Information for Parents Receiving Special Education Transportation Services

Dear Parent / Guardian

San Jose Unified school District (SJUSD) has prepared this booklet to make sure you have the information you need about your student’s school transportation. We need your assistance and cooperation to maintain safe, timely and reliable service. Your familiarity with this information, and adherence to these rules will be a big help in transporting your student safely and on time.

Sincerely,

Corrin Reynolds
Manager, Transportation
San Jose Unified School District

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Drivers and Qualifications
All drivers are required to be fingerprinted and a background investigation is completed by the Department of Justice. State law requires each school bus driver to have a valid School Bus Driver Certificate. All of our drivers must successfully complete extensive written and driving tests, receive first aid training, pass a physical examination, undergo testing to ensure they are drug and alcohol free, annually receive ten hours of additional training and recertify for their special certificate every five years.

In addition, drivers attend regularly scheduled safety meetings and in-service training sessions that can include improving their skills in transporting students with special needs. San Jose Unified works to meet or exceed all requirements.

Safety Devices
The use of safety harnesses or other restrictive devices must be reviewed and approved through the IEP process. All safety devices must have a Fade Plan included for their use and written in the IEP. Students with transportation as a related service in their IEP should have Transportation goals in their IEP that builds confidence in their abilities and to achieve transportation independence in the Least Restrictive Environment.

Inspection of Equipment
To assure the use of safe equipment, all SJUSD buses and vans are inspected daily by the driver, every 45 days by a mechanic, and buses are inspected annually by the California Highway Patrol. All buses are certified by the State of California and meet or exceed all federal and state safety requirements. Vehicles used to transport special education students are equipped with seat belts. Students will be required to wear them properly while riding the school bus. Seat belts are to remain fastened until the bus has stopped at the student’s proper destination.
To Better Serve You …
The more information that is shared in an IEP with Transportation about your student’s special needs and requirements, the more easily we can ensure your student has a successful bus ride. We respect your privacy and the sensitivity of information concerning your student’s special needs. We request your cooperation in providing information that might impact the safety of your student and other bus riders and to aid in providing a successful ride to all students.

Communications
Most of the communication you will receive will come from your driver. They will let you know where the vehicle will be stopping and at what time. They will also provide updates to you when the route is changed. Other communications will come from the San Jose Unified Transportation office and may include automated notices (via ParentLink) of route changes and other important information.

It’s important that San Jose Unified has your current contact information in our database at all times.

All communications from you must go through the SJUSD office. Do not contact or call the driver directly.

Moving, Telephone Number Changes
If you are moving during the school year or changing your telephone number, please notify The Enrollment Center at 535-6414, the Special Ed Department at 535-6030 and the Transportation Department at 535-6185 as soon as possible, at least two (2) weeks before the change. Also be sure the Teacher or Case Manager is aware of any changes as a new Bus Service Request (BSR) must be created.

Please do not send or take your student to school and expect the bus to bring your student home to a new address unless you have been notified that transportation has been arranged to and from the new address.
In the Event of Illness or Absence

In fairness to your student and other children, keep a sick student at home. Because he or she may become worse a few minutes or hours later, do not send even a mildly ill student to school. A student who is obviously ill will not be transported. Please notify our dispatch and the school of attendance when you do not intend to send your student to school. If a student becomes ill at school, the parent is responsible for transporting the student home.

Service will be discontinued if your student misses the bus on three consecutive days without contacting us and notifying us of your student’s absence. To reinstate service, call a minimum two days before service is to be resumed. Calling the same day may result in not receiving service for that day.

Do not call the driver on their cell phone, Drivers are prohibited by law to use their phones while on route. ALL calls should go to the Transportation Office at 408-535-6182, or your service provider. This ensures everyone has the right information in the event of a substitute driver.

Communicable Diseases

A student who has a communicable disease will be denied transportation until there is certification from a medical practitioner stating that proper precautions have been instituted to prevent the disease from spreading to other occupants of the vehicle and classroom.

Medication

Student medications should generally be transported in the student’s backpack. If, for safety or other considerations, the student should not transport their own medications, the medication should be given to the driver in a sealed package by a responsible adult, which is then given directly to another responsible adult at the destination.

Drivers are not to administer medications to any student. If a student may need a medication while on the vehicle, an aide who is trained in the procedure shall ride with the student. If the aide is not available to ride the vehicle then the student will be denied transportation on that day.
In an Emergency

In the event of a severe emergency (such as a severe earthquake), the following general guidelines will be implemented. Parents should provide students instructions what to do, where students are to go if they’re home, in case of an emergency.

- If the student is not on the bus at the time of the emergency, and near home, not at school:
  - If a student who is on a self-release is at a bus stop, he/she should proceed directly home.
  - If it is not safe at home, the student should proceed to the nearest school and ask for help from the school office.

