

SPECIAL NEEDS HANDBOOK

Special Needs Handbook

**Southwest Independent
School District**



The Southwest Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in providing education or providing access to the benefits of educational services, activities and programs, including career and technology education programs, in accordance with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended:

The provisions and information set forth in this handbook are intended to be informational and not contractual in nature. Thus, this handbook is not intended, and shall not be construed, to constitute a contract between the district and any employee; prospective employee; agency of the local, state or federal government; or any other person or legal entity of any and every nature whatsoever. The district hereby reserves and retains the right to amend, alter, change, delete, or modify any of the provisions of this handbook at any time and from time to time without notice in any manner that the administration or the board of trustees of the District deems to be in the best interest of the district. The contents of this handbook apply to all permanent employees (certified and auxiliary) and to all temporary and seasonal personnel in the district and do not amend, abridge, or replace board policies or Administrative regulations established by the District.

Southwest Independent School District
Transportation Department
210-63-6900

SWISD Special Education
210-622-4355

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Responsibilities

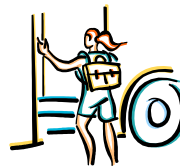
The safe and efficient transporting of your student relies on positive communications and cooperation among students, parents/guardians, driver/attendant, school staffs, special services, and transportation department. The following section outlines some of the various responsibilities of those involved.

1. Parent/Guardian

- Assist the school by submitting accurate and timely information to be included on the Transportation Request Form. Incorrect and untimely information delays the start up of transportation services.
- Inform the school administrator, special needs route manager, bus driver, and attendant of any medical condition or behavior which might affect the students safety or health on the bus.
- Provide up-to-date emergency information and alternate drop-off location (in the same neighborhood) information in writing to the school and the transportation office as changes occur.
- Inform the school administrator and the transportation office of any change of address in writing as soon as information is available. If the change of address requires re-scheduling, 3 working days may be needed to establish a new route or make adjustments to an existing route with new time schedule. Remember, all the other students on the route will also be affected by the change.

- Ensure that an authorized person will be at the pick-up and drop off location each day, unless the student may be left alone which has to be stated on the Transportation Request Form. Any exception to this requirement needs to be provided to the school and transportation office in writing. This includes alternate drop off locations.
- Ensure the student meets the bus at the scheduled time. Buses are scheduled to arrive within a few minutes of the designated time each day. The bus driver is not required to wait for more than 2 minutes past the pickup time. Any delays to the scheduled pick up time has a negative effect on the other students along the route.
- It is the parent's responsibility to call the transportation office **(210-622-4901)** if their child is not riding to or from school that day. If the bus comes by two consecutive days and the student doesn't ride, the driver will call to verify that the student will not ride the bus. It is the parents responsibility to call the transportation office to make new arrangements to resume transportation services after an extended absence.
- Please remember that parents are not allowed on the bus unless the driver has given permission to do so.

2. Student



- Obey the rules established by the bus driver and attendant. The safety of each student depends on how well all the students follow the rules. Distracting the driver could result in an accident.
- Respect the rights of the other students and adults on the bus. Cooperation between students on the bus helps to make a more pleasant bus ride.

- Be prepared to load the bus at the scheduled pick-up time and location
- If assigned by the ARD committee, the student must wear the seat belt, safety vest, or be in a car seat at all times. The student is to stay in his/her seat at all times.
- Lap trays must be off the wheel chair and secured.



3. Driver & Attendant

- Notify the parent/guardian of the bus number and approximate time of pick-up and drop off.
- Be on time for the pick-up and drop off. Setting a high standard for providing reliable transportation service should be a priority. If the driver arrives earlier than the designated time of pick up, he/she must wait until the designated time before proceeding on the route.
- Ensure the overall safe operation of the bus.
- Be familiar with each students disability and any special considerations in providing transportation service.
- Be prepared to provide appropriate first aid or CPR
- To attain the highest level of cooperation, display appropriate concern for each student and parent/guardian.
- (attendant) be located in a position inside of the bus that best meets the needs of all students.
- Maintain an emergency evacuation plan, listing each student, for use by medical personnel in the event of an accident.

- Complete and submit a **Bus Referral** form to the safety trainer who will send it to the designated school administrator if a behavior problem occurs on the bus.
- Assist all elementary students on and off the bus, middle school and high school students as required by their disabling condition. When appropriate and necessary, request loading and unloading assistance from school officials and parent/guardian.

