



# Parent Special Education Transportation Handbook



**ACCEPT EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE  
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT**

**Juniper Hill School  
29 Upper Joclyn Avenue  
Framingham, MA 01701  
(508) 620-3875 (Tel)  
(508) 620-2897 (Fax)  
[pmurphy@accept.org](mailto:pmurphy@accept.org)**

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**Ms. Betsey McKeon**  
*Director of Special Education*  
Framingham Public Schools

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Transportation Office  
29 Upper Joclyn Avenue  
Framingham, MA 01701  
Phone: (508) 620-3875  
Fax: (508) 620-2897

Main Office  
220 North Main Street, Suite 201  
Natick, MA 01760  
Phone: (508) 653-6776  
Fax: (508) 653-0878

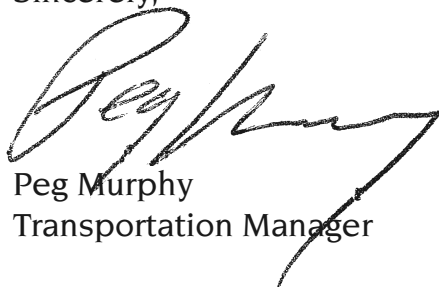
Dear Parents and Guardians,

ACCEPT Education Collaborative has provided specialized transportation services for the past thirty years. Our goal is to provide the safest, most reliable, timely and courteous transportation service possible for your child. We have developed this handbook to ensure clear communication and provide pertinent information regarding your child's special education transportation services. Please use this handbook as a reference throughout the school year.

We are proud of our long-standing partnerships with the school districts we serve. Your child's transportation needs are being met using safe and properly maintained vehicles equipped with both GPS and NEXTEL Direct Connect phones for prompt and efficient communication. All of our drivers are carefully screened, trained, and supervised and they have your child's safety and well-being as their primary concern. Please feel free to contact the Transportation office with any concerns, questions, problems, or suggestions you may have regarding our services.

Please return the Health and Emergency Form that you will find in the middle of this booklet. This form must be returned before Transportation Services begin. Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,



Peg Murphy  
Transportation Manager



Susan Rees  
Executive Director



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## **TRANSPORTATION HEALTH and EMERGENCY INFORMATION FORM**

To protect the safety of your child and maintain effective communication, you must complete the enclosed Health and Emergency Information Form and return it to the ACCEPT Transportation Office immediately. This form must be updated on a yearly basis so if you have already completed and returned the form for summer school transportation you do not need to complete it again. **NOTE: ACCEPT cannot transport your child unless an annually updated form is on file.**

Please notify ACCEPT Transportation in writing if your child is diagnosed with a new medical condition that may impact their safe transportation or if there are changes to emergency contact numbers.

## **TRANSPORTATION NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE**

At least the day before your child is scheduled to begin using ACCEPT transportation services for the first time, you will receive a call from ACCEPT Transportation with the designated pick up time. If you do not receive a call, please contact ACCEPT Transportation at 508-620-3875.

## **PROCEDURES FOR MORNING PICK UP**

- ◆ For prompt pick-ups, students should be ready at least **ten (10) minutes** before the vehicle is due to arrive. For unanticipated situations, the driver will wait up to **three (3) minutes** past the designated pick up time before continuing with their route.
  - ◆ If your child is less than 12 years old, he or she must have parental supervision to get on the van in the morning and off the van in the afternoon. If your child is 12 or older, you must indicate on the **Health and Emergency Form** whether or not the student can independently get on the van in the morning and off in the afternoon. If you indicate that a responsible adult does not have to supervise your child, it will also indicate that you give your permission for your child to be home alone.
  - ◆ Seat belts must be worn at all times. In addition, students under the age of eight (8) shall be fastened and secured by a child passenger restraint, such as a car or booster seat, unless the student is taller than 57 inches in height according to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 90, sect. 7AA. The child passenger restraint must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and be approved by Federal regulations 49 CFR 571.213. When a car or booster seat is required, parents are responsible for providing and maintaining it; no child under the age of 8, unless 57 inches or more in height, will be transported if the parent(s)/guardian(s) do not have such a car or booster seat available for the student. All seats must be clearly labeled with your child's name. Safety seats stay with the child at school during the day; school personnel and parents are responsible for installing the safety seat each and every time a child is transported.
  - ◆ Wheelchair van drivers will operate the lift gate for students in wheelchairs to ensure that the wheelchairs are secured and all seat belts fastened.
  - ◆ Please label all personal items sent to school. ACCEPT assumes no responsibility for lost articles. Any articles found on a van will be returned to the school.
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### **TRANSPORTATION OF PRESCRIPTION OR OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS**

