

Your Child And Their Transportation Information for Parents and Students



Dear Parents:

The transportation department of Oconee County Schools has prepared this information to acquaint you with the rules governing your child's school transportation. We need your assistance and cooperation to maintain timely and reliable service. Your familiarization with and adherence to these rules will aid considerably in transporting your child with the maximum service, courtesy, and safety. Please feel free to call at any time should you have questions or concerns regarding your child's transportation.

*Duane Peterson
Director of Transportation
706-769-3508 ext. 1502*

*Debbie Allen
Special Services Route Coordinator
706-769-3508 ext.1503
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SAFETY

Special education transportation requires uniquely competent drivers to give the best service and protection to your child.

+ SCHOOL BUS DRIVER QUALIFICATION AND TRAINING

Special education drivers are carefully screened and receive additional training tailored to the needs of your child. Federal and state laws require each driver to pass a physical examination and to have a valid commercial driver's license. In addition, all drivers receive CPR and first aid training.

+ SCHOOL BUS EQUIPMENT

To ensure use of safe equipment, all school buses are inspected daily by the bus driver and serviced routinely by the transportation bus shop. In addition, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) inspects each vehicle annually to certify that it meets all applicable regulations and laws relating to pupil transportation in the state of Georgia. Our special education buses are equipped with seat belts, the use of which is determined by the driver. Additional safety supports for students will be determined by the IEP process.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ILLNESS

Please notify the transportation office and the school as soon as possible when you do not intend to send your child to school. If your child does not ride the bus for three consecutive days and you do not notify the office that the child will be off the bus for a specified number of days, bus service **will be discontinued** until you call the transportation office to reinstate service.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

A child with a communicable disease as reported by the school will be denied transportation until there is certification from the Department of Health or a medical doctor that proper precautions have been instituted to prevent the disease from spreading to other occupants of the bus.

PERSONAL ARTICLES

As a safety factor, a child will not be permitted to take any of the following on the bus: large toys, breakable items, insects, animals, reptiles, or sharp objects. Any other articles that may cause an injury will not be allowed on the bus. Lunch must be packed in appropriate containers, with the owner properly identified. Attaching messages or instructions to a student's clothing with a safety pin can be hazardous. Any article that is placed in a plastic bag should be inserted **into** the book bag.

LOST ITEMS

The bus driver or the school will not be responsible for personal belongings. However, you may call to check if items have been found.

MEDICATION

All medications, whether prescription or over-the-counter, may be administered only in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the school health service program. As stated in the *Oconee County School Health Service Resource Manual*, all medication must be taken by the parent/guardian to the school and must be in the original container, clearly labeled as to the name of the student, the name of the medication, the appropriate dosage, and the times for the dosage. If it is impossible for the parent/guardian to bring the medication to the school, special arrangements should be made with the school nurse and/or principal.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

For those children still in the process of being toilet trained or who must wear special undergarments, please be sure the child uses the toilet before boarding the bus. If students soil their undergarments, the parent (if at home) or school personnel (if at school) will be responsible for changing clothing **before** they place the student on the bus.

WHEELCHAIRS

Students accepted for transportation must be fully ambulatory or in adequate, approved wheelchairs. Small children may be transported in car seats. Students with inadequate trunk support or the inability to sit in their seat may require a safety vest/restraint. Medically fragile children with individualized needs must have equipment approved through the transportation department before they will be allowed to board the bus.

Each wheelchair needs to be equipped with a belt for securing the student in the chair. Your child must be strapped in the wheelchair upon arrival of the bus. In addition, each wheelchair must be equipped with functioning and properly maintained brakes. Powered wheelchairs must use **spill proof (gel type)** batteries. They must be easily secured in the bus without requiring any modification of standard vehicle equipment. For safety purposes, students will not be transported if equipment does not function properly.

