

EQUIPMENT

Student Transportation Services provides special equipment to bus companies, as required by the IEP. The type of equipment will be entered into either the Assistive Device, or IEP Mandates sections of the Student Transportation Form. Depending on IEP Team decisions about student need, equipment listed can include:

- Student Car Seat(s)
- Seat Belt Buckle Guard(s)
- Safety Vests(s)
- Wheelchair lift

Although there may be other equipment specified in the IEP that STS does not supply, it may be transported on the bus.

REPORTING CHILD ABSENCE

Notify the School Bus Contractor in advance (one full school day, if possible) or signal the bus when it arrives and let the driver know in the event the student will not attend school on a specific day.

HOME PICK UP OR DROP OFF SERVICES

For students whose IEP Teams have determined home pick up or drop off service (a.k.a., curb-to-curb transportation) is needed, the bus driver will not leave the student unattended at either the pick up or drop off location if the box, "Student CANNOT be Left Unattended" is checked. If no one is at the drop off location to meet the student, the bus company attempts to reach emergency contacts listed on the Student Transportation Form. If the bus company is unable to make contact, the bus driver will contact the bus contractor office via radio. The bus contractor office will contact STS and continue to try to reach the parent. While attempting to make contact with the student's parents/guardians or the emergency contacts listed on the form, bus driver may proceed on the designated route to deliver any other students onboard to their destinations and then return to the student's delivery location.

If the transportation provider is still unable to make contact with the parents/guardians or emergency contacts listed on the form, the bus driver will transport the student to the STS office. STS staff will accept the student and continue to attempt to contact the parents/guardians or the emergency contacts. If no contact has been made by 6:00 p.m., STS will contact the APS School Police who will pick up the student. If APS School Police are unable to contact the parents/guardians or the emergency contacts, school police may determine it is necessary to call Children, Youth and Families Division (CYFD).

REPORTING INFORMATION CHANGES

To request changes to information entered on the Student Transportation form such as telephone number or address, parents should call STS directly at 880-3989. STS will complete an electronic "Change of Status Form." Any information changes affecting drop-off and pick-up locations must be approved by STS. Parents may also work with school staff to make these changes.

To request changes in service such as program hours, the change must be reflected in the IEP and sent to STS by the school administration.

TRAINING FOR DRIVERS

All new bus drivers receive 36 hours of pre-service training annually on:

- School bus operations
- Special equipment on the bus
- First aid and CPR
- Defensive driving
- How to stop the bus if the driver has a medical emergency

All school bus attendants receive training annually on:

- 6 hours of training on serving students with special needs
- 6 hours of first aid training

Drivers receive an additional 16 hours of in-service training annually, 4 hours quarterly. STS approves all training and works closely with contractors to ensure that training is relevant to the needs of drivers and the students they transport. Additional specialized training is provided for drivers and attendants transporting students enrolled in Autism Programs, Behavior Intervention Programs (BIP) and Programs for Students with Emotional Disturbance (ED). STS works with Special Education Department staff to provide this specialized training and to identify any additional training needed to support students.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Drivers are required to prepare for emergencies by conducting student emergency evacuation drills twice each school year, once in the fall and once in the spring, supervised by STS staff. STS and school bus contractors coordinate with school administrators and teachers to develop emergency evacuation plans for all students, including students with disabilities. *APS Student Transportation Handbook: 10. Evacuation Drills.*

“Plan of Action for Emergency” procedures are used for students receiving transportation as a related service (NMAC - 6.41.4.9 C). This plan is specialized for students on each bus route. The driver and attendant begin developing a plan immediately after service begins; the capabilities of each student are considered in this process. The plan is changed as routes change and students are added or removed. School bus contractors oversee changes to plans. See “How the IEP Relates to Transportation” section.



APS Student Transportation Services (STS)
912 Oak St. SE
Albuquerque 87106
Phone: (505) 880-3989
Fax: (505) 848-8815

Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504:

IDEA: 20 USC 1401(22): “The term ‘related services’ means transportation...as may be required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education...”

IDEA Part B Regulations: 34 CFR 300.16(b)(14): Transportation includes “travel to and from school and between schools, travel in and around school buildings,” and “specialized equipment (such as special or adapted buses, lifts and ramps) if required to provide a special education for a student with a disability.” http://www.spannj.org/publications/transportation_pub.htm

QUICK REFERENCE INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

APS Student Transportation Services (STS) Office:
880-3989

For Bus Contractor contact information, call the STS Office or visit the web at:
<http://www.aps.edu/transportation/bus-contractors>

APS Special Education Family Liaison Office:
855-9912

APS Police Department:
243-7712, or for emergencies, 243-4471.

Check with STS or your child’s school to fill in the information below.

My Bus Contractor Is: _____

Phone #: _____

Bus Driver’s Name: _____

Bus Attendant’s Name: _____

My Child’s Bus number: _____

My Child’s School: _____

School Phone Number: _____

Check with your child’s school to fill in the information below.

Head Special Education Teacher

Name: _____

Phone #: _____

APS Special Education Family Liaison Office
Phone: (505) 855-9912
Fax: (505) 855-9970

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