Massachusetts State Regulation 105 CMR 210.008A requires “a parent, guardian or parent/ guardian-designated responsible adult shall deliver all prescription medications to be administered by school personnel or to be taken by self-medicating students, if required by the self-administration agreement to the school nurse or other responsible person designated by the school nurse.” Therefore, should your child require medication during the school day it is the parent/guardian’s responsibility to deliver it directly to the school nurse. If your child is in a residential program please make the necessary arrangements to have adequate prescription medication at home as ACCEPT Transportation will not transport medication. ***Neither the ACCEPT driver nor the student will carry any medication (except Epi-Pens – see below) to be administered by school personnel on the van for transport to school. ACCEPT drivers have been instructed to refuse any requests from a parent to transport medication to and from school.***

### **MANAGEMENT OF STUDENTS WITH LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES (LTA)**

If your child has a life threatening allergy you are required to follow the protocol outlined below:

- Inform the Transportation Office of your child’s specific allergy before the start of the school year (or as soon as possible after diagnosis)
  - ◆ Provide the Transportation Office with your child’s Allergy Action Plan and current medication order for Epi-Pen from licensed provider
  - ◆ Ensure that an up-to-date twin pack Epi-Pen is in your child’s back pack each and every day
  - ◆ Provide emergency contact numbers
  - ◆ Provide updates as needed on student’s allergy status
  - ◆ If your child is developmentally able, teach them to recognize the first signs of an allergic reaction and communicate as soon as they feel a reaction is starting

Please do not hesitate to contact the ACCEPT Nurse Leader if you have any questions – (508) 653-6776.

### **TO REPORT A STUDENT’S ABSENCE**

If your child will not be attending school due to illness, vacations or appointments, please call the ACCEPT Transportation Office 508-620-3875 as soon as possible prior to the pickup time. **(For nights and weekends press #115 for Dispatcher voice mail.)**

Please speak loudly and clearly when leaving your message. Your message should include:

- ◆ **Date of Absence/Change**
- ◆ **Student’s Name**
- ◆ **School Name, Town**

#### **Examples:**

If your child is **not going to school** on the van but **does need a ride home**, the message should be:

- ◆ “My name is Mr. Smith and on Thursday, July 22, my son John Smith who attends Wheelock School in Medfield will be a **‘NO IN’** but **‘YES OUT’** “

- ◆ If your child is **not attending school** that day, the message should be: "My name is Mr. Smith and on Thursday, July 22 my son John Smith who attends Wheelock School in Medfield will be a '**NO GO**' for the day."

If you drive your child to school, you will need to call ACCEPT Transportation (508-620-3875) as soon as possible to let them know that your child needs a ride home. Please also contact the ACCEPT Transportation if you are picking up your child at school for any reason including illness.

**To ensure accuracy in routing all communication must be reported directly to the ACCEPT Transportation Office at 508-620-3875. Please do not leave messages with the driver.** All calls to transportation may be recorded for quality assurance and/or training purposes.

### **PROCEDURES FOR DROPPING STUDENTS OFF**

Drop off will be made at the location agreed to with your child's special education administrator. In the event that a responsible adult is unavailable to meet the student at the designated drop off point and there is no authorization on file to drop the student off unattended, the following procedure will be observed:

*The bus driver will notify the dispatcher by radio immediately and, if other students are on board, continue the route. To ensure the safety of your child and as a last resort, at the completion of the route if a responsible adult is not present at the designated drop off location, your local police department or other designated agency will be contacted. Consistent failure to meet the van may result in a referral to the Department of Children and Families.*

### **CHANGES IN PICK-UP OR DROP OFF LOCATION**

Only requests for permanent changes (e.g. an after school program, relatives home in the same town, moving to a new address, etc.) will be considered. Requests for changes should be made, **in writing to your child's special education office for authorization at least three days prior to the need.** If the change is approved, the District office will notify ACCEPT of the change either by email or fax. **Same day requests for any transportation changes cannot be accommodated.** Drivers cannot accept notes from parents; they are not responsible for any requests or changes from parents.

