

MVYPS GUIDELINES FOR PROVISION OF TRANSPORTATION

PARENT/STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Students wait at the designated bus stop safely, 5-10 minutes prior to anticipated pick up time.
 - a. Regular Busses can not provide wait time at stops
 - b. Specialized transportation vehicles have a 3 minute wait time.
2. Students must follow the school code of conduct as well as the transportation code of conduct
3. Any concerns regarding the safety of transportation, parents are requested to notify the Transportation Director.
4. Kindergarten students must be met at the bus stop by an adult.
5. Students requiring specialized transportation must be met at the bus stop by an adult.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Students may be assigned to specific seats by the driver or school staff.
2. Weapons of any kind are not allowed on the vehicle.
3. Students are not allowed to use profane, racist, sexist or abusive language or engage in any behavior that may threaten other passengers.
4. Students will cooperate with the driver in all matters regarding the NOISE LEVEL, NO SMOKING, NO EATING, NO DRINKING policy on the vehicle.
5. Students must never approach the vehicle until it has completely stopped.
6. Students shall not open the windows without permission. Students shall not throw anything out of the window. Basic school bus laws, prohibit students from extending any body part out an open window

Proper student behavior is important. In order to maintain safety in the vehicles, students are expected to maintain proper behavior at all times and follow the school's code of conduct. If safety is jeopardized because of improper behavior, disciplinary action will be taken. The Driver has full authority as well as responsibility for control of the conduct of students while they are on the bus. Students must not be doing anything to distract the Driver. Drivers should be treated with respect and courtesy at all times. The procedures that follow will apply in most cases when the Driver believes the misconduct has created a safety hazard on the vehicle.

Some instances may warrant IMMEDIATE ACTION:

1. The driver will handle any minor infractions through discussion with the student(s). If the problem cannot be resolved, the driver will notify the school administrator/designee and transportation director.
2. The Administrator at each school will determine the action for further violations. Which may include a meeting with the parents, to include possibly the driver, appropriate school personnel and/or the student. Temporary loss of transportation privileges may result. If this occurs, the parent will be required to provide transportation to and from school.

3. Additional or more serious infractions could lead to longer periods of suspension from transportation or loss of services. Again, parents may be required to provide transportation.
4. In cases where the infraction is with a student with a disability, the Student Support Services Director will be notified.
5. It is important that the driver and parents maintain a polite, and trusting relationship.
6. If a student's behavior becomes a threat to the safety of the driver or other passengers, parents and school staff will be notified and the bus/student may be returned to the school or appropriate alternative location. If necessary, emergency services will be called for assistance. Failure to maintain appropriate behavior may lead to suspension from transportation. The Principal/Administrator with consultation with Transportation Director will make the decision if the student will be suspended from the transportation vehicle. If the student has a disability the Director of Student Support Services will be included in the decision making process.

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY

1. Driver will become familiar with all routes prior to the start of school
2. Contact their supervisor when a student is no longer in need of transportation or has been absent for more than one day.
3. Not make unauthorized stops. They are to stop only at the stops listed on the route sheet.
4. Guide the wheelchair, if HP equipped, into the vehicle and secure it in place.
5. Not leave student(s) unattended. When stopping to load or unload students, drivers will secure the vehicle in park, secure emergency brake, and follow proper boarding regulations. Driver will not leave driver's compartment (except when assisting wheelchair lift).
6. Not carry unauthorized persons in the vehicle.
7. Pull off the side of the road, if a behavior problem arises and it is a safety issue. The driver will instruct the students that the vehicle will remain stopped until the behavior is resolved. The driver should be clear, firm and direct with their instructions. They should state clearly what they want the student to do. The driver will complete an incident report and return it to his/her Supervisor the same day. An incident report should be filled out each time a problem occurs. If there is a physical contact involved, (ex. a student hits another student or driver) the driver must call the transportation office/director immediately. The driver should not remove any student from the vehicle. They should not refuse to transport a student unless directed by the Administration. Under no circumstances should the driver or monitor discuss or decide punishment with the student or parent. In some severe situations, emergency services may be called to restore order and insure safety for all passengers. The Transportation Director will call the student's school and principal/administrator, or Director of Student Support Services/Administrator, or his/her designee will call the parent.
8. Stop the vehicle and contact the Supervisor or Emergency Personnel IMMEDIATELY, if the driver or monitor becomes aware of a student threatening harm to self or others and contact the Administration as soon as possible. The local police may be called when behaviors become out

of control or present a danger to other passengers. The Transportation Director or Administrator will then contact the necessary people. The incident form must be filled out that day.

