



## Transportation Policies and Procedures

Dear IDEA Families,

We hope this letter finds you well. IDEA Public Schools is committed to providing a safe environment for students on their road to college. As a parent/guardian who participates in IDEA's transportation services, you play a vital role in the effective implementation of the Transportation Policies and Procedures. This letter is designed to help you understand what you need to know to get the most from your child's transportation experience.

**Transportation Eligibility:** To take full advantage of the free transportation provided by IDEA Public Schools, please complete the Student Transportation Registration Form and submit it to the Campus Transportation Manager. Transportation eligibility is based on your child's primary residential address as registered with the school. Only one primary address is permitted. Other addresses may be used if the child is eligible for transportation at the primary residence, and the alternate address is used consistently. Alternate addresses must also be within the transportation boundary for the school.

**Change of Address:** The transportation department arranges transportation based on information provided by the school. To change your address, you must contact your school. Once we receive the new information from the school, it will take up to 3 business days before transportation arrangements or changes can take effect.

**Release of Information:** For the safety of your child, the transportation department will only discuss transportation arrangements with the parent/guardian listed on the record provided by the school. We do not give out or discuss transportation arrangements with relatives, grandparents, or family friends.

**Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:** IDEA encourages parents to have kinder, and elementary-age up to third grade be escorted to and met at the bus stop after school by a responsible person. Parents/guardians, please remember to get out of your vehicles to meet your children at the designated bus stop locations. This will allow our drivers to confirm that you or the responsible party is receiving your children.

IDEA's policies prohibit the bus driver from leaving a student unattended if there is no one there to meet the student at the stop. However, if in the Student Transportation Registration Form, you consent your 4th-12th grade child to be dropped off at an IDEA bus stop without parental/guardian supervision, this should not be a problem. If the student does not have parent/guardian consent to be dropped off at an IDEA bus stop without parental/guardian supervision and the parent/guardian is not at the bus stop, the student will be returned to the school, and it will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to meet the student there. If the parents/guardians do not pick up their children within the following two hours after they were returned to the school, the local police department will be called.

**Bus Stop Locations:** The transportation department is responsible for selecting bus stop locations. These locations are based on the road, traffic, and safety factors for the students, bus drivers, and other motorists. Please write down the bus route number and teach it to your child. This will make sure your child gets on the right bus and is useful in case of an emergency.

**Community Stop Locations:** IDEA's community stops are located in different areas intended to be accessible for a large number of students. Students are assigned to the closest community stop location based on the primary address and must use the designated bus stop location.

**Distance to Bus Stop:** Students may be required to travel a pre-determined distance to a Community Stop location. This distance varies based on grade level and whether or if it is in a city or rural area. Distance from home to school and stop locations is based on geometrics software used by the transportation department.

**Inclement Weather:** You are responsible for deciding if it is safe for your child to go to the bus stop or school during inclement weather. Make sure they have dressed appropriately for the conditions, as the bus may experience further delays. Please be aware that in the event of inclement weather, the bus may be delayed. Occasionally, the weather deteriorates during the course of the school day or another emergency, such as a power failure, which may result in an unexpected early dismissal of students. In the event of the above, the transportation department will work with the schools to decide the safest time to pick up the students and will work with the school to keep everyone informed through the local media of on-going changes. Additionally, each school may have its procedures for contacting parents/guardians; please check with your school.



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**Student Conduct and Discipline:** In addition to the School Code of Conduct, the Transportation Department requires Parents/Guardians to acknowledge and sign IDEA's Bus Rider Behavior Contract. The Transportation Department developed the Bus Rider Contract with the following philosophy in mind: "We believe all students can behave appropriately and safely while riding on a school bus. We will not tolerate any students stopping drivers from doing their job or preventing other students from having a safe and peaceful transportation experience". Talk to your children about safe, appropriate behavior when on board the school bus. Stress the importance of accountability for his/her actions and behavior when riding the bus.

**Severity Clause:** If any incident of misconduct is deemed to be very serious or hazardous to the safety of any or all passengers, a Bus Rider Incident Report will be completed and will begin at the appropriate incident level. During emergencies that threaten the health or safety of students, or when immediate removal from the bus is necessary to maintain the proper atmosphere, the Campus Transportation Manager has the authority to suspend the student from the bus riding privileges for twenty-four (24) hours. All attempts will be made to contact the parents as soon as possible.

**Consequences:** IDEA bus drivers use a variety of disciplinary techniques and methods to correct and prevent problems on their buses before enacting the discipline steps of this policy. If a student's behavior is repeatedly unacceptable, the following procedures will be initiated:

**Level I Incidents.** The driver will inform the student that a Bus Rider Incident Report is being issued and advise the student on the specific reasons for the report. The Campus Transportation Manager will meet with the student to validate the information collected. A copy of the report will be forwarded to the APO (Assistant Principal of Operations), the school's Academic Counselor, and the Regional Director of Transportation to administer the appropriate discipline and to inform parents/guardians about the situation. **Level I Incidents will be a warning and may include three (3) days suspension from the bus. Below are the most common Level I incidents:**

- Eating/Drinking/Chewing Gum/Littering the bus
- Failure to follow bus driver requests (getting out of the bus, sitting down, quieting down, etc.)
- Other behaviors which disrupt the ordinary and usual operation of the school bus

**Level II Incidents.** The driver will inform the student that a Bus Rider Incident Report is being issued and advise the student the specific reasons for the report. The Campus Transportation Manager will meet with the student to validate the information collected. A copy of the report will be forwarded to the APO (Assistant Principal of Operations), the school's Academic Counselor, and the Regional Director of Transportation to administer the appropriate discipline and to inform parents/guardians about the situation. **Level II Incidents will be a final warning and may include three (3) to five (5) days suspension from the bus. Below are the most common Level II incidents:**

- Pushing, shoving, or rushing while waiting, entering, exiting the bus
- Vandalism to the bus or any bus related equipment (restitution will be required as well)
- Other offenses and behaviors that disrespect bus drivers, students, motoring public, or pedestrians

**Level III Incidents.** The driver will inform the student that a Bus Rider Incident Report is being issued and advise the student the specific reasons for the report. The Campus Transportation Manager will meet with the student to validate the information collected. A copy of the report will be forwarded to the APO (Assistant Principal of Operations), the school's Academic Counselor, and the Regional Director of Transportation to administer the appropriate discipline and to inform parents/guardians about the situation. **Level III Incidents will include five (5) to ten (10) days suspension or even permanent removal from the bus. Below are the most common Level III incidents:**

- Possession or threats of possession of a weapon, explosive, or flammables
- Profanity, verbal abuse, harassment, inappropriate gestures or possession of inappropriate materials
- Other offenses and behaviors which seriously jeopardize the safety of the bus driver, other students, the motoring public, or pedestrians

**Parent Reminder:** State law requires school attendance even when suspended from bus riding privileges.

Please let us know if you have any questions regarding the information in this letter. IDEA's transportation department is committed to providing excellent service to our students on their road to college.

Sincerely,

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