

PRESCHOOL/EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

2020/2021 TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS



IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

For all questions concerning the program and services, please call:

VMC Group, Inc
9701 Niagara Falls Blvd Suite 1A
Niagara Falls, New York 14304
716 285-6000 ext. 1 /FAX: 716-285-1000

Student Bus Company Inc.
16 Hoffman St.
Spring Valley, NY 10977
(845) 371-0800/Fax: (845) 371-0559

RCDOH Program Administrator:
General: (845) 364 2071 or (845) 364-2620
Donna Bogin: (845) 364-2625

Child's School: _____ Address: _____

Telephone number: _____ Contact person: _____

COVID-19 Reminders:

Mandatory Daily Health Checks including Temperature

No child should attend school if:

They have a temperature of 100 or higher, or their behaviors are not typical i.e. did not eat breakfast

Someone in the home is symptomatic or diagnosed with a positive case of COVID-19, **child must remain home for duration of the quarantine – 14 days**

Children who become ill during the school day will not be transported home or to daycare on the bus

Wearing a mask is required by the parent/caregiver coming to the bus

Please limit the individuals coming to the bus to one individual and whenever possible the same individual.

The driver and monitor will be wearing a mask

The monitor will be wearing gloves

Children will be loaded onto the bus from back to front and taken off the bus from front to back

The windows or hatch may be opened to allow for air flow

The busses will be deep cleaned nightly and touch surfaces wiped down between trips as per regulations

Introduction

The Rockland County Department of Health (RCDOH) contracts with Student Bus Company Inc. to provide transportation for the Early Intervention and Pre-School children requiring Special Education Services. We ensure that the transportation complies with all transportation service requirements and contract specifications.

The bus company should be contacted at (845) 371-0800 about scheduling questions and concerns, including late pick-up and drop-offs. Student Bus Company Inc. logs and follows up on every phone call. If your issue is unresolved or you need further assistance please call VMC, the transportation management company at 716-285-6000 ext 1

Parent Responsibilities

It is our joint goal for your child to have a smooth and safe transition from home to school. In order to achieve this goal, your cooperation is requested. Your child should be ready to board the bus approximately 10 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. Drivers are not permitted to beep the horn. The driver will wait 3 minutes for the child past the scheduled pick-up time. Any delay in boarding the bus will result in delayed pickups of other children on the route and late arrival at school. If you are waiting more than 10 minutes from the scheduled pick-up time, and are not contacted by the bus company, call Student Bus Company Inc. If for any reason your child will not be attending school, please call/text 845-262-0160 the bus company prior to your pick-up that day.

If your child's bus driver arrives at your stop after you have notified the bus company that your child is not going to school, please wave to your driver to continue without your child. Due to "dead zone" areas, cell phone and/or radio communication are not always available. Therefore, it may not be possible to relay the message that your child will not be attending school that day. Your driver will then proceed to the next stop.