SAFETY SEATS AND RESTRAINTS

All children through age four or anyone weighing less than 50 pounds should be transported in a Child Safety Restraint System (CSRSs) that meets applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSSs) as well as The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) guidelines. Older fragile or extremely small students may be placed in car seats for their own protection. For students that demonstrate safety problems, the IEP team may recommend placement in a safety vest/restraint to ensure safe transportation for themselves as well as others on the bus. **Parents should make the driver aware of any special equipment a student must use that could be affected by the type of seating used for them.**

- **EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILLS** - It is a federal recommendation that emergency evacuations be conducted annually on all school buses. Great discretion is used when conducting emergency evacuations on special education buses. Severely physically impaired students will be shown the evacuation procedure and given verbal instructions. We will be requesting special permission to perform an actual evacuation on school grounds. Parental consent will be required for student to participate.
- **EMERGENCY INFORMATION SHEET AND RELEASE FORM** – *It is imperative that you complete both sheets to ensure your child's safety and to provide clear instructions to the driver.* All information will be kept confidential. New forms are completed each year due to changes in individual student's situations.

DISCIPLINE

Appropriate behavior is essential for safe transportation of all students. Each child **must behave** satisfactorily to enable the driver to be alert to the many hazards of traffic. One moment of distraction could result in serious consequences. Since the health and safety of all children on the bus is of prime importance, a child who behaves in an unsatisfactory manner may, at the discretion of the IEP committee, be denied use of the transportation facilities. Parents or guardians of children damaging school vehicles will be responsible for reimbursement of the damages.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

A. WARNING

A warning will be considered when a child's misconduct is minor and does not jeopardize the safety or welfare of other students or the operation of the bus.

B. SUSPENSION

When a child's misconduct jeopardizes the health and safety of other passengers and the operation of the bus, when repeated warnings fail to correct the problem, when a student damages the bus, or when no authorized person is home to receive the child, a suspension of bus service will be considered.

C. WILLFUL AND SERIOUS MISCONDUCT

Depending on the degree of misconduct, a meeting will be held to discuss appropriate action. An altered schedule or service may be considered when the willful and serious misconduct jeopardizes the other bus occupants, as well as the driver.

STUDENT BUS RULES

(Please discuss these rules with your child.)

1. When boarding the bus, the student should be seated immediately.
2. The student should remain seated while the bus is in motion or if the bus is delayed on the road.
3. The student should keep his or her arms and legs out of the bus aisle and not extend hands, legs, arms, or head out of the bus windows at any time.
4. The student should never throw anything out of the bus window nor make inappropriate gestures or remarks to passing motorists or pedestrians.
5. The student should conduct him/herself appropriately. No eating, use of tobacco, profanity, or excessively loud and distracting noise will be permitted on the bus.
6. The student should treat the driver and other passengers with courtesy and respect.
7. The student may use the emergency exit door **only** in case of emergency. The student is not to operate the bus door or tamper with the emergency door.
8. The student should not litter, damage, or deface any part of the bus.

PARENTS' / GUARDIANS' RESPONSIBILITIES AT PICK UP AND DELIVERY LOCATIONS

ALL CHILDREN MUST BE READY FOR PICKUP FIVE MINUTES BEFORE THE SCHEDULED ARRIVAL TIME. Buses must operate on a defined schedule to allow schools to start and dismiss on time. Buses will **WAIT THREE (3) MINUTES AFTER BLOWING THE HORN** and then continue on the route. Drivers cannot blow horns in areas where the Transportation Department has received complaints from residents. Buses will not depart from a stop prior to the designated pickup time. **A RESPONSIBLE PERSON** should assist the student from the house to the bus in the morning and from the bus to the house in the afternoon unless you have specified that your child can be left alone on the Release Form. The same procedure applies in the afternoon regarding the time a driver will wait for someone to get a student off the bus after school. The driver will blow the horn, **wait three minutes** and if no one comes, the driver will complete the route, and then return the student to the school. (If possible, the driver will contact someone at the office by radio to place a call to the residence if no one arrives to get the child off the bus prior to returning the child to school.)

If the parent wishes to designate someone to receive the child on a regular basis, this information must be authorized in writing on the **RELEASE FORM** provided by the bus driver. If a parent feels the child can be **LEFT ALONE**, they must sign the **RELEASE FORM** stating this. No child will be permitted to leave the bus stop at a point other than his/her assigned stop.