### **SNOW DAY/ INCLEMENT WEATHER CANCELLATIONS**

Bad weather creates hazardous driving conditions, which means the vehicles will be traveling at a slower speed than normal. We encourage parents to use their own discretion when sending children to school on snowy or icy days.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the area where the child is picked up/dropped off is reasonably clear of all snow and ice. Transportation may be cancelled if the driver cannot safely maneuver the vehicle.

1. If your child's school is in session, but the public school in that town is closed, ACCEPT will not transport into or out of that town.
2. If your child's school is in session, but the town you reside in has cancelled school, ACCEPT will not transport into or out of that town.

**ACCEPT reserves the right to cancel transportation even if member districts do not.**



capable of holding the wheelchair in place. Wheelchair power shall be turned off prior to being transported in a school bus. Batteries used to propel electric wheelchairs shall be both leak-resistant and spill-resistant or shall be placed in a leak-resistant container. Batteries shall be secured to the wheelchair in such a manner as to prevent separation in the event of an accident.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their child's wheelchair meets the minimum state safety requirements. Any wheelchair which does not meet safety requirements shall not be transported.

### **RESIDENTIAL STUDENTS TRANSPORTATION**

ACCEPT will work with your Special Education Office concerning Friday afternoon pick up times from the school and the Sunday or Monday return times of residential students. Any changes to the established time will have to be requested in advance and approved through your Special Education Office. The times will be based on factors such as but not limited to traffic concerns, cost factors, disruption of other student's pick-up times, or availability of vehicles/drivers.

If the forecast calls for inclement weather ACCEPT reserves the right to transport home a day early. When the ACCEPT Transportation office informs you of the decision to transport early and if you decline you will be responsible to transport your child home.

### **VAN RULES FOR STUDENTS**

Appropriate behavior is expected at all times to ensure the safety of students. The following rules along with your child's school code of conduct must be adhered to:

1. Students must refrain from bullying, harassment and or teasing on the van at all times. ACCEPT will follow procedures outlined in ACCEPT's Anti Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan found on our website [www.accept.org](http://www.accept.org) under announcements.
  2. Students must wear a correctly fastened seat belt and shall not attempt to enter or disembark until the vehicle has come to a complete stop.
  3. Students are required to be courteous and respectful at all times, e.g. profane and abusive language is not allowed.
  4. Students must not distract the driver so as to not endanger the safety of others.
  5. Students will cooperate with the driver regarding noise level and acceptable behavior in the vehicle, e.g., students are expected to keep their hands to themselves, use indoor voices and appropriate language.
  6. Students must remain in their assigned seats at all times when the bus is in motion.
  7. All vans are food, beverage and smoke free at all times. Lighters and matches are prohibited.
  8. Cell phone use is not permitted in the van. Audio taping, videotaping or photographing is prohibited at all times. Therefore, all cell phones should be turned off and stored in a bag.
  9. The decision to use the van AM/FM radio is the driver's. Students can use their own personal music devices only with headphones.
  10. Students shall not open the windows without permission. Students shall not throw anything out of the window.
  11. Sharp objects, weapons, loose toys or other large items are not allowed on the van, e.g., skateboards, baseball bats and fishing rods are prohibited.
  12. ACCEPT Transportation services many students and a large number of them have asthma, allergies or other respiratory issues. For this reason all students must refrain from wearing fragrances. Additionally, students are not allowed to bring aerosol or spray fragrances on the van.
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**INCIDENT AND ACCIDENT POLICY**

Serious incidents will be reported to parents/ guardians, placement programs, Special Education Administrators, and the Executive Director of ACCEPT. As mandated reporters, if appropriate the incident will be reported to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). We also encourage parents to notify ACCEPT Transportation if your child reports an incident on the bus. The procedures outlined in ACCEPT's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be followed for any incidents involving bullying. A copy of this plan is posted on the ACCEPT website [www.accept.org](http://www.accept.org) under announcements. A hard copy of this plan can be made available upon request.

