

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Parent,

We are very pleased to provide you with this pamphlet, which contains important information regarding transportation services provided by Nassau County through the Office of Children with Special Needs.

The Nassau County Department of Health is responsible for the administration of services for children with special needs. Swissport, a company that specializes in transportation services, has been contracted to manage the transportation portion of the program on behalf of the County.

The information in this pamphlet is intended to keep you and your provider agency informed about transportation services and is meant to be a reference guide to answer general questions you may have about the service. It includes information on policies, parent responsibilities, safety issues and weather emergencies, and provides key telephone contact numbers. Please keep this pamphlet and use it when necessary.

Your ongoing cooperation and suggestions are always welcome as Nassau County continually strives to improve services for our young children with special needs.

The Swissport Management Team

For additional information about Nassau County, please consult the Nassau County Government Website:
<https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/>

WHERE TO CALL WITH ANY TRANSPORTATION QUESTIONS

Swissport is under contract with Nassau County to provide efficient transportation management services for the Office for Children with Special Needs. Swissport oversees, monitors and provides enforcement of this transportation service through management of the County's separate

contracts with several transportation service providers. Swissport ensures that transporters comply with all transportation service requirements and contract specifications. Swissport's safety technicians visit provider school facilities, inspect buses, and observe drivers and driver assistants to ensure that all safety precautions and practices are followed by the transporters in the performance of their duties for your child.

Swissport's transportation office is located at:

**2150 Smithtown Avenue
Ronkonkoma, New York 11779
Tel: 631-737-0600 /516-433-4500
Fax: 631-737-4927 /516-931-0939
Hours: Monday - Friday 6:30 AM to 6 :00 PM
Voicemail is available when the office is closed**

THE FOLLOWING TRANSPORTERS SERVICE THIS PROGRAM:

Educational Bus Transportation	516-935-2277
Guardian Bus Company	516-723-3287
We Transport Inc.	516-349-0905
L&M Bus Corp	516-448-9227

Transportation questions related to service should be addressed directly to Swissport, not the County or the transporter. Swissport will assist you with your transportation needs. If you need information regarding a pick-up time or a drop-off time, or if you are reporting that your child will be absent then you should call your transporter directly.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Nassau County Department of Health, Office of Children with Special Needs is committed to assuring that your child receives safe and efficient transportation to the Early Intervention or Preschool Special Education programs he/she is attending. In order to accomplish this goal, your cooperation is requested. Please see that all students being transported are ready to leave fifteen minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. Food, pets, bottles, pacifiers, or toys are not permitted on the bus. Transportable items must be contained in a backpack or lunch box. Medication may not be transported on the bus unless a nurse is escorting the child to the program or service, he/she is attending. In addition, it is essential that an authorized and responsible individual be available at all times to accompany to or receive the child from the door of the vehicle.

Parents must provide emergency drop-off information for each child being transported (**please note, a transportation request for an emergency pick-up cannot be accommodated**) and submit the information to the child's school district prior to the start of transportation services. This emergency information must include a list of the

person(s) to whom you authorize your child to be released. These designees should be located within the **same** school district or in **close** proximity to your child's regular drop-off location. These designees must also have picture identification. Please be sure the information is updated on a regular basis. This information cannot and will not be used for routine changes and will only be used when an emergency prevents you from meeting the bus. In the event of an extreme emergency, a parent must contact the provider school. The designation of an emergency site within the same school district (or close proximity to your child's regular drop-off location) is important because then your child will not be forced to spend unnecessary time on the bus should a situation occur which requires that he/she be taken to the emergency drop-off site. It should be noted that if all else fails and no one is available to meet your child, he/she may have to be taken to a local emergency service location and Child Protective Services may be contacted. Swissport reviews all emergency transportation requests and excessive requests will be reported to the County and may result in an interruption of bus service.

For the safety and well being of other children, it is the responsibility of the parent and the provider school to alert the transportation management team and related personnel regarding all contagious or infectious medical conditions.

Parents are not permitted to ride on the school bus .
GENERAL SAFETY

In the performance of this contract, all transporters must comply with all Federal, State, County, and Town rules and regulations. They also shall abide by applicable transportation and safety regulations promulgated by the New York State Commissioner of Education, New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, and the New York State Department of Transportation.

SESSION START-UP

Before the start-up of transportation services for the summer and the school year program, drivers are required to complete a dry run of all routes and to notify parents of their child's approximate pick-up time. Notification will be made in person if possible. If no one is home when the driver visits, written notification will be left at the home. If you have not heard from your transporter within two days prior to the session start-up, please contact Swissport, at 516-433-4500 or 631-737-0600.

ROUTING

Routes are established before the start of school. Route time is determined not just by distance, but by the location of all children in the program. To keep routes as efficient as possible, usually the furthest child from the school is picked up first and dropped off last. Routes are not arranged to accommodate parents' schedules. **Although there is no state/local law or requirement, our goal is to limit route time to 90 minutes wherever possible.**

Sometimes this is not feasible due to the many factors that impact transportation, such as traffic patterns, adverse weather conditions, road construction, and other unforeseen difficulties. Routes may change during the school year.

