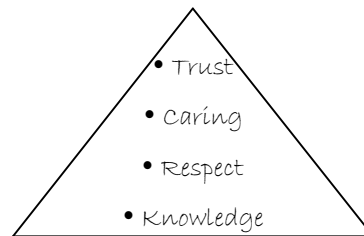


Rio Rancho Public Schools

Student /Parent Transportation Handbook

Student Transportation Vision Statement

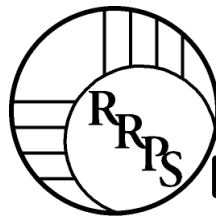
Safe, efficient transportation for Rio Rancho Public Schools students in a growing community based on:



Revised: 2009

This handbook has been designed to provide general information to students and parents about Student Transportation services for Rio Rancho Public Schools. The safety of our students is of foremost concern to Rio Rancho Public Schools when children are riding the school bus. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that there are many safety standards and student behavior expectations outlined in this handbook. Following these general rules go a long way in helping to ensure that children arrive at school in the morning and are returned home in the afternoon in a safe, comfortable, and timely manner. Please familiarize yourself with the information provided in this guide, as well as the rules and regulations that all students are expected to abide by.

Thank you.



Rio Rancho Public Schools

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Rio Rancho, NM 87124
(505) 896-0667
(505) 896-0662 (fax)
www.rrps.net

Department of Student Transportation (DOST)

(505) 338-0078
(505) 994-2091 (fax)

V. Sue Cleveland, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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Executive Director, DOST

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Member (*District 4*)

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WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RIDE THE BUS?

Except as required by law, bus transportation in New Mexico is considered a privilege.

A RRPS student will be provided transportation to his/her assigned school under the following criteria:



- **Grades K—5, Elementary:**
A student whose registered address is one mile or more one-way from his/her assigned school will be eligible for school bus transportation.
- **Grades 6—8, Middle School:**
A student whose registered address is one-and-one-half miles or more one-way from his/her assigned school will be eligible for school bus transportation.
- **Grades 9—12, High School:**
A student whose registered address is two miles or more one-way from his/her assigned school will be eligible for school bus transportation.
- **Modified Transportation:**
504 Committees and/or IEP Committees determine the need for modified transportation.

WHO IS INELIGIBLE TO RIDE THE BUS?

(When transportation becomes the responsibility of the parent or guardian)

- A student who resides outside the RRPS district boundaries.
- A student who is attending a school outside his/her attendance boundaries on an approved transfer.
- A student who lives closer than the distance requirements described above for his/her grade level.
- A student who has abused his/her bus privilege and through the referral process (see pg 7) has had this privilege revoked.



HOW DO I REGISTER FOR THE BUS?

Students are automatically registered for the bus when they register for school. The school Registrar provides a bus pass which indicates the bus #, morning pick up time, and stop location. This bus pass is handed to the driver on the first day your student rides his/her new bus.



If registering after the beginning of the school year, students will need to get a bus pass from their school's Registrar with their bus information to give to their bus driver the first time he/she rides the bus.

HOW DO I REGISTER FOR A DIFFERENT BUS OR BUS STOP?

(Call DOST at 338-0078)

- **If you have moved:**
We will assist you with your student's new bus number and/or stop and provide your student's school the busing information. You must also contact your student's school with the change of address and phone number.
- **Joint Custody:**
If parents have joint custody of a student, the student may have two designated stops if both parents live within the same school's boundaries and both homes are located the statutory distance from the school required for bus eligibility.
- **Day Care:**
Students attending day care facilities may be transported if the student's registered address and the facility meet the distance requirement for transportation to his/her home school and the daycare facility is in the same school attendance zone as the student's residence. For the safety of all students, the pick-up and drop-off locations need to be as consistent as possible all five days of the week.

(How do I register for a different bus or bus stop? Continued)

- **Emergencies:**

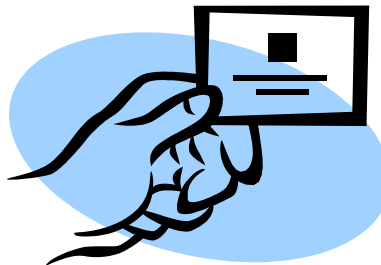
Permission to ride another bus or get off at another bus stop will be permitted for **emergency situations only**. When calling our office to set this up, parents must supply the bus number and bus stop they want their student to use, as well as the name, address and phone number of the adult they will be staying with.

