

Busing Issues 101



PRESENTED BY:

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Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn



Agenda



What is Advocates for Children

Types of Busing & Eligibility

Busing for Students with Disabilities

Busing for Students in Temporary Housing & Foster Care

Exceptions to General Bus Eligibility

NYCSA Portal & Bus Tracking App

Getting Help



What is Advocates for Children (AFC)?



AFC is an independent agency that protects the rights of all NYC students.

Our Services:

- Helpline: **1-866-427-6033** (Mon-Thurs, 10am – 4pm)
- Workshops and trainings
- Free legal services to low-income families
- Guides and resources: www.advocatesforchildren.org
- Policy & Impact Litigation



Types of Busing & Eligibility: Stop-to-Stop Busing



Picks up students at a designated stop on an existing bus route

Based on grade and distance and if bus available

- Grades K-2 students living more than 0.5 miles from school
- Grades 3-6 students living more than 1 mile from school

Public schools in the same district as family's residence

Non-public, charter and city-wide programs in the same borough as family's residence

Possible to add bus stop to an existing route



Types of Busing & Eligibility: Curb-to-School Busing



Picks up student at the curb by their home and drops them off at school

Available for Students:

- Transportation on their IEP or 504 plan
- OPT approved medical exception

Sometimes referred to as “specialized transportation”

Need to submit request for “alternate drop-off” to receive busing to another location after school



OMNY Cards for Students



Available for all students who live more than 1/2 mile away

Provided at student's school

Four rides daily---any place any time!

Including weekends and vacations

Tap-and-go for NYC Transit



Busing for Students with Disabilities



- Not all students with IEPs are eligible for busing
- Students **with bus transportation on their IEPs** are eligible for specialized busing or “Curb-to-School” busing
 - If listed on IEP, busing will be provided with any accommodations listed under transportation in the IEP
- Travel Time must be reasonable and is subjective depending on the location of the student’s home, school and traffic

SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATION TO ADDRESS NEEDS OF THE STUDENT RELATING TO THEIR DISABILITY

☐ None.

☒ Student needs special transportation accommodations/services as follows:
Transportation from the closest safe curb location to school.



Bus Accommodations for Students with Disabilities



Bus Paraprofessional

Specialized Vehicle

- i.e. smaller bus

Medical or Nursing Services

- Will require additional medical documentation

Limited Travel Time

- For students who need routes less than 60 minutes

Climate Control

- i.e. air conditioning

Porter Services

Safety Vests

Car Seats



Bus Accommodations for Students with Disabilities



- Some medical accommodations on the bus may require a doctor to complete forms (Medical Accommodations Request Form or [MARE](#)) before the IEP meeting to add the accommodations to the IEP
 - Generally, a **new** form is required for **each** school year
- A representative from the Office of School Health (OSH) must review the medical documentation and may be required to participate in the IEP meeting when an IEP team is considering the following types of Specialized Transportation Accommodations:
 - Transportation Nursing Services
 - Transportation Paraprofessional for reasons **other than social-emotional**
 - ✦ Medical documentation is **NOT** required when the reason for the bus paraprofessional is social-emotional/behavioral related to the student's disability
 - Travel Time Limitation, if the maximum travel time stated by the student's physician is less than 60 minutes
 - Route with Fewer Students
 - Climate Control
 - 5-Point Safety Harness / Safety Vest
 - Car Seat
 - Other accommodations that may impact the type of vehicle for the student.



Bus Accommodations for Pre-K Students with Disabilities



- Children in Pre-K and Early Intervention programs automatically receive specialized busing if they are recommended to receive instruction in a special class in a specialized school or a special class in an integrated setting
 - Entitled to busing even if it is not listed on the Pre-K IEP!
- Additionally →
 - An approved Child Safety Restraint System (CSRS, car seat or integrated seat) when necessary
 - Assistance to be properly secured in the CSRS or bus seat
 - An attendant who remains on the bus at all times
- Any accommodations must be listed on the IEP



