

2023 - 2024
Parent/Guardian Handbook



Mansfield ISD
Special Programs Transportation
1910 North Main Street
Mansfield TX 76063
(817) 299-6060

**MANSFIELD INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Transportation Department
1910 North Main Street · Mansfield, Texas 76063
(817) 299-6060**

This handbook has been created to provide Parents/Guardians, school staff and faculty with a source of information that addresses responsibilities and procedures within Special Programs Transportation. Special Programs Transportation is committed to providing safe, effective and efficient transportation services for Special Programs students. Our sincere hope is that this handbook will contribute to a clearer understanding of Special Programs Transportation services.

The full scope of the Special Programs Transportation operation is much broader than can be contained in this handbook. The handbook is not intended to be all inclusive, but rather an avenue to share important information with all parties associated with transporting Special Programs students.

The MISD Transportation Department strongly encourages Parents/Guardians to schedule appointments with us to personally view equipment, buses, meet drivers/attendants, management and office staff. To schedule a meeting please contact the Special Programs Route Manager at (817) 299-6070.

Should you have any questions that this handbook does not address, feel free to contact:

Gerald Bunch
Transportation Operations Manager
MISD Transportation
1910 North Main Street
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(817) 299-6065
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Hillary Guilford
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The Mansfield 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; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (34 CFR Part 110); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; and local Board policies. The Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction coordinates compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA). The Director of Student Services coordinates compliance of the McKinney Vento Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

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.

Terms used throughout this handbook are:

ARD = Admission, Review and Dismissal

Authorized Receiver = Individual(s) approved by the Parent/Guardian to be allowed to receive the student

Driver/Attendant = Driver(s) and Attendant(s) assigned to an adapted for special programs bus

FAQ = Frequently Asked Questions

Handbook = Guide for parents/guardians related to the policies and procedures of special programs transportation.

IEP = Individualized Education Program

Transportation = The Transportation Office located at the Danny Griffin Operations Center, 1910 North Main Street, Mansfield TX 76063 (817) 299-6060.

Parent/Guardian Handbook = Handbook

We/Us = Office of Special Programs Transportation

You/Your = Parent or guardian of the student

Establishing Special Programs Transportation

In order to qualify for Special Programs Transportation, the campus ARD committee must determine that transportation is needed as a related service. The Transportation Department must have the “Transportation Request Form” completed after the ARD meeting; this authorizes Special Programs Transportation as a related service.

Students with temporary medical conditions or injuries may qualify for temporary Special Programs Transportation. Please check with campus administrators for more information (504 procedures). The completed Transportation Request Form becomes the authorization for transportation services.

Beginning Special Programs Transportation

Upon receipt of the Transportation Request Form we will analyze and implement the “related service” best suited to the student’s needs and location. This process normally requires at least 3 work days before the student can ride for the first time.

Step 1: We receive the Transportation Request Form stating required actions involved in the safe transport of the student.

Step 2: We will assign the student to a route best suited for the student and MISD. This may require several trial assignments to find the best solution.

Step 3: The updated route data and Transportation Request Form will be given to the Driver/Attendant. The Driver/Attendant will review the updated route and student information.

Step 4: The driver will test drive the route. This familiarizes the driver with the route assigned and the pick up location. We will make any necessary adjustments to the route reported by the driver. A second test drive may be necessary.

Step 5: Upon finalization of the route, the Driver/Attendant will contact you by phone. The Driver/Attendant will introduce themselves, confirm pick up and drop off locations and times, and answer any questions you may have.

Step 6: As necessary, the Driver/Attendant will install equipment required for the safe transport of this student.

Step 7: Parent/guardian may download the Parent/Guardian handbook (hereinafter called “Handbook”). The Handbook contains an Authorized Receiver Form and a Student Rider Contract which should be completed and returned to the Driver/Attendant as soon as possible.

Step 8: The student will begin transportation services.

Transportation Procedures

The following procedures have been established to ensure the safe transport of students and to best utilize resources for the good of the entire Special Programs student body requiring transportation.

Curb-to-Curb Service

Whenever safely possible, we will provide right-side of the bus curb-to-curb service. Simply put, we will pick up the student at the curb directly in-front of the designated pick-up location. Conversely, we will drop off the student at the curb directly in-front of the designated drop-off location. Drivers/Attendants may assist students off the bus. However, for the safety of other students and Drivers/Attendants, we do not assist the student to and from the door during pick up and drop off. This responsibility lies with the parent/guardian or authorized receiver.