Permission will **not** be granted for personal reasons (i.e., playing with a friend, staying overnight, working on a project, doing homework together, etc.).

DO I NEED AN ID CARD TO RIDE THE BUS?

High school students eligible for transportation are required to display their Student ID when boarding their assigned bus home. If a student does not have their Student ID card in his/her possession they must present an alternate form of identification (including a driver's license, library card, class schedule, or other form of picture ID) to ride, but will receive a written referral for the day. A student will **not** be allowed to board the bus home if an alternate form of identification is not presented. Parents/guardians would then be responsible for picking up their student at the school.

After three (3) referrals the student will lose ridership privileges, will no longer be eligible to ride the bus, and will need to seek alternate transportation for the remainder of the school year.



Elementary and **middle school** students are not required to display ID for transportation.



STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES: IT'S ALL ABOUT SAFETY

RULES

Student transportation is a privilege extended to students who qualify for transportation pursuant to state statutes and local district policy. Students who do not obey the state and local regulations governing student transportation may have their transportation privileges revoked by the school district. This applies to transporting to and from school and field trips.

- Students shall learn and obey the safety rules and responsibilities and will use appropriate behavior required while on the school bus and at the bus stop.
- Students who are required to walk a distance to meet the bus must walk on the side of the road on their left (facing traffic), except on divided or multi-lane roadways. Students shall use crosswalks whenever possible.
- Students must be at their regular bus stop **five minutes prior** to scheduled stop time (the bus driver will not wait for students not at the loading area or making an effort to reach the bus). Students receiving modified transportation services shall be ready at the assigned pick-up at the assigned times.
- Students must wait in a safe place, clear of traffic and away from where the bus stops. Students must maintain safe and appropriate behavior when waiting for and boarding the bus.
- Students must obey the driver promptly. The driver/attendant are in full charge of students when they are on the bus. Students shall obey instructions immediately. In cases where a principal/designee is on the bus, they are also authorized to enforce student discipline.
- Students shall not get on or off the bus while it is in motion. Students must remain seated and keep aisles and exits clear.





(Student Responsibilities Rules continued)

- Students must occupy the seats assigned them by the bus driver/attendant. If the bus is equipped with seat belts, students must wear them.
- Students shall not be permitted in the driver's compartment while the bus is in motion. Students shall not tamper with any equipment on the bus.
- Students are not to carry on unnecessary conversation with the driver while the bus is in motion.
- Students shall be courteous and obedient to the driver.
- Students shall not use profane language or obscene gestures while on the bus.
- Students shall cooperate with the bus driver in keeping the bus clean.
- Rough or boisterous conduct will not be permitted on the bus. Students shall be absolutely quiet when the bus is approaching a railroad crossing and remain quiet until the bus is safely across the tracks.
- Students may drink only water on the bus; eating is not permitted except for **medical reasons**.
- Students should remember that misconduct or carelessness not only endangers their own safety, but the safety of other passengers.
- Students must not extend their hands, arms, head or objects through bus windows.
- Students shall not open or close the bus windows without the permission of the bus driver/attendant.
- Students shall not throw any item inside or outside the bus while boarding, riding, or leaving the bus.
- Students will not ride on the outside of the school bus at any time or attach any item to the bus.



- Firearms, knives, explosives, breakable glass, or other dangerous objects are not permitted on the bus. Animals, except those animals authorized by an IEP or 504 Accommodation Plan, are not permitted on the bus.
- No item that will block the aisle or is unsecured shall be carried on the bus. Items also cannot take the place of a student in the seat (see "Transportation of Large Articles," pg 12).
- The use, possession, or distribution of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, or any other controlled substance shall not be permitted on the bus.
- Students shall respect the property where bus stops are assigned.
- Passengers shall report damage to the bus from any cause to the driver/attendant, who will report it to the proper school officials.
- **Students and parents/guardians shall be held responsible for malicious destruction to the bus, bus stop location and/or private property.**





SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINARY PLAN

It is the responsibility of the school bus driver to enforce all rules governing the conduct of students on the school bus. The driver shall report student noncompliance with these rules to the principal/designee in accordance with local school district policy.

The following plan is used as a guide for all school sites:

1st Offense . First warning to student regarding loss of future riding privileges with continued offense. Student will be required to sit in front seat for five days.

Notification to parent/guardian.