Transportation for Students in Temporary Housing & Foster Care



All Students in Temporary Housing are entitled to transportation

- Busing or OMNY Cards
 - While residing in temporary housing
 - Until the end of the school year in which they transition into permanent housing
 - Plus, another year if they will be entering the last grade offered at their school

All Students in Foster Care are entitled to transportation

- Busing or OMNY cards if busing is not available



Transportation Options for Students in Temporary Housing & Foster Care



Student MetroCards

- OMNY Cards
- 4 rides per day
- All day, every day
- Works until next school year

Parent MetroCards

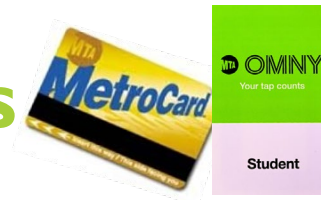
- Monthly/weekly cards for parents of students in any grade (3K-12th) if their child is not being bused and they accompany their child to school
- Parents of newly routed students who need cards until busing begins

Busing

- **Grades K-6**
- **Grades 7-8 with an IEP** without busing on their IEP
- 3-K and Pre-K **if** there is an available route
- *Remember! Students with an IEP that recommends busing*



Accessing OMNY/MetroCards



- Request from **School-Based STH Liaison**

- **Students** in temporary housing can get a full fare Student MetroCard regardless of distance traveled.
- **Parents** of students in temporary housing in grades 3K-12 are eligible for a free monthly MetroCard from their child's school if their child is not getting busing.

- Parents can also get free MetroCards from [STH Regional Managers](#) or [STH Community Coordinators and Family Assistants](#) to get to school events (for example, parent-teacher conferences) or while they are waiting for busing to be routed.



Busing for Students in Temporary Housing



Busing on their IEP

- School must update student's address in ATS
- Once updated, student is automatically routed

DHS Shelter

- Students in DHS shelters more than 0.5 miles away from their school are **automatically** routed once they enter shelter

Other Forms of Temporary Housing

- Domestic Violence (DV) Shelters, non-DHS shelter/transitional shelters, doubled-up, hotel/motel, transitioning into permanent housing
- School must update student's address in ATS
- An [exceptions request form](#) must be completed



Exceptions to General Eligibility



Joint Custody

Hazard

Victim of
Crime/Order of
Protection

Medical
Accommodations

Order of
Protection

Victim of a Crime



Exception Request Form

1

Parent/Guardian Information

First Name *

First Name

Last Name *

Last Name

Email *

Email

Contact Number *

eg: () - - - - ext - - - -

Contact Preferences

☐ Email

☐ Phone

Are you submitting this on behalf of someone else? *

Yes

Contact First Name *

Enter your answer

Contact Last Name *

Enter your answer

Contact Email *

Enter your answer

Contact Phone Number *

Enter your answer

2

Student Information

Student ID *

Student ID

Student detail fields below will be auto populated (if you are logged in) based on student ID

First Name *

Student First Name

Last Name *

Student Last Name

Select School *

Select School

Relationship to Student *

Select

Student's Home or Residential Street Address *

Enter your answer

City/Borough *

Enter your answer

Note: Families in Domestic Violence shelters should enter the PO Box ONLY.

State *

Enter your answer

ZIP Code *

Enter your answer

3

Technology Type

Hardware

Network

Software

Transport

4

Additional Information

Please remember to fill out one application per child; for example, if there are two siblings, please fill out one application for each sibling.

Please select the reason for the request *

Student in temporary housing

Does this child currently receive busing? *

Select

If the child is 5 years old or younger, enter weight of child

Enter your answer

This is used to determine the potential need for a car seat.

Does the child's sibling currently receive busing?