4. School

- Coordinate with Special Education the formulation of an ARD Committee decision and the completion of an IEP. If required ensure a transportation request form is submitted to the transportation department.
- Ensure a copy of the request form reaches the transportation office following the completion of the annual ARD meeting.
- Ensure that students are ready for dismissal at the time established between the school administrator and the Special Needs Route Manager.
- Notify parents/guardians of schedule changes that may affect students transportation services(early dismissals, inclement weather, etc).
- Provide appropriate arrangements for those students needing assistance in loading and unloading the bus at the school.

- Refer requests made by the parent/guardian involving alternate transportation arrangements to the transportation department.
- Notify Transportation department when a student still arrives at school but did not ride the morning bus, and when a student rides the morning bus but departs school in the afternoon by other means.
- Accept and act on all Bus Safety Infraction Report forms when submitted by the transportation office. The principal or designee is responsible for disciplinary action, including the suspension of the students transportation privilege, when appropriate.

5.OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

- Notify special needs route manager of any legal or procedural changes within the special education policies and procedures that would affect transportation services.
- Assist Special Needs Route Manager by ensuring schools receive the annual ARD Transportation Request Forms by the designated deadline date.

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- Assign each eligible student to a route that is in keeping with the information provided on the Transportation Request Form.
 - Provide curb-to-curb service unless directed to do otherwise by the Director of Transportation.
 - Develop routes and schedules that will ensure the safest and most effective and efficient use of transportation.
 - Address concerns from parents/guardians, school administrators, drivers, attendants regarding special needs transportation.
 - Provide the appropriate screening and training for staff, drivers and attendants which includes confidentiality.
 - Establish and enforce transportation procedures, rules and guidelines that are within the boundaries of school board policies.
 - Provide assistive devices as needed, including , but not limited to seat belts, safety vest and car seats. Ensure all wheelchair restraints meet state safety standards. The ARD committee along with the parents will ensure that all wheelchairs meet state safety standards.

PROCEDURES

The following procedures were established by the Transportation Department to facilitate safe, effective and efficient transportation for students riding special needs buses. On occasion, Transportation Department receives requests from parents/guardians to deviate from these procedures. Transportation Department reserves the right to authorize or deny deviations from these procedures based on the need to provide an acceptable level of safety for all students on the bus, and an acceptable level of service for those entitled to special needs transportation.

1. PICK-UP/ DROP-OFF

- Under most conditions, special needs transportation provides curb-to-curb service. This means that the bus will pick-up and drop-off at the curb in front of the student's home or day care.
- Parents are responsible to have an approved adult meet the bus unless students can be left alone, which has to be stated on the Transportation ARD Request Form.
- Due to road conditions (dead end, dirt/gravel or narrow roadways), there may be a requirement to place the pick-up/drop-off site at a safe location away from the home or daycare. Every effort will be made to locate the stop as close as possible to the home or daycare.
- SWISD Transportation is considered to be public transportation with a primary responsibility to transport SWISD students to and from school safely.

PROCEDURES

PICK-UP/ DROP-OFF TIMES

- Assigned route pick-up and drop-off times will be assigned at the beginning of the school year. During the school year, as students are added or deleted from the routes, the actual times will change. The bus driver will notify the parents/guardians of the changes.
- Bus routes are scheduled to accommodate the arrival and dismissal times for each school, and to maximize efficiency of transportation for **all students** transported to and from school. The transportation Department will not honor request to lengthen or shorten a student's bus ride to accommodate day care or parent/guardian work schedule. Drivers are authorized to wait only **2 minutes** past the scheduled pick-up times before proceeding on their route.

ALTERNATE DROP-OFF

- Drivers are authorized to drop-off students only at the school or the designated drop-off. If there is no authorized person to accept the students at the primary drop-off location other than the school, the following steps will be taken.
- If someone other than the parent is to take a student off the bus, the driver must have a note signed by the parent. If no one is at the drop-off location the child will be returned to school and it's the parents responsibility to come and pick-up the child.

PROCEDURES

- The driver will attempt to drop-off the student at the alternate drop off location designated on the Transportation Request Form. If there is no authorized person at the alternate drop-off or no designated alternate drop-off location, the student will be taken back to the school. If the parent/guardian does not arrive to pick-up the student by 5:00 pm, the Southwest Police Department will be contacted.

LOADING AND UNLOADING



- Either the driver or attendant will be outside the bus to help load and unload students at the pickup/drop-off location. Under certain circumstances, the parents/guardian may be requested to assist with his/her students only. Parents/Guardians are strongly encouraged to communicate to the driver or attendant any information about the student that would help facilitate safe loading and unloading.
- Parents/Guardians **should not** send students to the bus with food or drink to be consumed on the bus.

