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## **Transportation Department – Bus Barn Contact Information:**

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## **1. Eligibility/Ineligibility of School Bus Riders**

- Elementary (Grades K-5): A student whose registered address is one (1) mile or more one-way from the assigned school will be eligible for school bus service.
- Middle School (Grades 6-8): A student whose registered address is one and one-half (1½) miles or more one-way from the assigned school will be eligible for school bus service.
- High School (Grades 9-12): A student whose registered address is two (2) miles or more one-way from the assigned school will be eligible for school bus service.

A student will not be allowed transportation if attending a school outside of the student's attendance area unless specified by an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Transportation for attendance at a school outside of the student's attendance area will be the responsibility of the parents or guardians.

## 2. Preschool Students

1. The student is eligible for bus service **only** if the student has an active IEP. A copy of the IEP will be required prior to starting transportation services and will be kept on file.
2. The student must be transported on a special needs bus or on a regular bus with an attendant present.

### **3. Identification Cards**

High School and middle school students issued a school identification card that are eligible to ride a school bus are required to have their identification card in their possession and to display the card to any GMCS employee, school bus driver, or law enforcement officer upon request. The school bus driver may make discretionary checks of identification cards and will report any unauthorized passengers to the appropriate school administrator. Unauthorized passengers will not be able to board the bus to or from school.

#### Student Identification Card Requirements

Grades K-5 (Elementary): ID card not required

Grades 6-8 (Middle): ID card required

Grades 9-12 (High): ID card required

## **4. Bus Registration**

All students must be registered in order to ride the bus. The registration will take place when the student is registered at school. The student's physical address in Synergy will determine student's eligibility for bus transportation service. All students and parents will be required to read the Student Transportation Handbook. Students and Parents will need to complete, sign and return the Registration Form which acknowledges that both parties have read and understand the Transportation Policies. This information is needed for funding and to ensure student safety in the event of an emergency. A new procedure for the 22/23 school year will require all students to be logged on the bus when boarding the bus at their stop or school. The log on is required for the new GMCS routing software which will allow parents/guardians to receive Services Alerts and Notice (example: if the bus is running late). It will also ensure that students will not be able to board the incorrect bus.

## 5 BUS RULES

Each school year the rules are distributed to students who ride the buses, and they are posted at the front of each school bus for the students to review on a daily basis.

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

- 1st Offense - A warning to the student with a copy of the conduct report issued to the parent/guardian. Parents are expected to help prevent a re-occurrence of the offense;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense - Disciplinary action will be administered at the discretion of the School or District Administration. Possible options include a report to the parents and suspension of riding privileges; and
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense - Automatic suspension of riding privileges will result. The length of suspension will depend on the seriousness of the infraction. A report will be made to the parents.

Any severe disruption including, but not limited to, physical harm to student(s), physical harm to driver, physical damage to the bus, drug, alcohol or weapons possession, will result in automatic suspension of transportation privileges as determined by the building principal.

A bus is an extension of the school and students riding the bus must adhere to the rules and expectations posted on the bus. The same guidelines for disciplinary action specified in the Disciplinary Action Levels section will apply. Riding privileges may be suspended for up to ten days at a time. Expulsion from riding privileges may also occur.

Students who are being very disruptive on the bus may be returned to the school and removed by the school administrator. Parents will be expected to pick their student up from school immediately following notification from the school administrator.

Suspension of a student from bus riding privileges does not necessarily mean the student is suspended from school. Suspension from school does imply automatic suspension of bus riding privileges. In addition to the suspension of transportation privileges, legal action may be taken and may result in charges being filed.

Students with an IEP or 504 plan who are suspended from school transportation may require other transportation means.