Select

Add attachment

- For students in temporary housing and foster care completing this form, additional documentation is not needed
- For all other circumstances, additional document may be required



Exception Request Form



- Make sure address has been updated if needed to process busing!
- If families have NYCSA access, they should log in before submitting Exception Request
 - Track status of request through NYCSA
- If family does not have NYCSA access, complete form as guest and **save reference number**
- If more info is needed, OPT will contact family first, then follow up with person who submitted form on their behalf.
 - Help families monitor the status of the ticket and check email frequently
- If you have questions about the status of an exception request or it has been rejected and you need an explanation, email BusingExceptions@schools.nyc.gov and include:
 - Request reference number
 - Student Name
 - If available, OSIS (student ID) and DOB



New York City Students Account (NYCSA) Portal



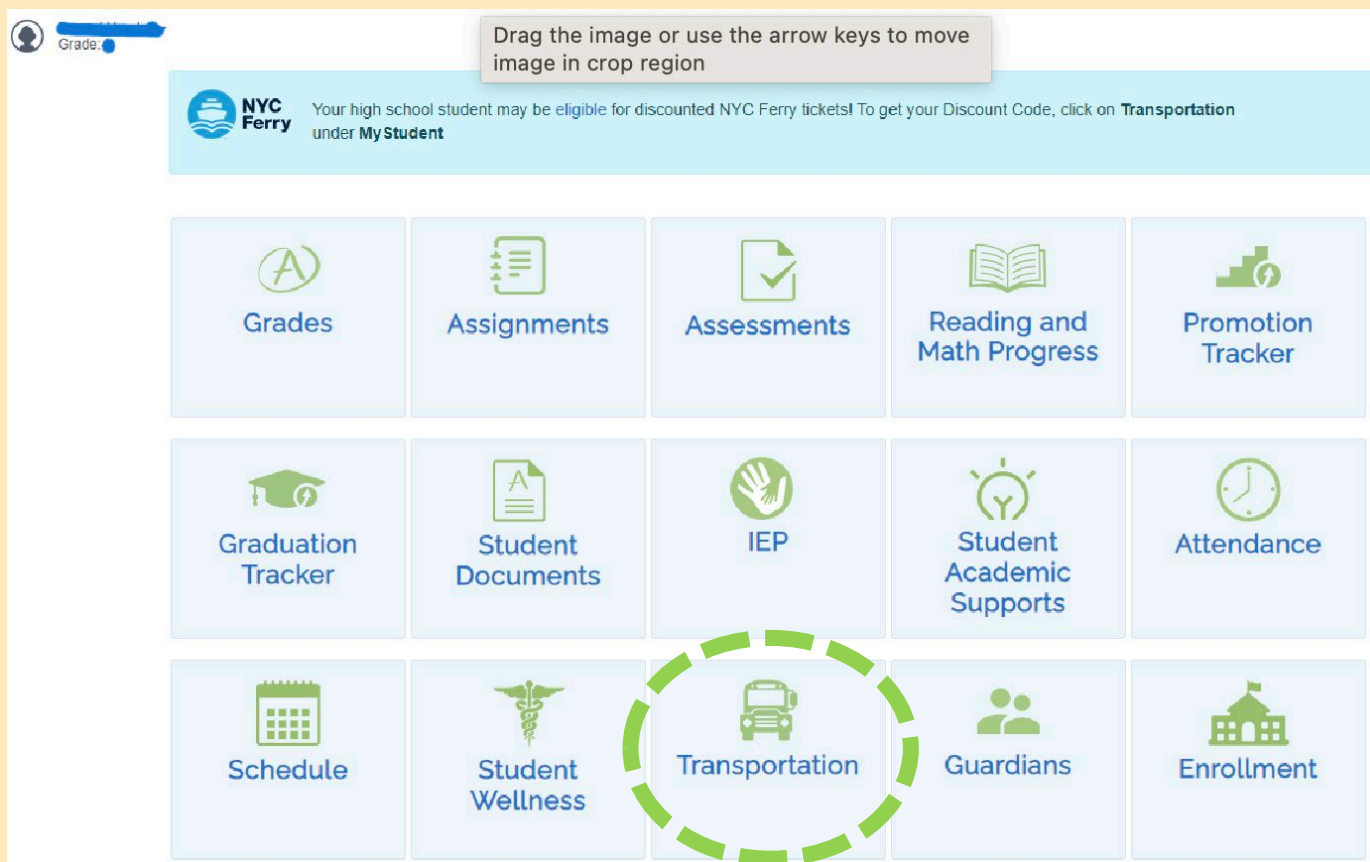
- Directions on how to set up account available:
<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/student-journey/nyc-schools-account>
- You need an account creation code to link a student to your account
- If you do not have one, ask your child's school