2nd Offense . One (1) to five (5) day suspension of riding privileges, depending on the seriousness of the infraction.

Notification to parent/guardian.

3rd Offense - Five (5) day minimum suspension of riding privileges. The actual length of the suspension would depend on the seriousness of the infraction. Meeting with parents/guardians will be held.

Serious behaviors will result in suspension of transportation privileges for the remainder of the current school year. These may include but are not limited to:

- **Physical harm to self or any student**
- **Possession and/or use of drugs**
- **Possession and/or use of weapons**
- **Physical harm to the driver**
- **Physical damage to the bus**
- **Bullying**
- **Objects thrown from the bus**
- **Other behaviors that interfere with school bus safety**

In addition to suspension of transportation privileges, legal action against the student and or parents/guardians may be taken. In addition, students may be subject to disciplinary action for violation of District policies while on school buses or at authorized stops.

Transportation to and from school for students who are suspended from school bus privileges is the responsibility of the parents/guardians.



Students receiving modified transportation services may be suspended from the bus. The 504 Committee or IEP Committee must review any suspension of a student with a current 504 Accommodation Plan or IEP. Parent/guardian shall transport their student in the event of bus suspension, unless otherwise determined by a 504 Accommodation plan or IEP.

The Department of Student Transportation shall be notified by the 504 Committee or IEP Committee of any disabilities that might exhibit problematic behaviors while on the bus. Information will be shared with the individual bus driver/ attendant. The Modified Transportation Form should include:

- Problematic behaviors
- Special disciplinary interventions
- Any restrictions
- Health concerns
- Modified transportation justification
- All demographic information requested
- All emergency information requested



STUDENT ROSTERS AND SEATING CHARTS

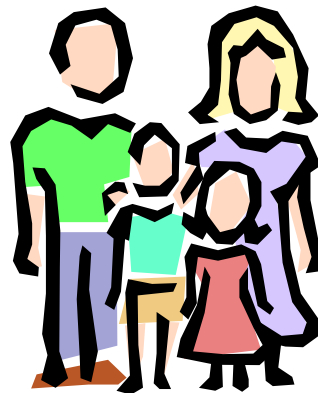
School bus drivers will maintain a student roster and student seating chart for each school bus route. The student rosters and seating charts shall be kept updated. Information of the student rosters shall remain confidential and secured on the school bus. Copies of the student rosters and seating charts are to be maintained by DOST and made available to school officials and law enforcement officers upon request. A copy of the student seating chart shall be provided by DOST to school administrators. Student rosters will contain the following information:

- first and last name of each student
- student address
- student phone number
- emergency phone number

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

To ensure the safety of all students on a school bus, parent/guardian responsibilities include the following:

- **Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child/ren learn and obey the school bus safety rules and use appropriate behavior required on a school bus.** This includes to and from transportation and field/activity trips.
- Parents/guardians shall ensure that their child/ren arrive at the designated bus stop **five (5) minutes prior** to the scheduled arrival time.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for instructing their child/ren about their assigned bus stop and advising them to get off the bus only at their assigned stop.
- Notes and/or calls from parents/guardians requesting that their student be picked up or dropped off at a stop other than his/her regular stop will not be allowed unless for emergency day-care reasons. These requests must be received and approved by DOST.
- **Parents/guardians shall be responsible for any observed damage by their child/ren on the bus, at the bus stop location, or to private property. Restitution may be pursued.**





MODIFIED TRANSPORTATION

Parents/guardians of students who have been **approved for modified transportation services** shall:

- Provide information required, from parents/guardians, on the RRPS Modified Transportation Form.
- Allow three (3) to five (5) working days after the DOST receives the Modified Transportation Form from the 504 Committee or IEP Committee to reconfigure the route and begin transportation services.
- Any changes in the student's assigned school, hours of attendance, and/or specific equipment constitute a change in program and must go through the 504 Committee or IEP committee.
- Any changes in the pick-up and/or drop-off locations shall be submitted to DOST. Three (3) to five (5) days will be allowed to reconfigure the route.
- Have the student ready to board the bus at the assigned pick-up time. The bus will wait three (3) minutes for a student receiving curb to curb service before continuing on the route.
- Parent/guardian shall ensure that a responsible person meets the bus when it is indicated on the Modified Transportation Form that a student cannot be left unattended.
- Parent/guardian shall notify the transportation provider, in advance, if the student does not plan to attend school on any specific day (a full day notice if possible or by 6:00 a.m. of the current day).
- Students receiving modified transportation services may be suspended from the bus. The 504 Committee or IEP Committee must review any suspension of a student with a current 504 Accommodation Plan or IEP. Parent/guardian shall transport their student in the event of bus suspension, unless determined by a 504 Accommodation Plan or IEP.