Address Changes

We are unable to accommodate address changes without an updated Transportation Form. With this in mind, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the school Diagnostician to request an updated Transportation Request Form. There will be a 3 day process from the receipt of the updated Transportation Request Form to arrange for route changes before the student will be picked-up or dropped-off at the new address. Parents of students that move during the summer may contact the transportation office with the new address information to avoid any delays in bus service for the start of the new school year. Parent/guardian will need to notify the school as soon as possible to update the information so that a new Transportation Request Form can be sent to transportation.

Pick-Up

Assigned route pick-up and drop-off times, particularly at the beginning of the school year, reflect the Transportation Department's best estimate based on a number of variables. These are estimated times only. As students are added or deleted from routes, actual pick-up and drop-off times will change. You will be notified by your Driver/Attendant the day before the adjustments begin.

We require that students be prepared for pick-up 15 minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time. Upon arrival, drivers will wait 2 minutes before proceeding on route. Drivers/attendants will document arrival time and waiting time if they leave without the student.

If your student does not ride for 3 consecutive mornings without notification by you, the Driver/Attendant will contact you and/or the school to verify the student's situation. If this is clearly a temporary absence from school situation, we will maintain contact with you to resume scheduled pick up. However, if Transportation has confirmed the student's need for special transportation has ceased, a notice will be made to the campus Diagnostician. A new ARD/Transportation Request Form must be submitted to resume transportation services. In the event a student's situation can't be confirmed, transportation services will

cease. Reinstatement of services requires direct contact with our office by you. Transportation services will begin 3 days after contact.

Drop-Off

Student Authorization

If your student is allowed to enter the home without an adult present, you must specify this during the ARD meeting. The Diagnostician will note this on the Transportation Request Form. In the interest of the student's safety, he/she must use a doorway that is visible from the bus's location, such as a front door or garage door. We will observe that the student safely enters the home. Students are not allowed to enter the home through the backyard, side yard or stairwell which is out of sight from the bus.

Student Not Riding

If at any time, your student will not be riding the bus, even if they only require one-way transportation (i.e. afternoon drop-off only or morning pick up only) please contact Transportation at (817) 299-6060 as soon as possible.

Authorized Receivers of Students

We must ensure that your child is released to the proper persons. Therefore, for the safety of your child, it is necessary to maintain current and accurate information regarding those you designate to receive your child. For this reason, we require an Authorized Receiver of Student Form to be completed listing each person authorized to receive your child, including each parent and guardian. (Note: Form is located in the back of this book).

At time of drop-off, the Driver/Attendant will ask the receiving party to see their photo ID. The ID will be compared to the Authorized Receiver of Student Form. In the event the individual cannot be verified, the student will be retained on the bus.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify us in writing should any changes occur or authorizations are revoked. Additional forms may be obtained by asking the Driver/Attendant or contacting the office.

The Authorized Receiver must be available 15 minutes prior to scheduled drop off time. Again, depending upon external, uncontrollable factors, your student could be the first student delivered when normally he/she is later. If the Authorized Receiver is unavailable when we arrive, driver will wait two minutes before proceeding with the route. Parent/guardian or authorized receiver may be required to pick up your student at his/her campus. Parent/guardian or authorized receiver will be required to present a picture ID. Students must be picked-up by 5:00 pm. If students are not picked-up by 5:00 pm we will contact the Mansfield ISD Police Department for assistance.

No One Available to Receive Students

If there are three occurrences where no one is available to receive your student at the scheduled drop off time, we will request a parent meeting with the campus administrator. If the problem persists after meeting with the campus administrator, an ARD will be called to review the potential safety risks for the student posed by the delay in parental supervision.

Day Care Centers

We understand that day care centers provide an important link in your student's educational experience. However, it is imperative that you are aware of our policies regarding day care centers. We strongly encourage you and center staff to review policies prior to the first day of attendance at the facility.

We will work with day care staff to ensure that your child gets to and from the bus safely. Procedures allowing the student to walk from the center to the bus without the assistance of an adult should be established between parent/guardian and day care center directly. Drivers/Attendants will document arrival time and waiting time upon leaving without a student. We will not return to pick-up the student.

Day care centers must be available to meet the bus at school dismissal times. Depending upon external, uncontrollable factors, your student could be the first student delivered when normally he/she is later. If the day care center does not meet the bus within 2 minutes of arrival, the driver will radio Transportation Dispatch for assistance. If contact cannot be made, the student will be retained on the bus and the driver will continue the route. Drivers/Attendants will document arrival time and waiting time at the center upon leaving without delivering the student.

Day care centers must be located within the home address attendance zone or the assigned school attendance zone to be eligible for bus service.