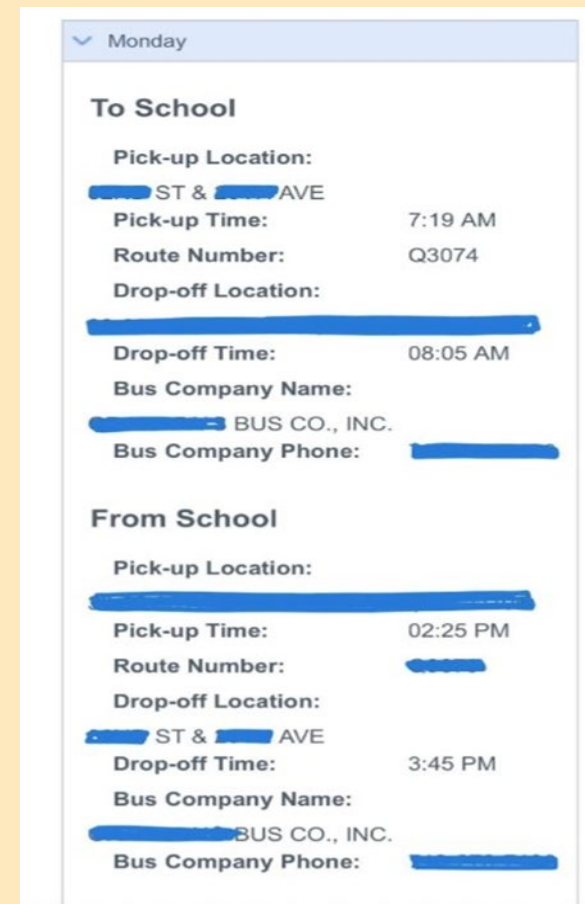
New York City Students Account (NYCSA) Portal

Accessible on Mobile App or Computer



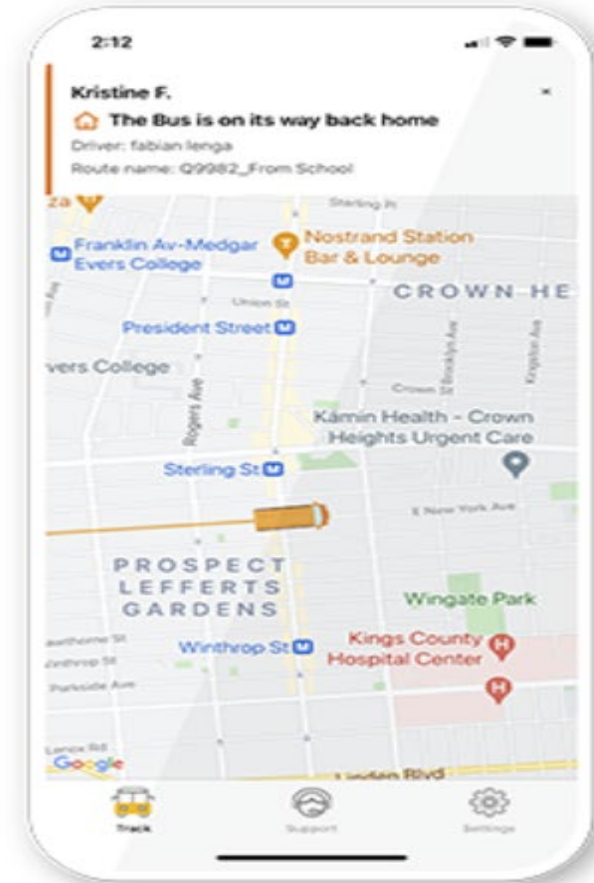
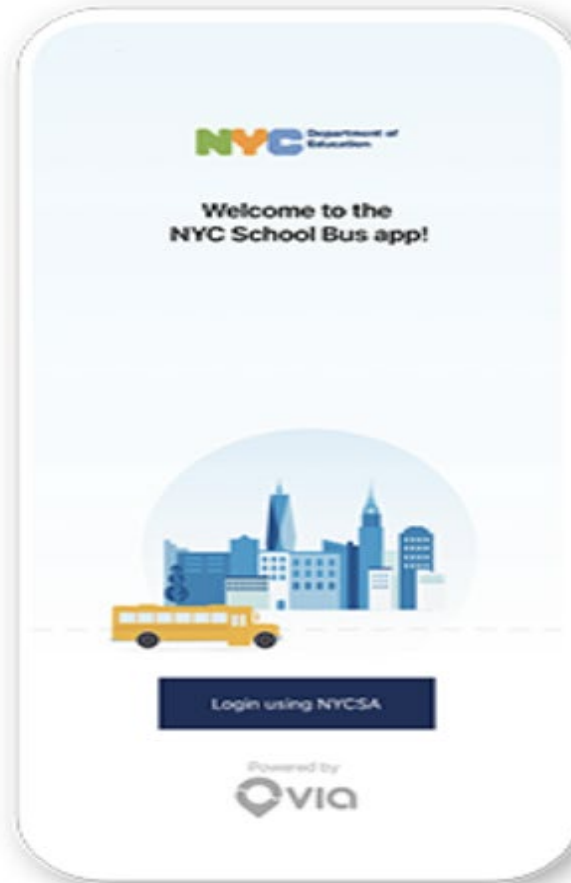
Bus Route
available on
NYCSA