PICKUP / DROP-OFF CHANGE REQUESTS

Transportation is to be provided once daily from the location where childcare is provided on a regular basis to the special service or program, and once daily from the special service or program to the location where childcare is provided on a regular basis. Unless there is a specific reason, transportation will be provided to the same location each day of the week and the child will be returned to the same location each day of the week, although the two locations need not be the same. **Short-term pick-up and drop-off changes have a negative impact on all of the children on a route; therefore, these types of changes will not be accommodated.** Long term pick-up /drop-off change requests will normally be implemented within three school days of the receipt of the request unless there are extraordinary circumstances or vehicle requirements which may add additional time. Frequent transportation change requests will be researched and may not be accommodated.

SAFETY RESTRAINT SYSTEM

Each transporter is required to provide a safety restraint system and/or wheelchair hook-up (when required) for each child as requested. Providing specialized seats for children with special needs is the responsibility of the parent, the destination facility, or requesting agency.

The driver or assistant is responsible for buckling a child in a safety restraint system. Due to insurance regulations, it is not routinely permitted for a parent to board the bus to secure their child in a safety restraint system.

DRIVERS

All drivers are required to complete a safety and training program approved by New York State, as well as yearly safety refresher courses. This program includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Pupil Management - Special Needs
- Classroom Instruction
- Written Test
- Defensive Driving Review
- Physical Performance Test
- Road Test

All drivers for this program are thoroughly screened. This screening includes:

- Criminal History Background Check (fingerprinting)

- Drug and Alcohol Screening
- Dept. of Motor Vehicles License Check

All drivers are required to have a physical examination prior to the start of service. The results of the exam are reported on a form prescribed by the New York State Commissioner of Education, which complies with the requirements of Article 19A of the Vehicle and Traffic Law and Section 156.3 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. All regular and substitute school bus drivers must be at least 21 years of age. In addition, all drivers must have a Commercial Driver License and must wear photo ID badges. Drivers are not permitted to make any route changes without Swissport's authorization

DRIVER ASSISTANTS

All driver assistants must be at least 19 years of age and must wear a photo ID badge. They are trained in safety and sensitivity and receive special education awareness training.

All driver assistants are thoroughly screened. This screening includes:

- Criminal History Background Check (fingerprinting)
- Personal Reference Check
- Drug and Alcohol Screening

The driver assistant duties are of a limited nature. They are responsible for:

- Supervising all children on the vehicle.
- Assisting the children on and off the bus, not from the house to the bus and not from the bus to the school. The aides at each school are responsible for assisting the children to and from the school; the parents are responsible for assisting the children to and from their home.

All driver assistants are required to attend training and an annual refresher course. The assistants are instructed in bus safety practices. **They are not qualified to provide medical assistance of any kind.**

Swissport will make every effort to reduce the number of different drivers or driver assistants assigned to your child's bus. However, it is important to mention that your child may have different drivers or driver assistants assigned to their routes. There are circumstances, at times, which are not in our control that would result in changing your child's driver or driver assistant.

WEATHER/EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

In the event that transportation is cancelled during inclement weather, notification will be posted on:

WALK (97.5 FM)
WEBSITE: WALKRADIO.com
Fios Channel 1

Channel 12 NEWS
WEBSITE: NEWS12.com

Most notices of school closings and cancelation of transportation are usually put on the air before 7 a.m. The absence of an announcement means transportation will be provided.

If your school is open and transportation is provided, your driver, having safety as his/her main concern, may be delayed. To avoid further delays please have your child ready for pickup.

Your provider school will distribute yearly inclement weather procedures.

Since the County does not have exclusive use of the vehicles and only has use of the busses during regular scheduled hours, a delayed opening cannot be accommodated. If your school delays their opening for any reason, there will be no transportation to that school.

It is important to be aware of which school district your child's preschool is located in. If that school district closes because of inclement weather, there will be no transportation provided, even if the preschool itself is open.

If you live within a school district that decided to close, transportation will not be provided.

ACCIDENTS

For all accidents, regardless of the severity, the transporter notifies 911 immediately. The transporter will also notify Swissport, the parents, and the provider agency. If there is an accident, Swissport will have coordinated communication with the transporter and the vehicle. Updated information or answers to questions regarding the accident can be obtained by calling the transporter or Swissport.

PARENT MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

The Parental Mileage Reimbursement Program is a transportation alternative available to parents/designees of children receiving authorized services. This program has been widely accepted by parents/designees of children using our special services.

Further information regarding the PMR program can be obtained by contacting your School District or Swissport.

EARLY INTERVENTION

In accordance with the New York State Department of Health Early Intervention Program Regulations Section 69-4.19(b) Transportation: In developing the IFSP, consideration shall first be given to provision of transportation by a parent of a child to early intervention services.

PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

In accordance with the University of the State of New York THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT Office of

Vocation and Education Services for Individuals with Disabilities REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION, Pursuant of Sections 207, 3214, 4403, 4404, and 4410 of the Education Law Part 200, Section 200.16(e)(5)

In developing its recommendation for a preschool student with disability to receive programs and services the committee must identify transportation options for the student and encourage parents to transport their child at public expense where cost-effective.

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

NASSAU COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

OFFICE OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

