

Parent and Driver Information

for children receiving

Home to School Special Education Transportation Services



Amador County Office of Education
Amador County Unified School District
Transportation Department
545 Independence Drive
Sutter Creek, CA 95685
(209) 257-5180
Fax: (209) 267-9356

Parent and Driver Information

Dear Parent:

The Amador County Office of Education and Amador County Unified School District Transportation Department has prepared this information package to acquaint you with the rules covering your child's school transportation. We need your assistance and cooperation to maintain timely and reliable service. Your familiarization and adherence to these rules will aid considerably in transporting your child with the maximum service, courtesy and safety.

The ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department can be contacted by telephone at (209) 257-5180 if you have a suggestion, complaint, comment or question. The ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department dispatch and supervisory staff are on duty from 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on school attendance days. A voicemail system is available to receive your message between 6:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. during the week and on weekends.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION - PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Parent and Driver Information

ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department	257-5180
Shirley Morasca, ACOE Dispatcher	257-5182
Theresa Cramer, ACUSD Dispatcher	257-5181
Doug Green, Director of Transportation	257-5188
Mitzi Faulkner, Asst. Superintendent of Special Education / SELPA	257-5330

ACOE/ACUSD TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
5:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Phone (209) 257-5180

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Parent and Driver Information

SAFETY

Special Education transportation requires drivers with a high level of competency and skill to ensure the safe transportation of your child.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT AND RANDOM DRUG AND ALCOHOL TEST

Drivers are tested for both drug and alcohol use prior to employment and are subject to periodic random testing throughout employment.

DRIVER TRAINING

All vehicle drivers are required to have a valid California Driver License, to attend regularly scheduled safety meetings and in-service training sessions to improve their skills with special education students.

Our bus drivers are specially trained to give students the best service and protection available. The ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department requires all bus drivers to complete CPR recertification and first-aid instruction every two years, to attend regularly scheduled safety meetings, and to attend in-service training sessions to improve their skills with special education students. In addition, State law requires each bus driver to have a valid School Bus Driver Certificate, pass a physical examination and obtain traffic and criminal clearances.

SCHOOL BUS EQUIPMENT

To assure use of safe equipment, all school buses are inspected daily by the driver and annually by the California Highway Patrol. In addition, ACUSD Transportation mechanics perform comprehensive inspections at frequent intervals. In case of an emergency, all buses are equipped with two-way radios and video cameras.

Although seat belts are only required on school buses manufactured on or after 7/1/06, all ACOE special education buses are equipped with seat belts for the added safety of our special needs children. In the event that a seat belt does not provide adequate safety for an individual child, the ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department and parents will agree upon alternate safety equipment.

SAFETY HARNESSSES

Students under 60 pounds or under 6 years old are to be transported while secured in safety harnesses meeting State child safety standards. The ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department will provide the safety harnesses. Parents should inform the ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department when their child is over 60 pounds and is 6 years old. In the event that a safety harness is not the safest equipment for an individual child, the ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department and parents will agree upon alternate safety equipment.

Parent and Driver Information

WHEELCHAIR AND TRAVEL CHAIRS

The safest possible lifts and tie-down equipment have been purchased for the transportation of your child. Your help is also needed to maintain safe transportation of wheelchairs and travel chairs. Section 1293G C.C.R.: **“WHEELCHAIRS SHALL BE EQUIPPED WITH BRAKES AND RESTRAINING BELT PROPERLY MAINTAINED BY THE OWNER OF THE CHAIR.”** Transportation may be **DISCONTINUED** unless the owner properly maintains these devices.

WHEELCHAIR LIFT OPERATION

Drivers are specially trained on the wheelchair lift operation. Although your assistance in loading and unloading is appreciated, **ONLY THE DRIVER OPERATES THE LIFT CONTROLS.**

IDENTIFICATION

For safety purposes, each student should carry or wear identification (example: bus pass). **DO NOT WRITE STUDENT NAME BOLDLY ON OUTSIDE OF ARTICLE.** Write on the inside of the item (backpack, lunch box, etc.) A preferred method is an ID bracelet worn on the student’s wrist.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Amador County has a variety of weather conditions (fog, rain, snow, etc.) that can cause a major delay of bus service. Fog or snow can affect areas differently; therefore, some routes may have “on time” service, whereas other areas may experience a major slow down on routes.

If for any reason there is a major visibility condition and the driver feels it is unsafe to proceed, the dispatcher will call the parents on the affected route and advise parents of the delay.

Any major countywide bus delay due to weather conditions will be reported to the local radio station and will be broadcasted every 15 to 20 minutes.

In winter, the Snowline, (209) 257-5355, will be updated frequently as to the current busing conditions and/or bus service.

If school is delayed or closed for weather reasons, a computer message will be sent to student’s homes.