TIP! OPT will **not**
give bus route via
email so use
NYCSA!





Tracking Your Child's Bus with VIA!



<https://doe.app.ridewithvia.com/schoolbus/login>



Help! I do not know my child's bus route, pick-up or drop off time



- For your child's bus route, call your child's school or check under "transportation" on your [New York City Schools Account \(NYCSA\)](#)
- The bus company should call you with pick-up and drop-off information
 - If they do not call, contact the bus company directly
 - The phone number should be listed on NYCSA with the route number
 - ✦ [School-Age Bus Companies](#) and [Pre-K and Early Intervention Bus Companies](#)
 - ✦ Make sure you have your child's route number when you contact the bus company
- If you cannot reach the company, contact OPT at 718-392-8855 or [online](#) and make a complaint. Ask for the complaint number.
- Contact your district's [Transportation Liaison](#), include the complaint number(s), and tell them you cannot reach your bus company to confirm pick up time.
- Families of children receiving busing for Early Intervention and preschool special education should contact the DOE at EarlyChildhoodBusing@schools.nyc.gov and their [CPSE office](#)



Help! The bus has the wrong pick-up location



- Contact your school's Transportation Coordinator and confirm that the Ridership Report shows the correct address.
- If it does not have the correct address, ask the school to update their system (ATS) with the correct address and if necessary, the special education system, SESIS.
- If you reside at a confidential address, ask the Transportation Coordinator to make sure that your PO Box is correctly listed in ATS and if necessary, SESIS.
- If everything is accurate in ATS/SEIS, contact your district's Transportation Liaison and ask them to give the bus company the correct address.
- If your student attends a charter, private, or non-public school, contact both the CSE and your district Transportation Liaison to correct the address



Help! My child's bus is late to school or not coming at all or picking up too early or the route is too long



- Call both the bus company and OPT to make a complaint.
 - OPT: call 718-392-8855 or submit a complaint [online](#)
 - Make a complaint every time you have an issue!
 - Get a complaint number each time!
- Ask the school's Transportation Coordinator to make a complaint with OPT too!
- If the issue is not resolved within a week, your district's [Transportation Liaison](#), include the complaint number(s), and request a new route.