9. Notify the school nurse if a student becomes ill on route to school and the student will be brought to school to be seen by the school nurse.
10. Check the entire vehicle after each route for students and/or personal belongings left behind.
11. Not block roadways in school areas or park in “no parking” zones.
12. Not play loud music while students are in the vehicle. Selection of radio stations must be age appropriate and not contain content that is potentially objectionable.
13. Observe proper language at all times. No swearing.
14. Will dress in an appropriate way for safety (i.e., no open-toed shoes, sandals, flip flops, etc.) and to convey professionalism, confidence and care to parents and/or staff.
15. Report all incidents/accidents to the Director of Transportation immediately as well as to the school personnel meeting the vehicle.
16. Will participate in all training provided/arranged for to ensure safety for the students.

TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITY

1. Arrange transportation for all students, including special transportation.
2. Collect and maintain Student Emergency Information / Contact Form as provided by parents/guardians for students with specialized transportation.
3. Receive and contact parents/school administration regarding issues while students are being transported.
5. Work with the School Administration and/or Special Education Department to resolve issues related to behavioral or safety requirements.
6. Contact new students/parents informing them of pickup and drop off times at least one day prior to beginning the route.
7. Inform the parent(s), Drivers and Monitors when changes are made that would either alter both old and new routes.
8. Inform the parents of all affected students on the vehicle if changes are made that affect pick up or drop off times.
9. Arrange for required training for Drivers and Monitors, including disability awareness, strategies in working with students with disabilities, de-escalation, and other safety skills, etc.
10. Ensure that Drivers and Monitors follow the calendar with regard to early dismissals and no school days.
11. Maintain a clean and safe environment for all students being transported
12. Make sure vehicles and drivers are in compliance with all federal and state laws and regulations.

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION

Policy and Guidelines for MVYPS transportation apply for MVYPS specialized transportation.

1. Once the IEP team has determined the student requires specialized transportation and the IEP is accepted, a request form is filled out and provided to the transportation department to arrange transportation. This is updated for each school year, and as needed throughout the school year.
2. New requests received during the school year could take at least 2 school days to be arranged.
3. Once the routes are determined the transportation office will call to discuss the details of pick-up and drop-off location/times. Parents are asked to discuss with the driver anything you think will help your child's transportation go smoothly and report any changes to the transportation office.
4. Student pickups and drop offs will be made closest to the student's home that is designated as safe by the transportation office. The stop is then considered the designated scheduled route bus stop. A secondary drop off address can be arranged with the Transportation office if it remains consistent on a weekly basis and for child care purposes.
5. Student schedules may be subject to change with the discharge or addition of new student(s). Please be aware that traffic or weather related conditions might affect pick up and drop off schedules significantly.
6. Transportation for students that are placed by the district at an off-island special education school is arranged through the IEP process, see FAQ below for further information.

PARENT/STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

We ask that you review the vehicle safety and behavior responsibilities with your child being provided specialized transportation in a small bus, van, or car.

1. Students are required to wear seat belts at all times, if the vehicles are so equipped.
 - a. It is the monitor's responsibility to secure their child into a car seat/seat belt before the vehicle leaves location. (If a monitor is not required this is parent's responsibility)
 - b. Students must not unbuckle their seat belts and attempt to disembark until the vehicle has come to a complete stop and instructed or assisted by transportation staff.
2. A parent or other authorized person/adult must be present and students shall be ready for pick up five (5) -ten (10) minutes before the bus is due to arrive. Please wait with your child until the bus arrives. Due to time restrictions, drivers cannot be delayed by late student arrivals. The wait time is **3 minutes**. If the student is not ready, the driver will continue on the route. Parents will then be responsible to transport their child to school.