Student Behavior

MISD Transportation is responsible for the safety of all students who ride school buses to and from school. In the absence of a teacher or school administrator, the school bus driver and attendant are responsible for ensuring that students behave in a safe manner. The driver and attendant work together as a team to ensure safe transportation services including the implementation of established Behavior Intervention Plans.

Any continued behavior that interferes with the safe transportation of students must be corrected and reported. Behavior problems are handled in accordance with applicable policies and procedures, including ARD committee approved individualized Behavior Intervention Plans. Any inappropriate behavior on the school bus will be reported by the Driver/Attendant to our Transportation Manager using the report for student incident/information (School Bus Safety Warning/Referral Form).

You will be provided a copy of the School Bus Safety Warning/Referral report form within 1 day of issuance.

The report will be provided by us to school administration. School administration will review the incident and assign appropriate consequences and will notify the parents and Transportation Manager of the assigned consequence.

General Safety Guidelines

For the safety of each student, drinks or food are not allowed on the bus.

Small toys, books, radios with head phones, cell phones, etc. are allowed as long as such items do not interfere with other students or the safe operation of the bus. This situation will be reviewed on a case by case basis if problems arise. We will discuss this with you or administration prior to the privilege being revoked.

Backpacks will be separately secured on the bus. We will not transport items which can't fit inside the student's back pack.

Hygiene/Cleanliness/Accidents

For the dignity and health of all students and personnel, we require that each student appears to maintain good hygiene when riding the bus. This includes proper bathing and grooming.

Drivers/Attendants are instructed not to accept students who already have soiled clothing due to bowel or bladder accidents.

In an attempt to prevent students from being ridiculed by other students due to bowel/bladder accidents which occur during the bus trip, our Drivers/Attendants are instructed not to attempt cleaning during the route but to proceed to the scheduled stop at home or school. After unloading the student at the stop, the Driver/Attendant will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting affected surfaces on the bus utilizing established safety procedures.

Medication and Other Items

Drivers/Attendants are not authorized to handle any type of medication for the student. Notes or other papers should be put into the student's back pack. If asked, we will deliver notes or other papers but we will not be held responsible for the loss or mis-delivery of such items. Documents of importance should be provided by you to the school directly.

Parents/Guardians on the Bus

We understand the first few days of riding the bus can be challenging for students and we want the bus experience to be a fun one. It is with this in mind, we encourage you to walk your students onto the bus for the first few days of riding. Following 3 days of assistance, we ask that children enter the bus without parental assistance. For security reasons Drivers/Attendants will not allow persons on the bus without proper ID and appropriate cause.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Drivers/Attendants will work with management and safety trainers to develop proper evacuation procedures in accordance with each student's ability. Such procedures will be modified and recorded as needed. Written plans will be maintained with the Driver. Plans will be reviewed with students on a periodic basis.

MISD Issued Special Programs Student Equipment

Special Programs Drivers/Attendants have received specific training on equipment we use, ensuring the safe operation of equipment for students.

Equipment is consistently checked for quality and safety. We have implemented rigorous cleaning schedules and have maintenance records on file in accordance with industry standards.

It is with this level of care and detail in mind that we ask extreme care be given to equipment. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to pay for damages that occur to any equipment when damage is the direct result of student or parent/guardian actions.

All MISD issued equipment must be returned to us when a student withdraws or at the end of the school year. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to pay for lost or unreturned equipment.

Wheelchair Track Straps

To ensure a safe and pleasant ride, wheelchairs are secured in place on the bus using wheelchair track straps. Wheelchair track straps prevent the chair from moving or falling over during bus operations. Electric wheelchairs require 2 additional wheelchair track straps attached to the rear of the wheelchair to properly restrain the chair.

Wheelchair Quick Straps

Depending upon wheelchair type, either a purple or blue strap set may be added to the wheelchair to provide an accessible attachment point. Please do not remove these items until the end of the school year or the last day of transportation services.

Wheelchair Lap Trays

Lap trays must be removed during transport. Teachers will remove the lap tray before loading during school pick up. Lap trays must be separately secured on the bus.

Car Seats/STAR Seats

To facilitate safe travel for students under the age of 4 or under 40 pounds and students with physical challenges requiring additional upper body support, MISD provides car seats/STAR Seats for use while on the bus.

Safety Vests

A safety vest is designed for students with behavioral/emotional or upper body challenges who need help remaining properly seated on the bus seat.

If a student has been assigned to wear a safety vest as stated in the IEP, the student must wear it while on the bus. It is your responsibility to ensure the student is in the safety vest at pick up time. Teachers will ensure the student is placed in the safety vest for school pick-up. Students required to wear vests as stated in the IEP will not be transported without their vest and crotch strap properly fastened as vest design dictates.

