



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 2017

# Student Transportation Policy

Chancellor's Directive # 301

Version 01

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Chancellor's Signature

11/16/17  
Date

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## I. Executive Summary

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Originating Office: Office of the Chief Operating Officer	Number: # 301
Subject: Student Transportation Authority: DC Code 50-1702	Date: November 2017 Rescinds: 643.4 Transportation Policies; 643.8 Assignment & Use of Motor Vehicles; 661.2 Safety Standards for DCPS Vehicles- Operators & Passengers.

### A. Introduction

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) is a metropolitan school district and does not provide routine transportation for students traveling to or from school. In certain circumstances, DCPS provides transportation to students who require Special Education/Section 504 services, who are temporarily moved to a different location than their primary school placement (swing space), who are attending extracurricular activities outside of the regular school day, or to attend a field trip.

### B. Purpose

This policy delivers DCPS guidance on transportation of students and specific measures DCPS takes to ensure the safety of all the students. This policy shall apply to circumstances articulated above as well as any other situation involving DCPS transporting students not explicitly stated in this document. Questions about this guidance shall be directed to [dcps.policy@dc.gov](mailto:dcps.policy@dc.gov).

### C. Roadmap

Section II. A. of this policy explains the circumstances in which DCPS might provide transportation to students and procedures surrounding requests for transportation. Section II. B. delivers safety standards to be followed by all DCPS personnel who are involved in the transportation of students.

## II. Student Transportation Policy

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### A. Transportation Eligibility and Procedures

DCPS is in a metropolitan district with a variety of public transportation options, and therefore does not provide routine transportation for students traveling to and from school. However, DCPS recognizes its students may be transported to and from school for a variety of reasons. DCPS students may be transported to and from school as a related service required by their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan. DCPS may provide transportation for students whose school is temporarily moved to a different location, referred to as a “swing space.” Lastly, DCPS may provide transportation for class trips, athletic competitions, or other educational programming during and outside of the regular school day.

#### 1. Special Education Transportation

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) manages special education transportation throughout the District of Columbia. For information about their policy regarding such services, see OSSE’s [Special Education Transportation Services Policy](#).<sup>1</sup> Stakeholders may also call 202-576-5000 if they have questions about special education transportation specifically.

#### 2. Swing Space Transportation

Transportation may be provided to students whose school is temporarily moved to a different location while their school is under construction or being modernized. This temporary school location is referred to as swing space. Transportation to and from school will only be provided if a school’s swing space is both (1) outside the normal boundaries of the school and (2) One (1) mile or more from the school’s regular address. In some cases, even when these two criteria are met, transportation may not be necessary due to proximity to public transit and other factors. DCPS will work with each school prior to a school moving to their swing space to determine transportation needs.

#### 3. School Trips and Extracurricular Activities

Schools may provide ground transportation services for school trips and extracurricular events. For ground transportation, schools should directly contract with a bus transportation vendor approved by the DCPS’ Contracts and Acquisitions team. For a current list of these vendors or questions about using travel vendors/education tour group companies for transportation needs, schools may email [dcpsoca.inquiries@dc.gov](mailto:dcpsoca.inquiries@dc.gov).

The Department of Athletics shall cover travel expenses for member contests and meets scheduled by the Department of Athletics (i.e. league games) as well as certain related practice events. Transportation must be requested in writing, and at least 72 hours prior to a contest, to the Department of Athletics. Other transportation related to athletics or physical education shall be the responsibility of the school as a regular school trip. For additional information, see the DCPS *Athletics Handbook*, available at <https://dcps.dc.gov/sports>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://osse.dc.gov/service/student-transportation-osse-dot>.

### B. Transportation Safety Standards

#### 1. General

Any vehicle that has a seating capacity of 8 or fewer passengers (not including the driver) used by DCPS to transport children must have any children under 8 years old in an appropriate infant, convertible or booster safety seat, and all children under 16 years old in either a CSRS or any kind of seat belt.<sup>2</sup>

#### 2. School Buses

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has consistently maintained that school buses are the safest mode of student transportation.<sup>3</sup> According to NHTSA, School buses should be used to transport students over other forms of transportation. Additionally, buses used to transport pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) children must be equipped with appropriate child safety restraint systems (CRSTs).

#### 3. 15-Passenger Vans and Other Non-School Bus Vehicles

DCPS does not permit the use of 15-passenger vans in the transportation of students because of safety concerns.<sup>4</sup> Use of private vehicles for ground transportation is strictly prohibited and DCPS staff and volunteers should not transport students in their own personal vehicles. Use of ride-sharing services for transportation to and/or from a field trip site is strictly prohibited. Ground transportation is restricted to contracted buses and public transportation.

#### 4. Transportation of Pre-K Students

The preferred method of transportation for pre-k students is a school bus. Each school bus must have at least one bus monitor on board at all times. Further, all pre-K students must be transported in an age, height, and weight appropriate child safety restraint system (CSRS), during school-sponsored travel. A CSRS means any device used to restrain, seat, or position a child in a manner that complies with federal standards.<sup>5</sup> All buses responsible for the transportation of pre-K students must be installed with appropriate CSRSs which meet the standards of federal regulations.<sup>6</sup>

All CSRSs used by DCPS must, at a minimum:

- Meet the specifications of Federal Motor Vehicles Safety Standards (FMVSS) 213 (Child Restraint Systems);
- Have a manufacturer certification label attached which confirms compliance with FMVSS, delineates the make and model of the device, and states the appropriate age/weight range that the CSRS should be used for as well as the expiration date for the CSRS;
- Be secured to the seat using a seatbelt or anchorage that meets the appropriate FMVSS;<sup>7</sup>
- Not be under a recall that recommends non-use of the CSRS;
- Have all parts intact and in working order.

School buses which transport pre-K students must have seatbelts or anchorages installed so that CSRSs can be properly installed.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> DC Code 50-1703.

<sup>3</sup> NHTSA, "School Bus Crashworthiness Research Report," April 2002.

<sup>4</sup> NHTSA, "Fatalities to Occupants of 15-Passenger Vans, 2003-2007," May 2009.

<sup>5</sup> For comprehensive definitions, please see "Head Start Policy and Regulations" available at <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1305-2-terms>.

<sup>6</sup> 49 CFR 571.213 "Child Restraint Systems.": Means any device, except Type I or Type II seatbelts, designed for use in a motor vehicle or aircraft to restrain, seat, or position children who weigh 36 kg (80lbs) or less.

<sup>7</sup> 49 CFR 571.209; 49 CFR 571.225.

DCPS will also ensure that proper training procedures will be implemented for DCPS staff so that CSRSs are properly used and secured. DCPS will verify that contractors transporting pre-K students are using proper procedures for securing children in CSRSs and that the CSRS meets the child's needs based upon their age, height, and weight.

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<sup>8</sup> 49 CFR 571.225.