

# FAIRHAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK



Office of Student Services

## OVERVIEW

The Fairhaven Public Schools, in accordance with Massachusetts Special Education Law, provide the necessary transportation for children who are eligible for special education in vehicles other than regular transportation vehicles. This is determined by a Team when it is necessary for the student to have transportation in order to receive a free and appropriate public education (see 603 CMR 28.05(5)).



Massachusetts Special Education regulations specify certain rights regarding transportation and are as follows:

1. All IEPs require a statement as to how each child eligible for special education is transported to and from school.
2. If the student does not require specialized transportation as a result of his/her disability, the student will be transported to school, and transportation will be provided in the same manner as it would be for students who are not eligible for special education.
3. Modifications to vehicles will be made in order to allow for the safety and needs of the child when necessary. (example: wheelchair van, 5-point harness, etc.)
4. On occasions when a child's disability necessitates it, special equipment and/or a monitor may be provided.
5. Parents/guardians cannot be required to provide transportation. However in those instances when it has been agreed upon in the IEP, parents/guardians shall be reimbursed for round trips traveled in a direct route between the child's home and school.
6. In-service training for operators of vehicles that transport students who are eligible for special education shall occur at least annually. This will acquaint the operators with the needs of the children they are driving.
7. Unannounced spot checks and inspections of vehicles are to occur at least twice annually.
9. All vehicles will be in compliance with the necessary federal and state safety and equipment laws.
9. The operator, or other responsible individual, will assist a child on and off the vehicle when such assistance is necessary, and as determined by the Team.
10. Every attempt is made to transport students within one hour or less each way. Exceptions are with the written request of a Team and the approval of the Director of Student Services.

We look to parents/guardians for a partnership in implementing these regulations and to provide a safe experience for their child to and from school.

## PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary concern for the Fairhaven Public Schools ("Fairhaven") is that each child receives a safe and appropriate drive to and from school. In order to ensure a safe experience for all, we ask that you read and consider the following:

1. Fairhaven Public Schools requires that the pick-up and drop-off location of students be at the same – consistently – Monday through Friday. While it is understandable that students often like to visit friends, other arrangements by parents/guardians will have to be made. Places of business, work, or parking lots are not acceptable pick-up and/or drop-off locations.
2. Any changes in pick-up or drop-off locations have to be requested in writing and approved by the Director of Student Services three (3) school days prior to the change. The transportation company is not authorized to make such changes. Arrangements made between the family and the driver will not be honored.
3. If a child is moving, the parent/guardian is to notify the Director of Student Services in writing and in advance so that appropriate arrangements and scheduling can occur. This letter needs to be signed and should include the child's name, school, old address, new address, any new phone numbers, and the effective date. Please give at least five (5) school days for any changes.
4. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the transportation company if their child is going to be absent, dismissed early, or returning home with someone other than the transporter.
5. Due to making sure students arrive on time at school, drivers are instructed to wait no longer than three (3) minutes for a child to be ready. All students should be ready at their designated bus stop 5 minutes early than the scheduled arrival time.
6. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to have a responsible individual (preferably an adult) at home to receive their child. Fairhaven will not leave your child unattended if under the age of fourteen or unable to care for themselves. If a person other than a parent/guardian is receiving the child, it is up to the parent/guardian to provide a written list of people, with contact information, authorized to take their child to the school's office. We will not leave any child with someone not authorized by the parent/guardian in writing.

7. Only students can be transported via the special education transporter. Therefore, no parents, guardians, siblings, friends, or other individuals can ride. While drivers are more than accommodating, they cannot provide services other than driving your child to and from school.
8. Food and drinks are not to be consumed while in the vehicle. The risk of a child choking, or other children on restricted diets “borrowing” food from another student, is of constant concern.
9. Please, NO large objects like; toys, balloons, stuffed animals, or other items that could be used either as projectiles or “weapons” will be allowed on the vehicles.
10. Any illegal substances, facsimile substances, or weapons will be dealt with in accordance with appropriate policies, regulations, and laws and are never permitted on special education vehicles at any time.
11. Above all else, safety is our number one concern with every child. Behavioral issues, verbal or physical abuse of the driver, or other children being transported will not be tolerated. Any such incidents shall be reported to the principal, program director, and/or the Pupil Personnel Services Department, and dealt with appropriately.
12. It is critical that both the Student Services Department and the Coordinator of Transportation have an emergency phone number and address of an individual in case the parent or guardian is not at home to receive the child.

NOTE: No child shall be transported on a special education vehicle without a working emergency contact number.

# School Bus Safety Tips for Kids

SAFE  
KIDS  
WORLDWIDE®

**1** Wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before getting on or off.

**2** Use handrails when getting on and off the bus.

**3** Before crossing the street, take 5 big steps in front of the bus, and make eye contact with the bus driver.

**4** Never walk behind the bus.