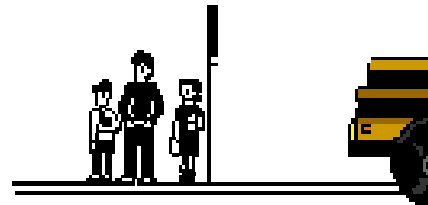




PROCEDURES FOR DELIVERY OF MODIFIED TRANSPORTATION STUDENTS

When delivering a student receiving modified transportation service and the parents/guardians are not present to receive the student, DOST will refer to the student's Confidential Emergency Information form as follows:

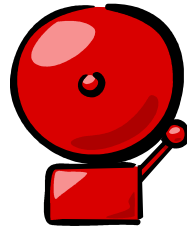
1. If the parents/guardians have authorized that the student can be left unattended, the local transportation provider may leave the student at the delivery location.
2. If the parents/guardians have not authorized that the student can be left unattended, DOST will not leave the student unattended.
 - DOST will attempt to contact the student's parents/guardians at work or at other phone numbers provided, and if necessary, call the alternate contacts listed on the form.
 - While attempting to make contact with the student's parent/guardians or alternate contacts listed on the form, the driver may proceed on the designated route to deliver other passengers on board to their destinations and then return to the student's delivery location.
 - If DOST is still unable to make contact with parents/guardians or with emergency contact listed on the form, the provider will make an effort to transport the student back to the school or to the DOST office. Staff will accept the student and continue to contact parents/guardians or alternate contacts.
3. If RRPS is unable to contact parents/guardians or emergency contacts, the student may be referred to the appropriate personnel for child protective services.





OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

EVACUATION DRILLS



Student emergency evacuation drills or an emergency evacuation demonstration will be conducted **twice each school year** for each route assigned to a school bus. DOST personnel will work with school administrators and teachers to develop emergency evacuation plans which will be effective for students whose disability may impede conventional methods of evacuation.

TRANSPORTATION OF LARGE ARTICLES

For the safety of all RRPS bus passengers, the following shall apply in the transporting of musical instruments or other large articles:

- **Skateboards are prohibited** from being transported on the bus.
- No item shall block the aisle, emergency door, or service door of the bus.
- No item shall be placed in the driver's compartment.
- Items allowed on the bus shall be under the control of the student at all times, be carried on the student's lap or on the floor of the bus, and shall not extend beyond or above the height of the seat in front of the student.
- Parents are encouraged to transport large articles.
- Students needing the assistance of oxygen or other mechanical ventilation devices during their bus ride must have this identified, justified, and outlined on the Modified Transportation Form. All such equipment shall be secured to prevent items from becoming projectiles in the event of an impact.



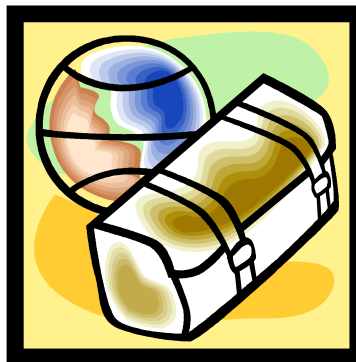
TRANSPORTATION OF MEDICATION

Children cannot transport medication unless there are revisions made in their Health Management Plan to allow it.

If you have any questions regarding this policy please contact your student's school's Health Services Office.

ACTIVITY TRIPS

The transportation of students to school-sponsored activity trips should be in school bus vehicles whenever possible. Only Rio Rancho Public Schools students, sponsors, and chaperones will be transported on school buses for school-sponsored activity trips. A school bus **must** be used any time the school-sponsored activity involves more than **eighteen** (18) passengers or would require **more than two** school-owned or **private vehicles** to transport passengers to the same destination.



In order to promote the safe transportation of students, the use of school-owned vehicles should be on a limited basis. If a vehicle other than a school bus is used the following criteria must be met:

- The rated capacity of the vehicle is **nine or fewer**.
- The sponsored activity involves **eighteen or less** passengers.
- The sponsored activity will require only **two** school-owned vehicles to transport students to the same destination.
- A signed release from the parents/guardians giving permission for the students to participate in the activity and to ride in a school-owned vehicle must be obtained by the sponsor.