## 6. Students Receiving Modified Services

When transporting a student who receives modified services and the parent/guardian is not present at the residence for drop-off, the driver shall refer to the student's Confidential Emergency Information Form and will follow the steps outlined herein:

1. Designated bus stop must be the same for pickup **and** drop off.
2. If the Transportation Form states the parent/guardian has authorized that the student can be left unattended, the driver/attendant may leave the student at their designated drop-off location.
3. If the parent/guardian has not authorized that the student be left unattended, the driver/attendant shall not leave the student alone, but will do the following:
  - a. The driver/attendant shall radio the bus barn and have them attempt to contact the student's parent/guardian via cell, home or work numbers and emergency contacts.
  - b. While attempting to make contact with the parent/guardian, the bus driver may proceed on their designated route in order to drop-off any other student(s) onboard to their destinations and then return to the student's drop-off location.
  - c. If the bus barn is still unable to make contact with a parent/guardian, the driver will transport the student back to the school. The principal or designee will accept the student and continue their attempt to get in contact with the parent/guardian.
  - d. If the school principal/designee is unable to contact student's parent/guardian or other emergency contacts, the student will then be referred to law enforcement or child protective agency.
4. It is not recommended that prescribed medication be transported on any GMCS bus. If there is a need to transport prescribed medication, it will follow these guidelines:
  - a. Appropriately labeled medication will be transported in the student's backpack where the student will maintain possession of it for the duration of their bus ride. Exception: If the student is incapable of being responsible for their belongings, the driver/attendant may care for it until the student arrives at the school or drop-off location, at which time the medication will be given to the school faculty member or parent/guardian.
  - b. No medication will be administered by the driver or the attendant. When necessary, only a health care provider accompanying students or as specified in an IEP or 504 Plan will be authorized to administer the medication.

## **7. Inclement Weather**

The abbreviated day schedule is a shortened school day which begins two (2) hours later than the normal school schedule and ends at the regular time. The most common use of the abbreviated day schedule occurs when severe weather causes streets/roads to be in a condition which would endanger the safety of students being transported. When the two (2) hour delay is enforced, morning pick-up times will also be two (2) hours later. (IE: if your student's pick-up time is normally 7:10am, the student will be picked up at 9:10am). Please remember that road conditions may still be hazardous, and drivers need to operate the bus cautiously, which may prevent them from being on time. Any time in which severe weather conditions make the unpaved roads too muddy/icy to drive on, a parent/guardian is responsible for meeting the bus at the nearest paved or graveled road.

The District will send out an All Call via text message and/or recorded message to the parent's/guardian's phone numbers listed on file at the school to notify them of the delay. It is important to keep your contact information updated in Synergy so that you receive all messages from the District. Television and radio stations, the GMCS website, and the District Weather Line will have information of inclement weather reports. The Hotline can be reached at (505) 721-2233. The decision to delay school will take place no later than 5:30AM. If weather conditions worsen and it is necessary to cancel in person school all students will then be remote, that decision will be made no later than 7:00AM.

## 8. Bus Stops and Routes

1. 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 the State Statute. Parents of students that live further away from the designated bus stop than the walking distance under the State Statute will be eligible to apply for the Feeder Route. Parents can contact the GMCS Transportation Department – Motor Pool Department for information and to obtain an application.
2. The driver will pick-up and drop-off students on the right hand side of the road **ONLY** at each designated bus stop. Students are not permitted to cross the highway in order to load or unload the bus.
3. Notes from a parent/guardian or principal/assistant principal requesting the bus driver drop off a student at a bus stop that is different than their designated drop-off location is not permitted.
4. Drivers will not transport anyone that is not a student, or approved school personnel, registered or assigned to their bus while making regular routes.
5. 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.
6. If a student that is not registered to ride the bus is at an A.M. bus stop. The student will be transported to school, and the driver will notify the dispatcher to let the principal know about the student.
7. In the PM, the driver will not be required to wait more than eight (8) minutes after the school 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 school, the driver will not make any additional stops or be expected to return to the school for students who are late for the bus.
8. It is the responsibility of elementary teachers to have their class to the bus loading area on time. Elementary schools should develop a bus loading check off plan to ensure all students are accounted for and have been loaded on to the correct buses within the eight (8) minutes of the dismissal bell.
9. Complaints regarding route schedule(s) or school bus stop(s) can and will be addressed to either the Supervisor at the Transportation Department or the school Principal. Complaints regarding discipline on board school buses will be addressed to the Principal.