PARKING

Drivers are encouraged **NOT** to pull in and out of private driveways. It is extremely helpful if room can be left at the curb/street in front of your home for loading and unloading purposes. Drivers are encouraged **NOT** to do any backing if it is at all possible to avoid.

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DELAYED BUSES

If a bus is delayed, the driver notifies the ACUSD Transportation Department via a communications radio in the bus. ACUSD Transportation Department notifies schools of buses that are more than ten (10) minutes late. Parents may call the ACUSD Transportation Department to determine the reason for the delay and the approximate length of the delay. ACUSD Transportation staff will telephone parents if a delay exceeds thirty (30) minutes.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/TELEPHONE

If you move during the school year or change your telephone number, please notify the school and ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department at least three (3) working days before the move to insure uninterrupted bus service. Do not deliver your child to school and expect the bus to return him or her to a new address unless you have been notified that bus service to the new address has been arranged by the ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department.

It is important that ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department have **CURRENT AND CORRECT TELEPHONE NUMBERS** (home, emergency, etc.). Please notify ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department of any changes at (209) 257-5180.

COMMUNICATION

If you have a request or complaint regarding transportation please do not ask your child's teacher to take care of this matter. Contact the ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department at (209) 257-5180.

Bus drivers are not to be used as messengers between home and school. Please write down any communication for school staff and enclose in your child's backpack.

Families without phones will be contacted by the ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department through their message phone number. Please be sure these phone numbers are kept current.

TRANSPORTATION OF MEDICATION

Parents may request on child's student transportation application that medication be transported with the child to school. Bus drivers may not transport medication until parents have complied with all legal provisions. When medication is transported, these guidelines below must be followed:

- (1) The drug or medication is sealed in an envelope or other container in its original pharmacy container.
- (2) The envelope or container is labeled with identification of the student and school.
- (3) The envelope or container is to be kept in personal possession of the driver while in route.

Parent and Driver Information

Transportation of Medication continued

- (4) The envelope or container is delivered by the driver directly to school staff or parent/guardian.
- (5) Under no circumstances is the student allowed to keep medications in their possession.

ROUTE TIMES

Amador County Office of Education/Amador County Unified School District buses children throughout Amador County. Our large service area makes it necessary for some children to have long bus rides. Travel time will vary from route to route. We attempt to ensure that each student rides the bus no longer than one (1) hour each direction between home and school. You can be assured that every attempt has been made to make your child's ride as short and comfortable as possible.

ROUTE CHANGES

Parent should be prepared for **CHANGES** in drivers, buses, routes, and time of pick-up/drop-off **THROUGHOUT** the school year as a result of additions or withdrawals of students in the program. Overall route travel time will vary from route to route depending on class times and student home locations. Parents will be notified if route changes affect their child's pick-up or drop-off times. After an initial adjustment period at the start of school or upon reorganization of routes, the pickup and delivery time should be consistent within approximately 15 minutes. Buses may run later during days of unfavorable weather conditions, such as fog, rain, and snow.

CHILD CARE ADDRESSES

Some parents may want their child delivered after school to a childcare facility. This service may be provided if:

- (1) The service occurs on a consistent long-term basis.
- (2) The service can be accommodated on an existing route.

Please allow 72 hours for all route changes. Drivers will not change established pick-up or drop-off sites to accommodate special requests without authorization from the ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department. **New pick-up or drop-off sites are not added to meet temporary needs.**

PICK-UP PROCEDURE

At the beginning of the school year, parents will be notified by ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department of their child's pick-up time. Parents will be informed of changes in pick-up time throughout the year. All students should be ready 15 minutes before pick-up time. Drivers are asked **NOT** to honk the horn. Many children and classes are affected by bus schedules; therefore, drivers **WILL NOT** wait beyond the scheduled pick-up time and will proceed on their route. Parents or a designated adult are responsible for assisting the child from the house to the bus and drivers are responsible from that point on. Drivers will **NOT** go to your door to pick-up a child.

Parent and Driver Information

DROP-OFF PROCEDURE

A parent or a designated adult **MUST** be at the home to receive the student when delivered by the bus driver. The parent or designated adult should be at home ten (10) minutes prior to the drop-off time and is responsible for assisting the child from the bus into the home. Drivers will **NOT** go to your door to drop-off your child. If you desire your child to be left at home without an adult to receive the child on a regular basis, this **MUST BE STATED IN WRITING AND GIVEN TO THE ACOE/ACUSD TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT.**

If there is no designated person to receive the child at the designated drop-off location the procedure will be as follows:

- (1) Driver is to notify dispatcher of the problem.
- (2) Dispatch will call the home or emergency phone number (current information on hand).
- (3) Driver will continue on route while awaiting instruction from dispatch.
- (4) If there is still no one to receive the child at the designated drop-off location, dispatch will notify the local police department/sheriff office.
- (5) The local police department/sheriff office will hold the child until parents are contacted.
- (6) A social service agency will be called if the child is not picked up by the parents or if contact with the parents cannot be made. All attempts will be made to notify parents with information regarding their child.

