

**Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Education Services
Policies and Procedures**

School Transportation of Students

Effective Date: January 11, 2008 (Revised)
Original Effective Date: April 17, 2001

Purpose:

To establish a uniform policy and guidelines regarding the provision of school transportation for K-12 residential and day students in the Office of Education Services (OES).

Legal Rationale:

- (1) The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 1997 (IDEA)
- (2) GS 115C, Article 9
- (3) North Carolina Constitution

Mission Statement:

The Office of Education Services is committed to promoting independence and educational opportunities for special needs students through positive, safe, and efficient transportation experiences. Equal educational opportunities to elementary and secondary school age special needs students are achieved by providing a free and appropriate public education to each student, regardless of the nature or severity of the student's disability. An essential part of the student's free and appropriate public education is transportation services.

Target Group:

All OES Employees, Legal Guardians, and Students

Definition:

In this policy, the term "legal guardian" refers to parents, family members, foster care parents, surrogate parents, or designees of legal guardians who have the authority to transport students.

Policy:

- Student transportation is a school and system wide function and responsibility involving multiple professional disciplines and multiple levels of staff involvement, as well as collaboration among schools when possible.

- Appropriate transportation shall be provided for all OES students.
- Residential students will be provided transportation on a weekly basis at no cost.
- Day students will be provided appropriate daily transportation prior to and at the conclusion of the school day.
- Day transportation is designated for students within the county of the residential schools location (Burke for NCSD, Wilson for ENCSD, and Wake for GMS).
- Students who are eligible for day transportation are residents of the county where the school is located (either Wake, Wilson or Burke) that have public separate indicated on their IEP OR Residents of counties outside of Wake, Wilson or Burke and have public separate and transportation as a related service indicated on their IEP.
- Students who reside outside of the day transportation designation may receive transportation as designated in individualized education programs.
- The Transportation Committee will establish bus routes and designated pick up and drop off locations minimizing legal guardian travel to the extent possible.
- Schools will ensure communication to legal guardians regarding transportation routes and schedules including meeting times. Also, schools will provide provisions for en route communications to staff.
- Legal guardians must be present to pick up or deliver students at pre-arranged bus stops at the designated time. Unless extenuating circumstances are involved, parents are responsible for providing transportation to and from school when pre-arranged times and designated stops are missed.
- Door to door transportation will be provided only when specified by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Day students will be offered residential services during the time they are involved in extracurricular activities requiring extended hours on the school grounds. If residential services are declined, legal guardians are responsible for transportation after school hours, including costs.

- ❑ Transportation in and around school requires the use of an approved OES school vehicle and requires staff members, approved and designated by the Transportation Coordinator, to provide transportation. The off campus use of 15 passenger vans for student transportation is prohibited.
- ❑ Student transportation requires a minimum of two adults at all times, unless there exists an emergency situation and/or extreme need for flexibility requiring only a driver. Outside of an emergency, exceptions require the prior written approval of the Transportation Director and/or School Director in conjunction with the OES Transportation Coordinator.
- ❑ Student transportation does not include providing transportation to and from medical appointments, unless the medical need is an emergency. Schools/Programs are encouraged to establish guidelines and processes in collaboration with parents/guardians and provide resource information to parents/guardians in order to ensure medical appointments requiring off campus and/or out of county transportation are scheduled with a minimum impact on instruction.
- ❑ When individual student needs require a one to one monitor during transport, the Transportation Coordinator and School Director will ensure appropriate staffing and safety measures.
- ❑ The use of OES staff personal vehicles to transport students is prohibited.
- ❑ The use of a mobile phone or additional technology while operating a vehicle transporting students is strictly prohibited, unless it is an emergency situation such as medical concerns, unsafe road conditions, matters of public safety, or mechanical problems that create a risk of harm for the operator or passengers of a vehicle transporting students.
- ❑ Vehicles used for transporting students shall meet all requirements of Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Public Instruction, and Department of Health and Human Services, safety regulations and shall have current safety inspection stickers.

- Trained monitors and drivers shall be assigned to vehicles by the schools based on the needs of the students, number of students, and/or length of time/distance of the commute. Training is required of any driver and monitor. Training will include:
 - Confidentiality
 - OSHA precautions
 - Medical issues
 - Behavioral management
 - Evacuation procedures
 - Reporting protocols
 - Record maintenance including attendance sheets
 - Discipline and incident reporting (OES Student Code of Conduct Policy)
 - Phone usage
 - Communication skills
 - Best practices
 - Assistance in loading and unloading
 - Transportation policies
 - Child Passenger Safety Restraints
- The behavior management, discipline, and safety of all OES students are the responsibility of any OES staff member while accompanying students being transported. This responsibility is also extended to incident reporting while transportation is being conducted and/or upon the conclusion of a transportation trip. Therefore, Schools should ensure proper seating arrangements and/or staffing assignments prior to transportation. The OES Student Code of Conduct Policy is enforced during transporting of students.
- Staff sleeping and/or napping, reading books other than related transportation materials, playing hand held games, or wearing headsets for CD's or the like during transportation is prohibited.
- The school's Transportation Coordinator will maintain documentation of driver and monitor training records.
- Staff transporting students shall meet all the requirements and safety regulations of the Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Public Instruction, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

The school's Transportation Coordinator will ensure this information is maintained at the school.

- Schools will insure that a designated adult on each vehicle be knowledgeable of any special medical or behavioral needs of students.
- Students who are provided transportation are expected to follow appropriate codes of conduct with safety as a priority.
- Unless specified otherwise, this policy will pertain to admissions that follow the effective date of this policy.
- After July 1, 2003, this policy will be in effect for all OES students and legal guardians.

(OES Policy T-1; 4-17-2001; 3-27-2002, 7-25-07)