## **9. School Bus Rosters/Seating Charts**

School bus drivers will maintain a student roster and seating chart for each school they transport students to and from. The roster/seating chart will contain the following information:

1. First and last name of each student on the bus
2. Each student's address and phone number
3. Two emergency contact names and phone numbers
4. Student's assigned seat

Information contained on student rosters/seating charts will remain confidential and will remain in the bus. They will be made readily available upon request to school officials and law enforcement officers.

## **10. Transportation of Live Animals and Large Articles**

In consideration of student safety, live animals will not be permitted on any GMCS vehicle unless specified in a student's IEP or 504 Accommodation Plan.

Non-Permitted Items:

- Toys
- Items in glass containers or other dangerous objects
- Skate boards, scooters, rip sticks, etc.
- Band instruments
- Any type of sports equipment (baseball bats, etc.)
- Other large objects that might block the aisle, emergency door or service door

Basketballs, volleyballs, and soccer balls may be taken on the bus as long as it is placed in the student's bag or the student maintains control of it. In the event the driver must confiscate the ball, it will remain in the possession of the Transportation Department until a parent/guardian comes in to retrieve it.

## **11. Evacuation Drills/Emergency Plans**

Student emergency evacuation drills or emergency evacuation demonstrations will be conducted twice each school year. GMCS personnel and school bus drivers will work with school administrators and teachers to develop emergency evacuation plans.

Public safety officers such as firemen and law enforcement will also be invited to participate in evacuation drills as well as be involved in developing emergency plans for buses.

## 12. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

To provide safe bus riding for the student, the following are the responsibilities of their parent/guardian:

- a. A parent/guardian must be present at their student's assigned bus stop if the child is in Pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. If someone is not there to pick up their student, the student will be taken back to the school.
- b. Parent/guardian are fully responsible for the conduct and safety of their student before the school bus arrives for pick up and after it departs once student is dropped off.
- c. Insure that your student arrives at the designated bus stop at least ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled bus arrival time.
- d. Provide protection or supervision for the student when unusual conditions arise beyond ordinary circumstances (such as late bus due to unforeseen circumstances).
- e. Parent/guardian must complete the attached Registration Form and return to the bus driver within 5 school days from the date it was given to the student. If the form is not received within that timeframe, the student will be suspended off of the bus until it has been turned in. Principal's will be notified of these suspensions. The parent/guardian will be responsible for transporting their student to/from school.
- f. Parent/guardian should make sure that their child is wearing proper clothing for the season.
- g. Actively cooperate with school officials and school bus operators regarding appropriate conduct of your child at the bus stop and while walking to and from the bus stop.
- h. Parent/guardian will be held responsible for any observed acts of vandalism of private property by their child while at the bus stop or on the bus. Restitution for damages may be pursued. If so, the student will lose their bus riding privileges until the cost of the damages are paid in full.
- i. Parent/guardian will not be permitted on the bus nor will they be transported to and from school on a bus.
- j. It is not recommended that prescribed medication be transported on any GMCS bus. If there is a need to transport such medication to be used at school during the day, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to insure their student is in possession of it at all times. Please see Section 6 (Students Receiving Modified Services) Sub-Section #3 for further details.

For parent/guardian of students who have been approved for modified transportation services (Special Transportation Instructions), the following are your rights and responsibilities:

- a. Cooperate in the completion of the GMCS Transportation Form by providing emergency contact information of responsible persons to be called in case of an emergency such as

illness, injury, or abbreviated day due to inclement weather when a parent/guardian cannot be reached.