- If the student is on the bus at the time of the emergency going to school the bus will attempt to reach the student’s school. If the bus cannot reach the student’s school, the bus will proceed to another school site or designated shelter. The School or Site Administration will sign for the students on the bus driver’s roster and take them into their care. A parent should go to their nearest SJUSD school and work with the administration to locate their child.

- If a student is on the bus at the time of the emergency going home:
  - The bus will attempt to reach the student’s bus stop.
  - If the student is a self-release, they will sign themselves out on a roster.
  - If someone meets the student at the stop, they will need to provide identification to the bus driver and sign the student out on the roster.
  - If the bus cannot reach the student’s bus stop, the bus will proceed to a school site or designated shelter. School or Site Administration will sign for the students on the bus driver’s roster and take them into their care. A parent should go to their nearest SJUSD school and work with administration to locate their child.
Student Behavior

San Jose Unified School District is committed to helping your student ride to and from school in a safe and orderly manner, respectful of the rights of all passengers. We need your support of these basic requirements, listed below.

From time to time we may call upon you to help us in the effort to encourage your student to behave responsibly in the vehicle. We request that you share any information with our management and the driver that can help to encourage positive behavior in the vehicle.

Five Basic Behavior Requirements

- Listen, and follow the driver’s instructions.
- Hitting, fighting, or touching other riders or the driver is not permitted.
- Stay properly seated with seat belt fastened and/or in other equipment
- Speak softly and do not use abusive language.
- Food and drink cannot be consumed while in the vehicle.

Behavior and Incident Reports

The driver will always work with each student to obtain the behavior needed to safely and successfully transport all students. When, in the judgment of the driver, a student’s behavior interferes with safety, order, or the rights of others, the driver will determine if the behavior should be documented and reported to the school district. These reports are an essential link to schools and parents to let them know what is happening on the vehicle. The team can then make informed decisions to provide appropriate instruction and guidance to the student to enable them to be successful while being transported to and from school.
Counseling and Consequences

Your driver has been trained in a variety of techniques that are designed to promote positive behavior in the vehicle. If your student’s behavior constitutes a minor violation of the rules, the driver will attempt to encourage a positive change in behavior through various techniques. In some cases, the driver may assign seats to one or more students in order to maintain a safe and appropriate environment. If the negative behavior does not change, a written report will be made to the parent and the school district.

Temporary Suspension of Transportation Services:

Conduct:
We are committed to exploring alternatives that will not interfere with the transportation of your student. We will cooperate with you and the school administration in our effort to discover approaches that encourage appropriate behavior.

However, behaviors that severely or chronically compromise safety, orderly operation, or the rights of others in the vehicle may result in the suspension of transportation services until an alternate service has been arranged. This includes incidents when a student damages the vehicle, assaults another student or the driver, or otherwise creates an unsafe situation in the vehicle.

Continued disorderly conduct is sufficient reason for a pupil to be denied transportation in accordance with regulations of the governing board of the district. The denial of the use of transportation service does not constitute suspension from school.

Harness or Aide:
A student will not be permitted to board the vehicle if the student is not wearing their IEP-mandated harness or if the one-on-one aide is not present.

Undeliverable
Suspension of services may be imposed when an authorized person to receive the student is habitually not at home at the designated drop off time and route service is disrupted.
Pick-up of Students

All children must be ready for pick-up at least five (5) minutes before the scheduled pick-up time in the morning. A parent or guardian must be home in the afternoon, and prepared to meet the vehicle at least five (5) minutes before the scheduled drop off time. Transportation services must operate on a schedule in order to get all students to school or home on time.

In the morning, the vehicle should normally arrive just before the scheduled departure time and depart at the scheduled time. If the vehicle arrives at or after departure time, the vehicle will wait no more than one (1) minute and then continue on the route. The vehicle will not return if you have missed your departure time.

With certain exceptions, a bus is forbidden to wait an extended period of time for the student to come out of the house or for someone to meet the bus in the afternoon. The vehicle will not depart for another stop prior to your published departure time.

The parent/guardian is responsible for assisting the student to and from the vehicle and the residence. To ensure the safety of students already on board the vehicle, the driver cannot leave the vehicle to come to your door or use their horn to announce their arrival.

Drivers are not permitted to lift students into the vehicle or their seats, a student must be able to get in and out on their own or a parent/teacher must assist them. If a child requires equipment a parent/teacher may secure the student but ultimately it is the driver's responsibility to ensure the student is secured properly.
Delivery of Students

A parent/guardian is expected to be at their designated stop to receive their student. Parents must indicate on a Student Emergency Information form if some other responsible person is to receive their student at the designated stop. The form is to be obtained from the school or district of attendance and returned to your student’s school district. No student receiving closest-safest-stop service will be release to any unauthorized adult or anyone under the age of 18 years old, regardless of their relation to the student.