- The following is required:
 - Driver must attend the school-owned vehicle class
 - Proof of a valid driver's license
 - A driver background check through motor vehicle records
 - A physical
 - A drug test
 - Records indicating pre-and-post trip inspections of the vehicle
 - A planned route and procedures for loading and unloading students on the route
 - A roster of students to be transported (roster must include name, address, and telephone number for all students.)
- The cargo securement system is designed to ensure that no object is likely to become a flying missile in a crash situation (i.e., use of cargo net or other adequate securement tie-down) or cargo shall be carried in the trunk or in an external cargo area.
- Acceptable vehicles include a vehicle with a rated seating of nine or fewer provided the vehicle meets all Federal Motor Vehicle Safety standard requirements for its category.
- Unacceptable vehicles are vans and/or mini-vans.
- All occupants must have seat belts available and are required to wear them while the vehicle is in motion.
- If an approved school bus with a qualified driver for the activity is not used, the school should consider the value of the activity against the risks involved in transporting the students.

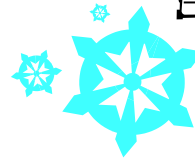


The above documentation **must be submitted** to the school site administration and to the Department of Student Transportation (DOST) **prior** to the activity.



BUS STOPS AND ROUTES

- Notes and/or calls from parents/guardians requesting that their student be picked up or dropped off at a stop other than his/her regular stop will not be allowed unless for emergency day-care reasons. These requests must be received and approved by DOST.
- Students will not be required to walk a greater distance to a bus stop than the walking distance for each grade level as specified by New Mexico State Statute.
- When possible, bus stops will not be established within three city blocks of the transportation boundary. Reasonably placed stops will be determined at the discretion of DOST.
- DOST will accept requests to move bus stops when property damage is occurring at the stop location. All requests to move or add bus stops to a route must be submitted to DOST in writing.
- Complaints regarding route schedules or school bus stops will be addressed to DOST. Complaints regarding discipline on board school buses will be addressed to the principal.
- Drivers will not transport any person who are not students or approved school personnel assigned to their bus while driving regular routes.
- Drivers will not give permission to anyone other than assigned students and/or approved school, transportation, emergency, or law enforcement personnel to board the bus. **Students may not ride a bus other than their assigned bus without permission from DOST.**
- In the pm the bus driver will not be required to wait more than nine minutes after the dismissal bell has rung. The driver and/or attendant will not be allowed to leave the bus to search for unaccounted students. Once the bus departs, the driver will not stop in the loading zone or be expected to return to the school for students who are late for the bus.
- **The driver has the authority to assign students to seats and change assignments through the school year as necessary.**



INCLEMENT WEATHER

The decision to implement an abbreviated day schedule will be made by the Superintendent of RRPS. Information is gathered through the coordinated efforts of many people such as the DOST Executive Director and state, county, and city weather and street departments. Road conditions and the ability of school buses to transport students safely to and from school are the basis of the information.

The abbreviated day schedule is a shortened school day that begins **two (2) hours later than the regular bell schedule** but ends at the regular time. Pick up times at school bus stops will be two hours later than regularly scheduled.

Cleveland & RR High School	9:20 am	
Colinas Del Norte Elem School	9:30 am	
Middle Schools (and CAES)	10:10 am	
Elementary Schools	11:00 am	
Pre-School	No morning Pre-School will be held, but afternoon Pre-School remains on the regular schedule	

The decision to institute an abbreviated schedule will be made and announced through the news media between 5:45 . 6:00 am. In the event that weather conditions worsen and it is necessary to close schools for the entire day, the decision and announcement will be made no later than 9:00 am.

There is no AM pre-school on an abbreviated day. If an abbreviated day is called on a Wednesday, the Elementary School dismissal time will be at the regular+bell schedule.

To get information about school schedules during inclement weather, listen or watch the following radio and television stations:

- | | | |
|---------------|--|------------------|
| KOB· AM 770 | | KOB· Channel 4 |
| KOB· FM 93.3 | | KOAT· Channel 7 |
| KRST· FM 92.3 | | KRQE· Channel 13 |

STUDENT/PARENT TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK

Rio Rancho Public Schools
Department of Student Transportation (DOST)
1804 Idalia Road NE
Rio Rancho, NM 87124

Phone: 505-338-0078
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