Help! My child qualifies for busing but does not have a route



- For stop-to-stop bus students: contact your school's Transportation Coordinator and your district's [Transportation Liaison](#)
- For students with IEP-mandated busing, contact your school's Transportation Coordinator and district's [Transportation Liaison](#)
- If your student has IEP-mandated busing and attends a charter school or non-public school, contact the [Committee on Special Education](#) (CSE)
- For students in K-6 and students in 7th and 8th grade with IEPs that don't already include busing who live in a DHS shelter, contact the shelter's STH Family Assistant, shelter-based Community Coordinator, and STH Regional Manager.
- For students in K-6 and students in 7th and 8th grade with IEPs that don't already include busing who live in another form of temporary housing, are moving into permanent housing, or students in temporary housing in 3-K or Pre-K, make sure an [Exceptions Request](#) has been completed.
 - If a busing request was filled out but has not been approved after 7–10 business days, email BusingExceptions@schools.nyc.gov, the STH Regional Manager, and [Transportation Liaison](#)



Help! My child is not receiving their IEP-mandated bus accommodations



- If the student is not receiving accommodations on the bus, like a bus paraprofessional, contact specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov.
 - Include the child's name and DOB and/or student ID number, parent/guardian's name, school name and what accommodation is not being implemented
 - If your child attends a charter school or non-public school, include the [CSE](#)
- If your student is not receiving their IEP-mandated accommodation of a nurse on the bus or their route does not meet limited time travel, contact OPT (718-392-8855 or [online](#)), your district [Transportation Liaison](#), and specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov



Help! I am waiting for busing but I need to take my child to school



- All students that live more than 0.5 miles away from their school are entitled to OMNY cards
- Parents for students in temporary housing or foster care are eligible for MetroCards regardless of their child's age
 - School's transportation coordinator can provide cards to families
- If a student is eligible for busing based on their IEP, temporary housing or foster care status, they may be eligible for [prepaid rideshare](#)
- For students with IEP busing, in foster care or who live in temporary housing, you may also be eligible for reimbursement if you have to spend money on transportation.
 - Save your receipts and submit a [Request for Reimbursement](#) via [SupportHub](#)



Rideshare Eligibility



IEP Busing

- 7 days after address has been updated
- Immediately if no route is available

Students in temporary housing/foster care

- 10 days after busing has been approved

IEP Accommodations

- Immediately if no bus paraprofessional/nurse



How to Access Rideshare



IEPs mandating transportation paras or nurses who aren't available, should see a code in NYCSA



Others should work with their school's Transportation Coordinator



With code in hand, book directly through NYCSA or call 212-426-8000



Book 2 trips (4 rides) / day with the voucher code with the school as the am drop-off and pm pick-up spot.