Undeliverable Students
If the parent/guardian is unable to meet the vehicle and has not pre-authorized another adult to receive their student at the designated drop-off point, or has not had prior authorization for their student to be left without adult supervision, the driver will contact dispatch and it will be determined whether the student will be taken to a Holding School, their attending school or another safe destination. Students attending a County Program will be taken to their Cluster’s office. Students attending a Non-Public school will be referred to the authorities. The parent/guardian will be required to pick-up the student from the Holding School/Cluster office. Continued problems with delivery of any student will be cause to discontinue transportation services, until the IEP team can convene and discuss a solution.

No student will be permitted to leave the vehicle at a point other than their designated stop. Due to the large number of students transported, we are unable to change an address temporarily. For parents who wish to take vacations or plan to be away for short periods of time, a temporary change of address must be within the district’s boundaries and authorized by the SJUSD Special Education Department and given at least ten(10) working days advance notice.

A calendar must be provided by the parents for students attending a day care. Parents are required to make their own transportation arrangements whenever the daycare/program is closed.
Stops

Under guidelines established by the California Administrative Code, SJUSD establishes stops for pupil transportation programs operated under the jurisdiction of the district. However, safety of students and the vehicle always takes precedence over other considerations.

Parents/guardians may request that an alternative address be established to deliver their student to in the event of a declared emergency. The emergency address must be located in reasonable proximity to the regular delivery site. The person who will be receiving the student must be on the Emergency Form. Please note that your driver is not authorized to make any changes in the route, including pick-up and drop-off locations, stop times or order of pickup or drop off, without clearance from their dispatch office.

San Jose Unified has decided that students with special needs students should not cross the street when moving between the bus and home. The vehicle will be routed to drop the student on the right side at the closest, safest stop nearest the student’s destination address.

Transportation is only provided from locations inside the District boundaries. Service is not provided to homes or day cares outside the district for any reason.

Transportation to different addresses on different days of the week is strongly discouraged. Not only is it a hardship for every other student, and their families, as their schedule changes depending on the day, but it is also confusing for schools and Transportation, which can affect your child’s transportation.
**Audio and Video Surveillance Systems, GPS**

For your student’s protection, we are pleased to announce the installation and use of video and audio surveillance systems on many of the vehicles your child may ride in. Available recordings will be reviewed when concerns are raised about activities on the bus.

For safety and monitoring, vehicles are equipped with GPS tracking systems. Available logs from these systems allow us to check where a vehicle was at any point in time on the route.

**Routing Changes**

Parents should be prepared for changes in vehicles, routes, drivers and time of pick-up and drop-off throughout the school year and from year to year. Overall route travel and pickup times will vary from route to route, and on the same route, depending on school and students who are currently assigned to the route.

The routes are constructed to safely and efficiently meet the needs of all the students. Routes must operate on a schedule to ensure everyone arrives at school or home in a timely manner. We are unable to accommodate requests to pickup or dropoff a student at a specific time.

After an initial adjustment period at the start of school or upon reorganization of routes, the pick-up and delivery time should be consistent for a given set of students. Unfortunately, routes may run later during days of unfavorable weather conditions such as fog and rain, during uncontrollable traffic delays or other events beyond the driver’s control.

**Personal Hygiene**

For those students still being toilet trained, please be sure the student has used the restroom before boarding the vehicle. Students who are not clean will not be permitted to board.

It is impractical and unlawful for a driver to allow a student off the vehicle at a place other than their designated stop or school of attendance to use the facilities.
**Wheelchairs**

Students accepted for transportation must be in wheelchairs designed for use in a bus and approved by the Transportation Department. Wheelchairs must be easily secured in the bus without any modifications to the vehicle.

Wheelchair students are typically expected to ride in their wheelchair while on the bus.

It is unsafe to transport students with their lap trays attached due to the potential of severe injury in the event of an accident. All lap trays must be removed and stored separately during transport.

If a parent picks up student at school but leaves the wheelchair, the parent must transport the student to school the next morning. We will bring the student and wheelchair home in the afternoon. We do not transport empty chairs if the student is not also on the bus.

No student is to ride a wheelchair lift without being seated and secured in a wheelchair.

**Wheelchairs must:**

- Be inspected daily
- Have a seat belt securely attached to the frame (no Velcro)
- Have functioning brakes preventing all movement
- Have functioning anti-tip bars and foot pedals
- Have fully inflated tires, no worn tread
- Be mechanically sound, no broken/missing parts
- Have locking pins (if applicable)
- Have a battery compartment secured to the chair and free of leaks

Students in wheelchairs not meeting these requirements may be denied transportation service due to the potential danger to themselves or other students.
Travel in Private Areas
When providing home-to-school transportation, San Jose Unified, as a public entity, will only travel on publicly maintained highways. However, if a student lives on a private road or lane, including in an apartment complex, the vehicle can travel to the closest, safest stop nearest to the student’s home on the private road as long as the parent/guardian is aware that the vehicle may cause damage to the road and they will be responsible for any and all repairs.