NOTE: Recurring problems regarding the delivery of your child may result in the need to hold an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting.

ABSENCES

Please notify the ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department when you do not intend to send your child to school. Advance notice is extremely helpful and, in many cases, saves unnecessary miles. The ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department can be contacted by telephone, (209) 257-5180, as early as 5:00 a.m. and as late as 6:00 p.m. A voicemail system is available to receive your message between 6:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. during the week and weekends. The ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department dispatch and supervisory staff are on duty from 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for school attendance days.

If your child does not ride the bus for **THREE (3) CONSECUTIVE DAYS**, transportation will be **DISCONTINUED** until you call the ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department, unless previous arrangements are made in advance with the ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department.

To resume transportation services for your child, please call the ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department at (209) 257-5180.

ILLNESS

Please do not send a child who is ill to school. Besides the risk of spreading the illness to other students and the driver, the bus drivers need to concentrate on driving and are not able to wipe noses, clean spit-up, or comfort a sick child.

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BUS RULES

(Please discuss with your child).

- (1) Sit down at once and remain seated**
- (2) No profanity**
- (3) No eating, drinking, or chewing gum**
- (4) No fighting, playing or loud conversations**
- (5) Keep all parts of the body inside the bus at all times**
- (6) Follow the driver's instructions at all times**

Each child on a school bus must behave in a satisfactory manner in order for the driver to be alert to the many hazards of driving. The safety of all children on the bus is of prime importance; if a child continually behaves in an unsatisfactory manner an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting will be scheduled. YOUR reinforcement of these regulations and occasional communication with your child's bus/vehicle driver will help considerably in maintaining a low level of disciplinary problems. PARENTS/GUARDIANS may be held responsible for any damage to vehicles caused directly by their child.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

A student's behavior is judged to be unacceptable when it jeopardizes the safety of the child or the other passengers, or interferes with the operation of the bus. In such a case the parent, the child's teacher, the school psychologist, and the bus driver may meet to create a behavior management plan for the child. The plan may be incorporated into the child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) if it is needed on a continuing long-term basis.

PARENT LIABILITY

The ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department will notify parents if their child has been involved in behavior leading to damage of school bus/vehicle or other passenger's property. Parents may be required to reimburse the ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department for these damages.

BUS RIDING RULES AND REGULATIONS

All transportation shall be subject to the appropriate provisions and policies of the California Education Code, California Administrative Code and policies of Amador County Office of Education/Unified School District.

Title 5 C.C.R. Section 14103: "Pupils transported in a school bus shall be under the authority of and responsible directly to the driver of the bus, and the driver shall be held for the orderly conduct of the pupils while they are on the bus or being escorted across a street or highway."

ANIMALS

Students are not allowed to bring animals, insects or pets (including those in boxes, cages, or on leashes) on board a school bus. Service dogs and signal dogs may be transported when accompanied by special education students. Guide dogs may be transported when accompanying visually impaired students.

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PERSONAL HYGIENE

Children must be clean and fully dressed (including shoes and socks) in appropriate school clothing before boarding the bus/vehicle. In consideration for the other students, no child will be allowed to enter the bus with a soiled diaper. Students still in the process of being toilet trained should use the restroom just before boarding the bus/vehicle, since the ride to school may take up to one hour or more.

PERSONAL ARTICLES

It is recommended that all students carry a backpack or bag marked with their name on the inside when bringing personal items to and from school.

In consideration of student safety, parents should consult with the ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department before a child is allowed to carry an item that is too large to fit in the child's backpack or bag.

ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department assumes no responsibility for lost items, but every effort will be made to locate such items and return them to their owner. *Please put your child's name on all items that could be easily lost (backpacks, coats, sweaters, etc.). Unclaimed items left on the bus/vehicle will be turned in to the ACOE/ACUSD Transportation Department, (209) 257-5180.*

VIDEO RECORDING

Board Policy cf. 5131.1 states that video recording devices may be used on school buses to monitor student behavior while traveling to and from school and school activities. The Board believes that such monitoring will deter misconduct and help to ensure the safety of students and staff. Most ACOE/ACUSD buses are equipped with video recording devices.

SEATING

Each student will be assigned to a specific bus route, and may be assigned to a specific seat on the bus. This seating assignment is based upon the children's medical needs, behavior management strategies, and other considerations affecting the safety and welfare of the students.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

It is the parent's responsibility to adhere to all policies contained within this handbook. Refusal to comply will result in the need to hold an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting.