

Bergen County Special Services

Adult Services Program Policy

Title: Transportation Policy for Adult Programs

The Board of Education will explore the ability to provide transportation to and from the program site for individuals enrolled in BCSS Adult Programs. Transportation will be provided based on finite resources, a specific catchment area within Bergen County and the availability of buses and drivers internally or through contracted vendors. All transportation shall be provided in accordance with the law, negotiated agreements and in compliance with the following stated guidelines. The priority of the District's transportation service and its contracted vendors is to provide effective and safe transportation to and from the program site for individuals served.

Definition

For the purposes of this policy, the words and terms shall have the following meanings:

"Individual with disabilities" will be interchangeable with individual and individual receiving service.

"District" and "District transportation" shall mean vehicles owned and operated by the Bergen County Special Services School District. Additionally, the District will develop and implement some bus routes utilizing contract vendors and their employees.

"Home representative" will refer to legal guardian(s), parent(s), family member(s) or family designee, community residence personnel or caretaker.

Insurance

The Superintendent shall determine on an annual basis the amount of insurance needed for drivers and vehicles for which the Board has responsibility. Additional coverage shall be maintained to provide insurance for the rare occurrence or emergency which necessitates authorized personnel to transport an adult in a private vehicle.

Service Criteria

Transportation services will be explored for Individuals attending a BCSS Adult Program through Medicaid funding. Transportation service is dependent upon existing bus routes, available and adequate space on the vehicle, current length of the bus ride, potential impact to current passengers. The catchment area is five miles from program site within Bergen County.

All individuals utilizing BCSS transportation or its contracted vendors must be able to ride the bus safely and independently. Individuals must be able to follow simple safety instructions and evacuate safely. District and contracted routes will operate without bus aides. If at any time the actions and/or vocalizations of an individual present a safety concern by disobeying or distracting the driver, or put other passengers at risk or under undue duress, transportation service may be suspended. The decision to suspend service temporarily or permanently is made by the Coordinator of Adult Services or designee in conjunction with the contracted vendor's safety officer/supervisor and/or the Bergen County Special Services Transportation Manager.

Transportation is door to door in the morning and afternoon. Any individual needing assistance to and from the vehicle must make arrangements for the home representative to provide this assistance. The driver cannot leave the vehicle and adult passengers at any time.

Upon arriving at the residence the driver will wait two to three minutes for the individual to come out of the house. The driver cannot beep the horn based on local noise ordinances. If after two to three minutes the individual has not come out of the house, the driver will drive away and continue the route. The driver will not be able to return; therefore, it is anticipated the individual may need to explore other travel options for that day.

The home representative must be available to acknowledge the arrival of the vehicle before the driver will leave. In the event the home representative is not available, the driver may wait or continue the route and return when the other individuals have been dropped off. This will be done in an emergency; however, if this should happen more than twice transportation may be suspended until the home representative has been able to schedule and implement the appropriate arrangements.

The legal guardian and home representative may choose to clarify in writing the individual served has access to the house and can enter the house independently, allowing the driver to observe the individual enter the house and resume the route.

Vehicle Requirements

1. All vehicles used to transport individuals attending the Bergen County Special Services adult programs shall comply with all applicable safety and licensing regulations of, and must be in compliance with, State of New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission regulations.
2. Documents of liability insurance will be maintained in the business office/transportation department.
3. Documentation of valid registration will be maintained in the vehicle.
4. Copies of emergency information on individuals will be kept in the vehicle.
5. Vehicle seating shall not exceed the maximum capacity as determined by the number of seats, seatbelts and if appropriate the wheelchair devices. Seating shall also be sensitive to individuals seated comfortably in a school bus.
6. Seatbelts or other proper/approved restraint shall be used for the driver and all passengers at all times while the vehicle is in transit.

7. Vehicles will be maintained in safe operating condition.
8. The BCSS transportation office shall develop a preventative maintenance system and inspection schedule for all vehicles owned and operated by the District. The District shall conduct a quarterly assessment of the vehicle by a certified mechanic. Additionally, all drivers will complete a pre inspection checklist assessing the condition of the vehicle each time it is used
9. All vehicles used to transport individuals shall be equipped with the following:
 - a). 10: BC dry chemical fire extinguisher
 - b). First Aid kit to include:
 1. Antiseptic;
 2. Rolled gauzed bandages;
 3. Sterile gauze bandages;
 4. Adhesive paper or ribbon tape;
 5. Scissors;
 6. Adhesive bandages (i.e. Band-Aids)
 7. At least 3 portable red reflector warning devices;
 9. Snow tires, all weather tires or chains when weather conditions dictate.

Note: School buses are not equipped with spare tires and jacks; however, the District's procedure is to respond to any roadside emergency by sending another driver and bus to the location. The same procedure is followed when a shuttle bus is used for transportation services and/or community based activities. Additionally, the District employs an ACE Master Certified Technician to assist in this area.

Transportation Routes

Routes shall be developed paying close attention to proximity to program, economic factors, logical configurations of route and amount of time each person spends on the bus. Specific catchment areas will be established typically within five miles of the program location. Parent or legal guardian requests for specific times may be considered on an individual basis. These requests; however, will not supersede route decisions based on economic factors, logical configuration of route, amount of time on the bus and geographical considerations. Additionally, consideration of any individual request shall take into account any hardship to other passengers on the route and family members as a result of any change(s).

Driver Responsibilities

1. Drivers are responsible for the safety of all passengers.
2. When transporting individuals home each day, the driver will wait until the individual has entered the house or a home representative has made their presence known to the driver.
3. At no time shall the driver leave an individual alone on a bus.

4. Drivers are responsible for notifying the Transportation Department if the route is running 15 minutes late or more. The BCSS Transportation Office will contact home representatives. BCSS drivers have emergency contact information and can contact home representative as well.

Contracted vendors are responsible to contact the program's main office if the route is running 15 minutes late or more. Contracted vendors have the emergency contact information for all individuals on their bus routes.

5. BCSS drivers are responsible for following the route developed by the Transportation Manager. Any changes to the routes must be approved by the Transportation Manager and the Coordinator of Adult Services.
6. BCSS drivers and/or any aide will adhere to District Policies 8630 Bus Driver/Bus Aide Responsibility and 8635 Student Transportation Vehicles and School Buses.

Accident and Incident Emergency Procedures

1. Incidents on the bus will be documented by a BCSS or contracted vendor incident report. Any reported incident above a level C will be documented as per Division Circular # 14: Reporting Unusual Incidents.
2. In the event of a bus accident, 911 and the Bergen County Sheriff's Office will be contacted. Individuals will receive medical care based on assessments of first responders on the scene, or will be transported to program. While at program, individuals will be assessed by BCSS nursing staff. Legal guardians and any appropriate family member/caretaker/stakeholder will be notified of the incident/accident as specified in Stephen Komnino's Law.
3. The District's business and transportation office will work in tandem to inform the District's insurance carrier and obtain any police report.
4. It is the responsibility of the District's Transportation Office to review emergency procedures with drivers. Contracted vendors are responsible for same.

Suspension of Transportation Services

Situations that present a health and safety concern and have the potential to impact the well-being of passengers and/or the bus driver may necessitate a temporary suspension of bus services.

Examples of situations that may result in a temporary suspension of transportation services include, but are not limited to:

- a). Incidents of physical aggression towards another passenger or the bus driver;
- b). Incidents of throwing any object(s) that have the potential to cause harm to another passenger or the bus driver;
- c). Inability or refusal to following safety guidelines and procedures (i.e. remaining seated while bus is moving, wearing a seat belt, stopping unsafe behavior, evacuating the bus);

- d). Inability or refusal to wear a seat belt consistently while the bus is in transit;
- e). Inability or refusal to remain seated while the bus is in transit;
- f). risk of elopement; and
- g). Screaming and loud vocalizations that have the potential to distract the driver and distress fellow passengers (i.e. acting out behavior and emotional upset).

Bergen County Special Services staff will make every effort to partner with the adult, home representatives and stakeholders to resolve a situation safely, effectively and in a timely manner. BCSS staff members will work with the individual on intervention strategies, coping skills and introducing preferred activities for the bus ride which may assist the individual to remain on the bus. BCSS staff members will assist passengers to cope with the intent to greatly reduce or extinguish behaviors and vocalizations that may cause distress and upset. If a situation cannot be resolved and passengers and driver remain at potential risk, the District reserves the right to permanently suspend transportation service to the individual.

The legal guardian/home representative/stakeholders will be notified of any incident or behavior that may impact the ability of the individual to receive transportation services from the District. This notification will serve as a warning with all parties understanding how and when a permanent suspension may take place.

If the suspension is temporary, parties will be informed of any requirement or action necessary for reinstatement of transportation services. If it has been determined that the suspension cannot be temporary, for whatever reason, parties will be informed. If any party is not in agreement, they will be advised of the District's appeal process.

The individual, guardian and stakeholders can appeal the decision through the District's central administration office located at 540 Fairview Ave, Paramus, NJ. A written appeal can be sent to the Districts' Director of Instruction. The appeal should include why the individual no longer poses a safety concern and /or what supports can be provided to ensure the safety of the individual, driver and other passengers (i.e. individual's budget can pay for 1:1 aide).

5. Situations that impact the effective and timely completion of the bus route may result in temporary suspension of service include, but are limited to:

- a). Consistent lateness for established morning pick up times.
- b). Family representative or designee assigned to meet/be home at the time of drop off is unavailable when the bus arrives in the afternoon. The program does not have permission from the legal guardian to drop the individual off at the house regardless of the absence of a home representative. When this happens the driver will call appropriate emergency numbers and remain at the house with the individual and other passengers. The driver may continue on the established route and return to the house in the hope that a home representative has arrived

at the residence. If the home representative still has not arrived the driver will make every effort to remain at the residence or transport the individual to local prescient.

The BCSS Transportation Office and/or Coordinator of Adult Services will alert the home representative that the driver is unable to wait at the house. If the issue cannot be resolved transportation may be temporarily suspended until the family has made alternative arrangements. Once the guardian has resolved the issues, transportation can resume. The District understands that an unanticipated emergency may prevent the home representative from arriving at the residence and will make decisions on transportation accordingly.

Inclement Weather and Emergency Closings

In the event of inclement weather or a facility emergency all home representatives will be contacted through emergency contact information provided to the program. All home representatives must be reached for any bus to be dismissed. In the event a home representative cannot be reached the bus and all its passengers will remain at the program. It is the guardian and home representative's responsibility to ensure current emergency contact information is on file and consistently updated. Additionally it is the home representative or designee's responsibility to be available when inclement weather is expected.

An individual may be dropped off at home without the home representative present if there is written permission authorizing the District to do so.

For individuals receiving transportation services to and from the program by community provider agencies, designated drivers will be responsible to pick up individuals in the time frame specified by the District. If drivers are more than 30 minutes late or two occasions the Director of the Residential Provider Agency director will be notified that the individual may not be able to attend program when inclement weather is expected. It is important for each community residential provider to have in place timely transportation when road conditions worsen.

Home representatives and appropriate stakeholders have the option of participating in the District's emergency phone chain and robo call system. This request can be made to the Program Secretary.

Early Dismissals for Staff Development Training and Holidays

1. Based on the *Twelve (12) Month Adults Services Program Calendar* the program may dismiss at 1:00pm due to staff development activities scheduled for the afternoon. Staff Development training days are listed on each year's calendar. Home representatives receive copies of the upcoming calendar each spring. Additionally, home representatives will receive reminders of Staff Development training activities prior to each scheduled event.

Community residence personnel receive copies of the upcoming calendar each spring. Community residence personnel will receive multiple written and verbal reminders of Staff Development training activities and early dismissal times. Additionally, early dismissal information is posted in various locations throughout the lobby and main office.

In the event community residence personnel do not pick up the individual(s) at the designated time, BCSS personnel will not attend the scheduled training in order to provide support and supervision to remaining individuals. This may require certain BCSS staff members to remain on site and not travel to training locations.

If community residence personnel are more than 20 minutes late the Coordinator of Adult Services or designee will contact the residential supervisor or Executive Director to inform him/her of late arrival and the importance of adhering to established pick up times on scheduled Staff Development training days.

In the event community residence personnel are 20 minutes late or more on another Staff Development training day, the community residence supervisor or Executive Director will be contacted. The supervisor/Executive will be informed the individual cannot attend program on the next scheduled Staff Development training day until timely transportation can be arranged.

2. The adult programs dismiss at 11:45 am before the Thanksgiving and Winter Recess. These dates are clearly marked on the *Twelve (12) Month Adult Services Program Calendar*, multiple reminders are provided to home representatives and community residence personnel.

In the event community residence arrive 20 minutes or more after the designated time, the supervisor and/or Executive Director will be notified that arriving late at the next designated early dismissal may jeopardize the individual's attendance in program on the days scheduled to dismiss at 11:45 am. The Coordinator of Adult Services may need to temporarily suspend services because the community residence provider agency cannot adhere to the program schedule.