Transportation Independence Skills
The Transportation Department is very interested in the education and growth of each child we transport. One of the skills a child must develop as they grow is Transportation Independence. It is our goal that when the child graduates from high school he or she is capable of at least using the public transportation system to go to a job, go shopping, visit friends, etc.

Instead of having the bus stop in front of the home (or as close to it as possible), the student will use what is called a Transitional Stop. Transitional stops are a way to start moving the child away from the home so the student is waiting for the vehicle instead of the vehicle waiting for the student. A transitional stop, during early stages, can be as close as 2 doors down from the home, moving to nearby corners as the student’s capabilities grow and eventually out to a community/corner stop where the student’s non-disabled peers would normally catch the bus.

Using a transitional stop helps the student build skills and confidence which can also help in the classroom setting as the teacher can then focus on other life skills, making the student more successful in their lives and in the community.

Students who have applied to be Self-Release are required to be using a Transitional or Community Stop identified in the IEP with a representative Transportation present.
Closest, Safest Stop
If a student has been designated as needing ‘curb to curb’ transportation services, the stop is usually placed at or near the student’s home. There are some cases, however, where this is not possible or legal. These include, for example,
- Where the student lives on the wrong side of a one-way street
- Within 200 feet of a railroad
- Where there is no place for a vehicle to safely pull to the curb. This includes instances where the speed limit is greater than 25 miles per hour, which prevents the vehicle from being able to legally double park.
- On narrow and/or dead-end streets where the vehicle cannot safely turn around

In these cases, a team from the Transportation Department will determine the closest, safest stop near the student’s home. The student will need to be waiting for at that stop in the morning at least five (5) minutes before the published arrival time. If the student is not self-release then the parent or guardian must be waiting at the stop in the afternoon at least five (5) minutes before the published arrival time in the afternoon.

Type of Vehicle
San Jose Unified will assign one or more different types of service to transport your student. The type of vehicle used will depend on multiple factors including, but not limited to, student and school locations, bell times, etc. The service, or vehicle, used is determined solely by the District.
Bus Evacuation Training
All transported students are required to receive training in how to evacuate their vehicle in case of an emergency at least once a year. During this essential training, the student learns how the process works, what is expected of them and what it feels like. All physically able students will be asked to exit the vehicle though a door other than the one they normally use to enter and exit. The training is held at a school site and staff is typically available to assist the students.

Personal Articles
Each item a student takes to school must be clearly marked with the student’s name. San Jose Unified is not responsible for personal electronics, cell phones, or any other belongings, even if their presence has been specified in an IEP. In case of lost items, check with your school or the driver.

Prohibited Items
The following are not permitted on a school bus: animals (except service animals specified in an IEP), glass containers, balloons, skateboards, scooters and laser pointers. Prior permission from Transportation is required to transport large articles.

Late Routes
Routes may be running late from time-to-time due to circumstances beyond our control (i.e traffic, weather, student behaviors). Buses will always run late the first few days of school, or if the route has a new driver, as students, drivers and parents start building a routine and start getting to know each other. We will often use the ParentLink messaging system to send you an automated message to notify you of this fact. Please be sure your primary telephone number is updated with the District at all times so you can receive these important messages.
Concerns?
San Jose Unified School District is dedicated to providing the safest, most reliable school bus transportation possible for your student. We have set process and procedures in place to ensure you receive the best service possible from us. We encourage you to call or write to us about any concerns you may have to help us identify any service problems and create solutions for them.

Questions or concerns regarding service can be directed to the Transportation Manager at:
San Jose Unified School District
855 Lenzen Avenue
Transportation Department
San Jose, CA 95126
Transportation@sjusd.org

San Jose Unified School District
Transportation Department 408-535-6185
Special Education Department 408-535-6030
Enrollment Center 408-535-6414
ALC, Service Provider 855-331-6778 x2
SafeTrans, Service Provider 408-286-4730
Zum, Service Provider 650-670-0317

Student Name: __________________________________________

School: _________________________________________________

Service Provided by: SJUSD / ALC / SafeTrans / Zum

Provider Phone #________________________________________

Driver Name: ___________________________________________

AM Route: ___________ Pick Up Time: _________________

PM Route: ___________ Drop Off Time: _________________

Early In/Out Schedule Route: _________________________

Early In/Out Schedule Time: _________________________

Early In/Out Schedule Day(s): _________________________