Walker

If a student uses a “walker” to assist in their mobility, it will be moved to a safe area and will be separately secured on the bus. For safety reasons, neither the walker nor the student can ride the lift.

Wheelchair Lifts

Transportation has several different types of wheelchair lifts in our fleet. Weight limits of lifts vary by manufacturer. To ensure safe transportation, we need to know if the loaded weight specifically exceeds 500 pounds.

Confidentiality

We are committed to the privacy of both you and the student. Our Drivers/Attendants attend confidentiality training annually. Refresher training is provided throughout the school year.

Student information maintained on-site is secured in the Transportation Manager’s office, protected under lock and key. Access to this information is strictly limited and monitored.

During transport, our Drivers/Attendants are required to keep with them student documentation. During non-transport times, Driver/Attendant files are locked and access is strictly monitored.

Transportation policy strictly prohibits discussions, writings, and/or other means of communication regarding students in an inappropriate manner by any Transportation employee. Disciplinary action will be enforced if this occurs.

MISD officials (teachers, administration or auxiliary personnel) may ride on buses without notice to document route information.

On the behalf of the Special Programs Drivers and Attendants we hope that you and your student have a safe, happy and successful school year.

Gerald Bunch
Transportation Operations Manager

FAQ

Q: When route changes occur during the year, will I be notified in a timely manner? How will I be notified?

A: You will be notified when routes are adjusted. The Driver/Attendant team will call you as soon as possible once new times are determined.

Q: Can siblings without IEP's ride special programs buses?

A: The sibling without an IEP must be enrolled at the same campus as the special programs student. Please contact our office to discuss your needs. If an exception is approved, the sibling is required to follow all other instructions. If there is a conflict with other riders, the privilege (by exception) will be immediately revoked.

Q: Can a parent ride the bus with us?

A: No, but we can arrange an orientation ride after school with the parent and child.

Q: What should I do if neither I nor my first choice Authorized Receiver can meet the bus after school?

A: Please list multiple receivers on the Authorized Receiver form. Remember, for the safety of your child, we must have an approved Authorized Receiver to deliver your student to. Your student will be returned to his/her campus or Transportation if verification of the receiver cannot be confirmed.



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2023-2024 AUTHORIZED RECEIVER FORM

PLEASE PRINT

Student: _____

Authorized Receivers:

Name: _____ DL or ID # _____ Phone # _____

Name: _____ DL or ID # _____ Phone # _____

Name: _____ DL or ID # _____ Phone # _____

Name: _____ DL or ID # _____ Phone # _____

Name: _____ DL or ID # _____ Phone # _____

Name: _____ DL or ID # _____ Phone # _____

Name: _____ DL or ID # _____ Phone # _____

Name: _____ DL or ID # _____ Phone # _____

Approved:

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____ Bus #: _____



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2023 – 2024

Dear Parents & Guardians,

Please read the following summarization of important policies and procedures related to the safe and efficient transport of your student.

1. Assigned route pick-up and drop-off times reflect the Transportation Department’s best estimate based on a number of variables. **These are estimated times only.**
2. Parents/Guardians are responsible to have their child prepared for pick-up 15 minute prior to the estimated pick-up time. Drivers will not call ahead, honk, flash their lights or knock on the door of a residence to announce their arrival.
3. Upon arrival, drivers will wait 2 minutes before proceeding on route.
4. For the safety of other students and Drivers/Attendants, we do not assist the student to and from your door during pick up and drop off. This responsibility lies with parent/guardian/authorized receiver.
5. Day care centers must be aware of our policies related to pick-up and drop-off of students.
6. Day care centers must be located within the home address attendance zone or the assigned school attendance zone to be eligible for bus service.
7. Authorized Receivers, including parents and guardians, must be listed on a completed Authorized Receiver Form. Drivers/Attendants/Substitutes will ask to see a picture ID during drop-off and to compare the information on the form to that on the picture ID.
8. Authorized Receiver must be available for drop off 15 minutes prior to scheduled drop off time. If there are three occurrences where no one is available to receive your student at the scheduled drop off time, we will request a parent meeting with the campus administrator. If the problem persists after meeting with the campus administrator, an ARD will be called to review the potential safety risks for the student posed by the delay in parental supervision.
9. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to pay for damages that occur to any equipment when damage is the direct result of student or parent/guardian actions.

Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions at (817) 299-6065 or (817) 299-6070. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Gerald Bunch
Transportation Operations Manager

Hillary Guilford
Special Programs Route Manager

Student Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Contact Phone: _____

Are there medical conditions that have initial responses that you expect from us? Please explain.

Date: _____