



## School Transportation for Students Guidance

### Introduction

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) delivers this guidance to articulate the practices and procedures for transporting students to school or another location for educational purposes or extracurricular activities. DCPS resides in a metropolitan district and therefore does not provide routine transportation for students traveling to school. However, DCPS may transport students as a related service as part of their Individualized education plan (IEP) or 504 plan. DCPS also provides transportation for students whose school is temporarily moved to a different location. Lastly, DCPS may provide transportation for class trips, athletic competitions, or other educational programming during and outside of the regular school day. This guidance shall apply to circumstances articulated above as well as any other situation involving DCPS transporting students not explicitly stated in this document. Question about this guidance shall be directed to [dcps.policy@dc.gov](mailto:dcps.policy@dc.gov).

### School Buses

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has consistently maintained that school buses are the safest mode of student transportation.<sup>1</sup> School buses should be used to transport students over other forms of transportation, including 15-passenger vans. Additionally, buses used to transport pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) children must be equipped with seat belts.

### 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.<sup>2</sup> 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) 1 mile or more from the school's regular address. In some cases even when these two criteria are met, transportation may still not be necessary due to proximity to public transit and other factors. DCPS will work with each school's School Improvement Team prior to a school moving to their swing space to determine when DCPS provided transportation is unnecessary.

### Seat Belts for Pre-K Students

All buses responsible for the transportation of pre-K students must be installed with seat belts, which meet the standards of federal regulation.<sup>3</sup> Every pre-K student must be secured in one of these seat belts during school-sponsored travel.

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<sup>1</sup> [NHTSA, "School Bus Crashworthiness Research Report," April 2002](#)

<sup>2</sup> This temporary school location is referred to as Swing Space.

<sup>3</sup> 49 CFR 571.213 "Child Restraint Systems"

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## **15-Passenger Vans and Other Non-School Bus Vehicles**

DCP does not permit the use of 15-passenger vans in the transportation of students because of safety concerns.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, DCPS staff and volunteers should not transport students in their own personal vehicles.

### **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, please visit:

<http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/OSSE%20Transportation%20PolicyV07292014.pdf>.

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