3. Students will not be dropped off anywhere except at their own homes/approved bus stop, unless other arrangements have been made in advance.
4. Parents may choose two locations for one AM and one PM for pick up drop off due to daycare/parental custody reasons, as long as it remains consistent throughout the school year. (not a day to day or week to week, basis)
5. If no adult is available at drop off the driver will wait the 3 minutes and if no one arrives keep the child on the vehicle, finish the route and then return to the student's drop off location to meet the adult responsible.
 - a. Drivers are expected to contact the Transportation Office immediately with an expected return time so they can contact the parent/adult. The Transportation Office will contact the school. The school will locate the parent or emergency contact person. If an adult is still not present upon return, the driver will contact the Transportation Office again. Upon authorization from the Transportation Office, the Driver may bring the student to the original school/program if staffing or time is available, if not they will return to the MVRHS transportation office or agreed up destination.
6. Please be aware that drivers are not allowed to leave the vehicle (unless assisting with wheelchair lift), so we require parents/authorized persons or school personnel to present the child to the bus monitor. The bus monitor will support/provide assistance on and off the vehicle if necessary.
7. Also please note, drivers are not allowed to make unauthorized stops. They are to stop only at the stops listed on the route sheet or designated as school or home/stop unless special arrangements have been agreed on by the Director of Transportation. If you are requesting a change in drop off or pick up you must contact the transportation office. Changes require at least a two school day timeframe for change to occur, if approved.
8. Parents shall notify the transportation office of any student absence or change of schedule. Please contact the transportation office to resume transportation after any extended absence.
9. Please feel free to contact the transportation office concerning any questions or problems you may have regarding the transportation services. Thank you for your cooperation and support.

TEACHER/SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY

1. School Personnel will be present when the students are dropped off or picked up at school.
2. Will not send students home with sharp objects, loose toys, uncovered or not contained food items, or other large items.
3. Review rules and regulations of passenger safety with the students periodically throughout the year.
4. Teachers are available to work with the driver and or monitor possible solutions to behavior problems.
5. Teachers/teams are asked to contact the transportation office to discuss any questions regarding a student's transportation needs prior to developing the IEP or to address any ongoing concerns.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION:

1. Q. What happens if a student is absent for just one day on specialized transportation? A. The parent should call the Transportation Office and if known the driver /monitor directly as soon as they know the student will not be going.

2. Q. What if the student does not need a ride home for just one day on specialized transportation? A. The parent should call the Transportation Office as soon as they know the student will not need a ride home.

3. Q. What if the student gets sick at school and needs a ride home? A. The contact person at the school calls the parent to arrange for pick up at the school. The parent should then notify the transportation office.

4. Q. Can the driver drop off a student at a different location or a friend's house if they receive written permission from the parent? A. No, the driver can only alter the pick up or drop off location with the prior approval from the Transportation Director.

5. Q. Can students get dropped off at school or at home alone for specialized transportation? A. A staff person, parent, or a designated adult must observe/meet students unless the Transportation office receives and approves a signed Home Alone Waiver.

6. Q. What is the transportation provision if my child is attending a District determined off-island special education school? A. Every child's needs are unique. Their IEP plans are designed specifically for them, this includes transportation needs. The IEP teams determine the programming for the student in order to receive Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE). When a student is placed in a special education school off island, the teams determine the service delivery and amounts of service, this includes the related service of transportation if so required by the student.

Districts are responsible for any transportation costs to/from school-home or to reimburse parents when the residential school closes the dorm for a vacation break.

- a. If the school is open and parents decide to take a student home from school, whether for a special event or a weekend, etc., it is their responsibility and expense (unless noted and determined above within the team process).

- b. As part of a student's IEP, transportation would also be arranged for the student to/from the school, when the student is working on generalization of skills and transitioning back to living/school programming on the island.

7. Q. My child has been placed in a year round 365 day placement at a Special Education School off-island, what transportation is provided?

According to regulations MA School Districts are not responsible for transportation costs when a student is placed in a 365 day residential program. However, MVYPS recognizes the strain on families to maintain close contact with their child due to the distance of our unique location and difficulty with traveling to/from the island. If it's appropriate for the student to travel, the MVYPS Districts will work with the family to determine a plan for transportation (including the schedule, mode, costs) for a student to come home/return to school, for scheduled vacation/holidays. These arrangements will be based on individual family/student needs.

*Please contact the Director of Student Support Services for questions and travel arrangements in these cases.

8. Q. What if a parent wants to visit or attend a school function or meeting at a school in district or out of district or off island?

A. Transportation is provided for the student to receive FAPE, a district is not responsible for the provision of transportation for the parent. The district will work with the family for other arrangements to participate in meetings, such as change of location, schedule, or remote methods to assist with attendance.