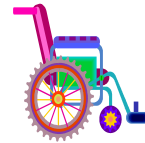
AT THE SCHOOL

- To facilitate a smoother student transition on and off the bus, designated school personnel are encouraged to help load and unload students. As other needs may arise, the driver may request other types of assistance.
- School administrators and teachers should not send students to the bus with food or drink to be consumed on the bus.

PROCEDURES

CARRYING STUDENTS ON/OFF THE BUS

- To avoid the risk of injury to students or assisting adults, students should not be carried up or down the bus steps. If a student cannot negotiate the bus steps with a reasonable degree of assistance, an alternate method of loading/unloading the student will need to be resolved between parents/guardians and the transportation department.



WHEELCHAIRS WITHOUT STUDENTS

- As a general rule, wheelchairs are not left on the bus during the day when the student is not being transported. Only under unique circumstances would transportation operations entertain the arrangement. Transporting a wheelchair without the student often affects the driver's ability to properly serve other wheelchair students on subsequent bus routes, or interferes with shuttles being conducted during the day.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- SWISD Special needs Transportation is responsible to provide safe transportation for all students who ride the school bus to and from school or on an activity trip. In the absence of a teacher or school administrator, the school bus driver is responsible for ensuring that students behave in a safe and responsible manner. Any behavior that interferes with the safe transportation of students must be reported. This policy applies to all students.
- Any inappropriate behavior on the school bus will be reported by the driver to the Transportation Director and School Administrators and Parent/Guardians. School Administrators are responsible for any disciplinary action required to be taken.

BEHAVIOR ON THE SCHOOL BUS

- Any unsafe behavior should be reported to the Transportation Department on a bus referral.
- When the behavior of a student on a special needs bus creates a potential danger to other students or adults on the bus, the driver will immediately call the Transportation Dispatch for instructions.
- Special needs students are allowed to have toys, a radio with head phones or books as long as the student does not cause a disturbance with his or her object.

RESTRAINT DEVICES

CAR SEATS

- Most small students with disabilities can be comfortably and securely transported in a conventional car seat. Many larger students with disabilities that affect their ability to sit up right without support can use regular restraint belts or a safety vest.
- Students who weigh under 20 pounds should be placed in a rear facing infant car seat.
- Students who weigh from 20-40 pounds and are 26'' - 40'' in height, should ride in a forward facing car seat.

SAFETY VESTS

- A safety vest is designed for students with behavioral or emotional disabilities who need to be restrained because of safety concerns while on the school bus. The safety vest is also designed to provide upper body support for students with physical disabilities.
- Special needs transportation will place the safety vest on a student only after the school administrator and parent have provided written permission, through an ARD committee meeting.

BUS EVACUATION PROCEDUES

- The driver and attendant will be responsible for ensuring each student fully understands what actions are to be taken if required to evacuate the bus for an emergency.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

BOWEL AND BLADDER ACCIDENTS

- This is an issue where the developed procedures are designed to protect the health and dignity of all individuals riding the bus. Bus drivers and attendants are instructed by the Transportation Department to not accept students for transport with soiled clothes from bowel or bladder accidents.
- If a bowel or bladder accident occurs during the bus trip, drivers and attendants are instructed not to attempt cleaning up the accident in route, but to proceed to the scheduled stop at school or home. After unloading the student at the stop, the driver/attendant will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting any affected surfaces on the bus utilizing the body fluid cleanup kit.

MEDICATIONS AND OTHER ITEMS

- The driver/attendant is not authorized to handle any type of medication for any reason. Notes or other papers should be placed into the child's back pack. If asked we will deliver a note or other papers, but will not be held responsible for the item getting to the correct person. These items should be provided to the school directly by the parent or guardian. If these items are placed in the student's back pack or other carrying device, the driver/attendant will not be held responsible for safe keeping during the bus ride.

POLICES AND PROCEDURES

SUMMER SCHEDULES AND ACTIVITIES

- If your student is involved in Extended School Year Services, the routes will be developed once the Transportation Department has a full listing of all students attending summer session. Parents/guardians will be notified of pick-up and drop off times by the driver after the routes have had a practice run to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.
- If the student's home address changes or any other changes occur during the summer, the Transportation Department must be notified to ensure the student has been placed on the correct route for the first day of the new school year.



- The SWISD Transportation Department is committed to provide safe, effective and efficient transportation services for special needs students. Our sincere hope is that this handbook will contribute to a clearer understanding of special needs transportation services

SPECIAL NEEDS HANDBOOK

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