1. Food, pets, bottles, pacifiers, or toys are not permitted to be held by children on the bus. **Please limit items being transported to school to a single item. Clearly labeled with your child's full name.**
2. Department of Transportation safety regulations do not permit eating and/or drinking on the school buses. This policy is strictly enforced. Please do not give food to your child while he/she is walking toward the bus.
3. In the beginning of each term, transportation tends to be hectic. Drivers, monitors, and your child's school are getting familiar with their new routes and children. This may cause delays in the loading and unloading process and may result in a delay in your child's pick-up or drop-off.
4. Department of Transportation safety regulations do not permit eating and/or drinking on the school buses. This policy is strictly enforced. Please do not give food to your child while he/she is walking toward the bus.
5. It is extremely stressful to a child to arrive and find there is no one at home to meet him/her. We require you to either be home or to have an authorized person there to meet your child. Such person must be indicated on the Transportation Request Form have a photo I.D. and a valid telephone number where they can be reached. The person authorized to pick-up your child must be over 14 years of age. Your child will not be given to anyone whose name is not listed on the form.
6. If you are not home at the drop-off time, the bus will finish its run and return to your home. If you are still not home when the bus returns, your child will be taken to the local Police Station and Child Protective Services may be called.
7. Parents must bring their child to the door of the bus wearing a mask and give the child to the monitor. Parents must also receive their child from the monitor or driver at the door of the bus, wearing a mask. Parents are not permitted to board the bus for any reason. **Even if the parent is present, an older sibling under the age of 14 may not take the child off the bus.**
8. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the preschool of any medical conditions or special alerts that they need to be aware of to safely transport your child. The preschool will give the necessary information to the bus company.
9. If you must send medications to be given to your child during the day, it must be in a child proof sealed container in the child's backpack. Under no circumstances is the bus driver or bus monitor permitted to administer medicine.
10. Parents are not permitted to ride the school bus.
11. It is the parent's responsibility to assure that your child utilizes the transportation service provided. Transportation may be suspended and/or cancelled if services are not used, if attendance is inconsistent or no one is available when the bus arrives to take the child off the bus.

Illness/Medical Emergency

- If your child becomes ill during the day, the school will call parent or emergency contact.
- **The parent or emergency contact MUST pick up the child from school in a timely fashion, within 1 hour of call.**
- **Children who get sick during the school day will NOT be transported home by the bus.**
- Phone Numbers: Please make sure that, as your phone numbers change, you forward it to the school and Student Bus Company Inc.

Head Lice/Other Situations

If the school finds lice in your child's hair, he/she will not be transported home. You or an emergency contact **MUST** pick up your child from school. Your child will not be transported again until the school has received and approved a doctor's note stating there are no longer lice present.

Transportation Request Forms

The Transportation Request Form that is needed for each child must be filled out in its entirety with accurate and up-to-date information (including height, weight and date of birth, home address, drop off and pick up address if different from home and **2 emergency contacts that are not the parents, who reside in the county**) and sent to your child's school. Forms with white out or tape over them will not be accepted. Once your child has been approved for services the bus company will process the Transportation Request Form. Your transportation provider is required to provide service **within 5 school days. No changes in transportation will be made in the first 10 days of a school term. Based upon the enhanced guidelines due to COVID-19, bus changes will be limited.**

Your transportation provider can pick up and drop off children at certified day care centers or at a babysitter only at the times that coincide with the Provider special education session the children are enrolled in. The pick-up/drop-off must be consistent five days a week and to be accomplished within the same geographical area i.e. Same pick-up and though different drop-off, both are consistent 5 days per week. This information must be submitted along with transportation information under pick-up and drop-off addresses.

- If there are any changes during the course of the year such as: home address, pick-up or drop-off location, emergency names and phone numbers, work numbers, contact person or babysitter, please contact your child's school immediately, to fill out a **new** Transportation Request Form in order for the changes to be made. It is the program's responsibility to notify Student Bus Company Inc. of these changes, in writing, before they can be implemented. **The bus company is not allowed to add or remove info from Transportation Request Form unless notified by the school in writing.**
- For your child's protection, parents must not ask the drivers to make any special arrangement. All requests must be received in writing from your child's school. If accepted, the change will go into effect within 5 business days from the time the change is received from your child's school by the Management Company. Due to the COVID-19 enhanced guidelines, it could take longer.

Bus Drivers

In the performance of this contract transporter must comply with all Federal and State rules and regulations. All drivers must be no less than 21 years old and must wear ID badge. They are trained in safety and receive special needs education awareness training before they can transport children. This screening/training includes but is not limited to the following:

- Fingerprinting
- Background Check
- Motor Vehicle Check
- Physical Examination
- Drug and Alcohol Screening (done on a pre-employment, post-accident, probable cause, and random basis)
- TB Testing

- Class Instruction
- Road Testing
- Defensive Driving Review
- Behind the Wheel Road Test
- Special Training session
- Two 2-hour mandatory refresher courses yearly

Bus Monitors

Although not required by law, Rockland County provides an additional safeguard by screening monitors under the same strict guidelines that New York State requires bus drivers to be screened.