In the case of a real emergency when the parent or authorized person is unable to meet the bus, the parent must arrange for another person to be at the regular delivery point when the bus arrives. The parent **MUST CALL** the Bus Shop at 706-769-3508 ext. 1503, prior to the bus' arrival and give the name of the person who will receive their child as well as a description. This person must provide identification to the driver. The driver will not deliver the child to any other person or address. (This may also be accomplished by sending a note with your student to school or giving it to the morning driver if they are also your child's afternoon driver.) If an authorized person is not at the delivery point, the following procedure will be observed:

➤ ROLE OF DRIVER

The driver will notify the Bus Shop or the school as soon as possible. The driver will continue delivering other students and return the student to school after the route is completed. In all cases, the driver **WILL NOT** release the student until instructed to do so.

➤ ROLE OF THE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT AND THE SCHOOL

If the parent or sitter is home, the driver will be instructed to wait at the assigned delivery address for someone to come get the student off the bus. If no one is at home, a message will be left on any available answering service telling the parent that delivery was attempted and that the child has been returned to school. The driver will then be instructed to return the child to school. The school should be notified that the child will be returned.

➤ **ROLE OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

The school will attempt to locate the parents. If parents are contacted, the school administrator will wait for them to pick up the child. If parents have not returned the call by 5:00 p.m., the school administrator will notify the local law enforcement agency to hold the child for parental pickup.

Continued problems with delivery of your child will result in notification to special education, Child Protective Services and/or the Department of Family and Children Services. It will necessitate a meeting at the school to determine an appropriate course of action.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICE DISCONTINUED AND REINSTATED

Transportation services will be discontinued for any student who does not ride for three consecutive days (a.m. and p.m.), unless the parent has **notified** the transportation office or driver. If service is discontinued because the driver was not notified, the parent must contact the Transportation Department at 706-769-3508 ext 1503 to reinstate service. Three working days may be required to reinstate service.

ALTERNATE OR TEMPORARY ADDRESS

Drivers may not deviate from established routes or accommodate special requests without prior approval. Students will be transported to the same address where they are picked up or to a pre-approved alternate address (such as a day care or sitter). The school and the transportation department may consider changes in an emergency. Please notify the Transportation Department or the school should you have an emergency that requires the driver to deviate from their normal route.

The following applies for students who wish to go home with another student:

The student must have a note from the parent signed by the school administrator or his or her designee. This privilege may and will be revoked for any students who present a problem on the bus. Requests also may be denied if seating space is not available.

If you move during the school year, please notify the school and the transportation department and allow at least three working days to ensure uninterrupted bus service.

• **TELEPHONE NUMBER**

If your home or business number changes during the year, it is CRUCIAL to notify the driver and/or transportation office immediately. This information is critical in an emergency.

- **ROUTE CHANGES – TRAVEL TIME – DELAYS**

Parents should be prepared for possible changes in buses, routes, and pickup times throughout the school year as students are added or withdrawn from the program. Overall route travel time will vary depending on the school, student's home location, and traffic. After an initial adjustment period at the start of school or on reorganization of routes, the pickup and delivery time should be within approximately 10 minutes. Buses may run late during unfavorable weather conditions or in the event of mechanical failure.

- **DELAYS – 30 MINUTES OR LONGER**

If a breakdown or other event causes a 30 minute or longer delay, every attempt will be made to contact the parent or person responsible for receiving your child.

COMPLAINTS

The bus drivers are employees of Oconee County Schools and, as such, must follow the rules and regulations of their transportation department. Please direct all comments or questions to the transportation office so a record may be kept and a response provided.

A REMINDER...PLEASE

If your child will not need bus transportation due to illness, doctor's appointment, etc., please notify the transportation office as soon as possible. It is helpful if you can notify the office the day before. Thank you for your cooperation.

EVERYONE HAS A ROLE IN SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

**Provided by the
Oconee County Schools
Transportation Department**