If an accident occurs, the driver will immediately contact the ACCEPT Transportation office. The police will also be immediately notified. The driver will not leave the students unattended in the vehicle until the proper authorities have arrived. The driver will complete an accident form as required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles. The parents, school district and school placement, (if appropriate) will be notified of the incident on the day of the occurrence.

**DISCIPLINE POLICY**

If discipline issues arise on the vehicle, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The driver will contact the ACCEPT Transportation Manager immediately. If the incident requires a police or fire response 911 will be called. The driver or monitor, in collaboration with the Transportation Manager, will document the problem on an Incident Report Form. The student's parent and special education liaison will be notified of the incident by the Transportation Manager (not the driver). A copy of the incident report will be faxed to the district's Special Education Office and mailed to the parent.
2. If the incident on the van interferes with the safe transport of student or others, the student will be suspended from the van for one day at the discretion of the transportation manager. If additional action is warranted, all decisions will be made in collaboration with the school district liaison, the director of child's school program, the student and/or the parent/guardian. This could result in additional days of suspension, and/or a risk assessment, a meeting with the student, parent or guardian, appropriate school staff and a representative from ACCEPT. The parent/guardians become responsible for transporting the student to and from school on the day(s) of the van suspension until a final determination is made.
3. In the event of intentional damage caused to the vehicle by a student, the cost of repair must be reimbursed by the student and/or parent/guardians.

**TEACHER/STAFF RESPONSIBILITY**

1. School staff/personnel will be present when the students are dropped off and picked up at school.
  2. School staff/personnel should contact ACCEPT Transportation at 508-620-3875 if problems occur with inconsistent arrival and/or departure times.
  3. School staff/personnel will remove the car or booster seat each morning. At the end of the day school staff/personnel will reinstall the booster or car seats properly and will ensure seatbelts are securely fastened.
  4. School staff/personnel will be expected to review rules and regulations of passenger safety with the students periodically throughout the year. School staff/personnel are responsible for de-escalating behaviors and ensuring that students entering the van exhibit safe behaviors.
  5. School staff/personnel should work with ACCEPT staff on possible solutions should behavioral problems occur on the vehicles.
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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q: My child has a long ride in the morning. Can my child have breakfast in the vehicle?
- A: **No. Students, drivers and monitors may not eat or drink while in vehicle at any time. Food is a potential choking hazard and allergies to food may cause a life-threatening reaction.**
- Q: Can I give the driver some money to stop for snacks at a drive-thru?
- A: **No. Unscheduled stops are not allowed when students are being transported in ACCEPT's vehicle.**
- Q: Can my child play/use video games or a personal music device in the van?
- A: **Yes. If the device is used appropriately; however, if it becomes a distraction to the driver or causes a problem with other students the privilege will be revoked. ACCEPT is not responsible for these or other personal items left in the vehicles. Students must carry their belongings in a bag. (See #8 Van rules for students)**
- Q: Can I call the driver in the vehicle to speak with him/her directly?
- A: **No. If communication is necessary, please call the Transportation Office at 508-620-3875.**
- Q: What do I do if I have a transportation service related question, problem with a driver or general complaint?
- A: **Please contact the ACCEPT Transportation Office at 508-620-3875 as soon as possible.**
- Q: What happens if the vehicle breaks down while my child is on the van?
- A: **The driver will contact the ACCEPT Transportation Office and remain with the student(s) at all times. If necessary, a replacement vehicle will be provided in a timely manner. Programs and parents will be notified.**
- Q: At the end of a long school day, my child likes to have a cigarette. Is smoking permitted on ACCEPT vans?
- A: **No. There is no smoking permitted on any ACCEPT vehicles at any time.**

**For more information or any questions, please contact:**

**ACCEPT Transportation  
(508) 620-3875 (Tel)  
(508) 620-2897 (Fax)**

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