All monitors must be at least 19 years of age and must wear an ID badge and mask. The following are the responsibilities of bus monitors.

- The monitor will assist the children on and off the bus. They may not assist your child from the house to the bus and from the bus to the house. The staff at each school are responsible for assisting the children on and off the bus at school. Parents are not allowed to board the bus for any reason.
- The monitor will buckle and unbuckle children in car seats. Monitors also have control over seating arrangements and transportable items.
- The monitor will supervise all the children on the vehicle.
- Although each monitor attends a training course and an annual refresher course, monitors are not permitted to administer medicine, give children any injection, or otherwise perform any medical treatment. If a medical emergency occurs while the child is traveling in the bus, the bus will pull over, and “911” will be called.

Car Seats

As required, your child will be seated in a car seat. Student Bus Company Inc. will supply a car seat for your child which will be cleaned on a nightly basis.

Vehicles

Each vehicle is equipped with a two- way radio and is inspected by New York State Department of Transportation every 6 months. The bus company and the Department of Transportation inspectors conduct additional on-site spot inspections.

Routing

Routes are established prior to the start of the school year. Route time is determined not just by distance from home but by the location of all children in the program. Routes are not arranged to accommodate parents’ schedules or other daycare or school schedules. To keep routes as short as possible, the furthest child from the school is picked up first and dropped off last. Bus routes may run up to 1 hour and 15 minutes. It is our goal to limit run times as much as possible. Prior to the start of school, the driver is required to do a complete dry run of his/her route and knock on the door or

leave a postcard in the door. Parents will be notified of the approximate pick up and drop off times before the start of school. As all programs accept students throughout the school year, bus routes are subject to change. This may affect your child's pick up and/or drop off times. **Short-term changes cannot be accommodated.**

Transportation by Parents

Parents are encouraged to provide their own transportation for their children. The County, at the current authorized rate for mileage, will reimburse parents who arrange for self-transport. Reimbursement is only provided when the child is in the car. Please speak to either your On-going Service Coordinator or CPSE Chairperson to notify them of your intent or interest to transport your own child. For inquiries regarding the process of mileage reimbursement please call 364-3853.

Accidents

In the event of an accident, regardless of the severity, the police department is notified immediately. In addition, while the police are being notified the transport management company, parents, schools, and the County are also being contacted. Any updated information can be obtained by calling your child's school. Parents should not come to the scene of an accident.

Late Buses

If for any reason the bus is unusually late, the bus driver will call the dispatcher and the bus company will notify the transportation management company and the parents. You may contact Student Bus Company Inc. at (845) 371-0800 for additional information.

Weather Related Closings and Delays

Please refer to your child's school policy for the notification of delays, closings, and early dismissals. Please listen to the local radio station WHUD 100.7 or visit cancellations.com. Information may also be obtained from the local TV station or by calling the program directly.

Student Bus Company and the RCDOH will monitor BOCES, and local school district closings. If transportation is canceled and your child's program chooses to open, you may transport your own child to the program. **Please be aware that you will be responsible for round-trip transportation.**

If there is a 2-hour delayed opening there will be no program for the AM students.

Early Dismissal

For early dismissals due to weather before 11 a.m., children will be returned to their a.m. pick up location.

For early dismissals after 11 a.m., children will go to their regular after school drop off location.

All parents must be contacted prior to a child being placed on a bus when there is an early dismissal

Concerns and Complaints

The RCDOH has contracted with VMC to oversee the transportation for children with special needs in Rockland County. If you have any problems, issues, or complaints that you are unable to resolve with your child's program or the transporter, you should contact VMC directly at 716-285-6000.