- b. Allow at least three (3) to five (5) business days to implement a new modified transportation service or any changes made to an existing one in regards to pick-up and/or drop-off locations and times. The driver is not allowed to change/modify a route.
- c. Have the student ready to board the bus at the assigned pick-up time. In the case that the driver's route is changed which alters pick-up or drop-off times, the driver, attendant or Transportation Department will contact the parent/guardian so that they are aware of said changes.
- d. Ensure the student has clean diapers if they are not toilet trained and that the student's colostomy bag is not filled to capacity before boarding the bus (if applicable). Transportation will not be provided if a student is soiled upon boarding the bus.
- e. Transport their student when exceptional situations arise which deviates from the established bus service (e.g.: the student needs to be dropped off at a different address temporarily). Per the Special Transportation Instructions Form, the student's drop-off and pick-up address is the only location the driver will stop. If a change needs to be made, the parent/guardian must contact the school administrator to request it. New transportation services will not begin until the updated form is received and given 3-5 days to rearranged transportation. Temporary changes are allowed but only up to a maximum of three (3) days.
- f. Transport their student in the event of a bus suspension.
- g. Make arrangements to have a responsible person meet the bus when it is indicated on the GMCS Special Transportation Instructions form that a student cannot be left unattended.
- h. Notify the Transportation Department or the bus driver in advance or call each day that the student will be absent or if the student does not need to be transported.

### 13. Student Responsibilities

To ensure the safety of the student, the student must be responsible for the following:

- a. Students who are required to walk a distance to meet the bus should walk on the side of the road to their left, facing traffic except on divided or multi-lane roadways.
- b. Students must be at their regular bus stop ten (10) minutes prior to scheduled stop times. The bus driver will not wait for students who are not making an effort to get to the bus.
- c. In the afternoon, the buses will depart from the school eight (8) minutes after the bell has rung, therefore, the student needs to be at the designated bus loading zone promptly.
- d. Bullying will not be tolerated on the bus or at the bus stop by any student.
- e. Students will exhibit safe and appropriate behavior at all times. This means while waiting for the bus, loading and unloading and for the duration of the bus ride.
- f. Students will not be permitted to get on or off at any stop other than their assigned bus stop.
- g. Students will not get on or off the bus while it is in motion. They must remain seated at all times during the bus ride and keep the aisle and exits clear.
- h. Students will occupy the seat assigned to them by the driver. If the bus is equipped with seat belts, the student must wear them.
- i. Students should not tamper with any equipment on the bus (i.e.: emergency door handles, bus operating devices, etc.).
- j. Students will not use profane language or make obscene gestures while on the bus.
- k. Rough or boisterous conduct will not be permitted.
- l. Students will be absolutely quiet when the bus is approaching a railroad crossing and will remain quiet until the bus has made it safely across the tracks.
- m. Weapons, explosives, breakable glass, lighters, or other dangerous objects are not permitted on the bus.
- n. No food or drinks are allowed to be consumed while being transported to and from school (with the exception of special needs students with an IEP).
- o. Students will not open or close the bus windows without the permission of the bus driver.
- p. Students will refrain from placing any and all body parts or objects out of the windows. This also includes throwing objects outside from the window.
- q. Students will exhibit respect, act responsibly, be trustworthy, practice fairness, have a caring attitude, and display good citizenship while on the bus.
- r. Students will keep the bus clean and refrain from throwing items around the bus. Students should remember that misconduct and/or carelessness endangers not only their own safety, but also the safety of the other students on the bus.
- s. The use, possession, or distribution of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, or any other controlled substance will not be permitted while on the bus.
- t. Students and parent/guardian will be held responsible for any malicious destruction made to the bus.

**\*\* Students who are transported in any other GMCS vehicle will follow the same rules/policies\*\***

## **Around every bus is a Danger Zone!**

Please complete, sign and return the attached Registration Form to your student's bus driver within 5 school days.

Thank you in advance for your attention to these details and your cooperation in helping us provide safe transportation for your child. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Transportation Department 505-721-2252 or 505- 721 1191.