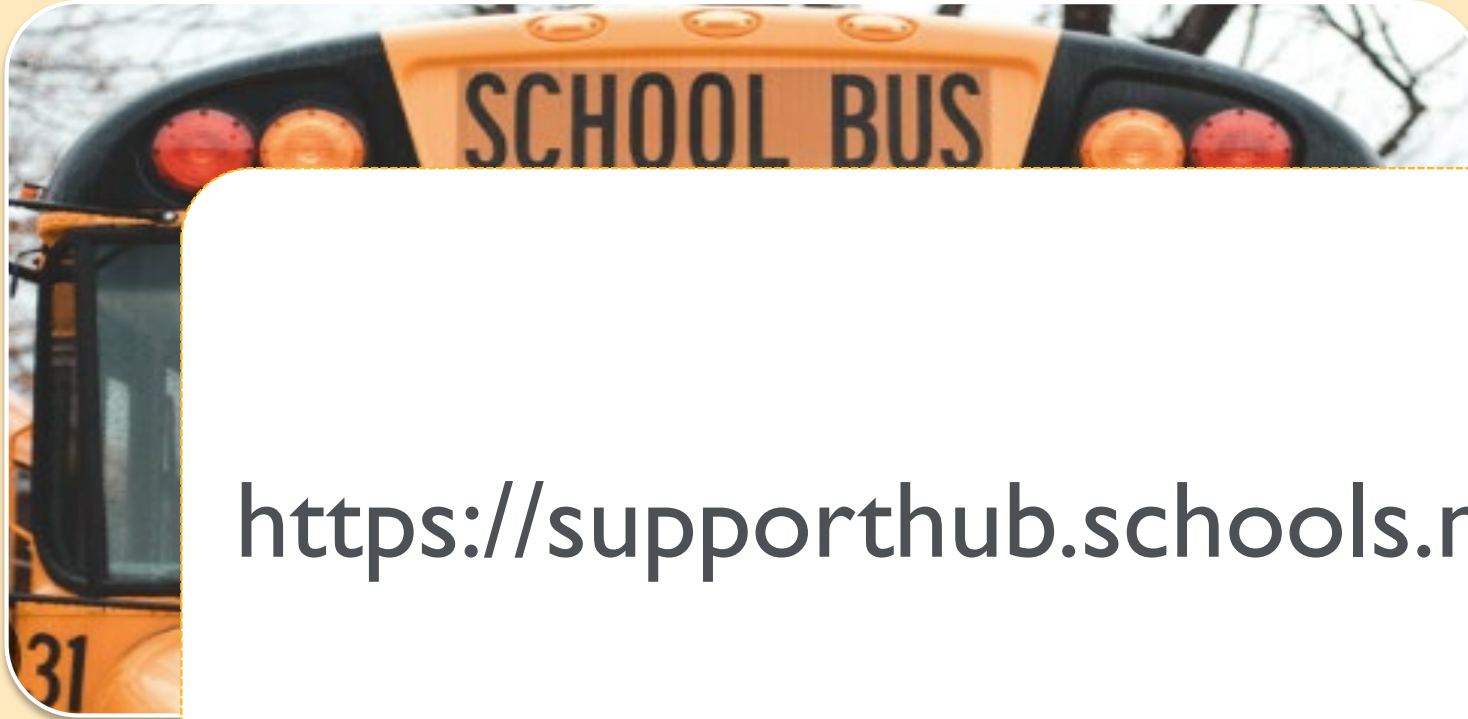
Help! My child is being treated inappropriately on the bus



- Your child has a right to a safe and respectful environment when they travel to school
- If your child is being treated inappropriately by **bus staff**, contact the school's Transportation Coordinator and OPT (718-392-8855 or [online](#)) and report the issue each time it occurs and get a complaint number. OPT should investigate and address the issue with the bus company.
- If your child is having issues with **other students** on the bus, contact the school's Transportation Coordinator and report the issue each time it occurs.
 - You can verbally or in writing report it to any school staff member and they are required to make a formal report and the principal is required to conduct an investigation within 5 days
 - You can also fill out the [complaint form](#) online, call 718-935-2288, or email respectforall@schools.nyc.gov.



Online Complaints



<https://supporthub.schools.nyc>



Online Complaints



Spanish ▾



Iniciar sesión

Bienvenido a SupportHub

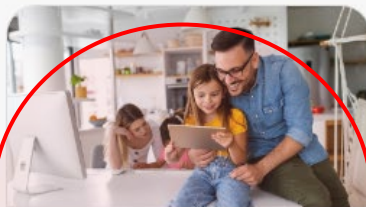
Inicia sesión para comenzar



¿Cómo puedo ayudarte hoy?



Yo soy un...



Estudiante/Familia

Estudiantes, padres y tutores de NYCPS.



Personal

Maestros, directores y administradores de escuela...



Proveedor

Conductores de autobús, vendedores ambulantes de...





Online Complaints



Assistance

Main Topic
Transportation



Category
OPT




Issue
I'm having problems with my child's current school bus.

I'm having problems with my child's current school bus.

Sometimes buses are delayed because of traffic congestion or mechanical failure. Check our [bus delays](#) page to see if your child's route has been affected.

A recurring issue with your current busing arrangement should be reported to [your school](#) by calling the school's main number and asking for the Transportation Coordinator, or a ticket can be submitted.

If you believe you are eligible and the above applies to you, click "Create Ticket" below to submit your application/request.

 Create Ticket

I want to report a safety concern about a school bus.

I need help with an emergency involving a school bus.

I want to know my child's bus route information.

My child's school bus did not arrive today.

I want to report an accident involving a school bus.





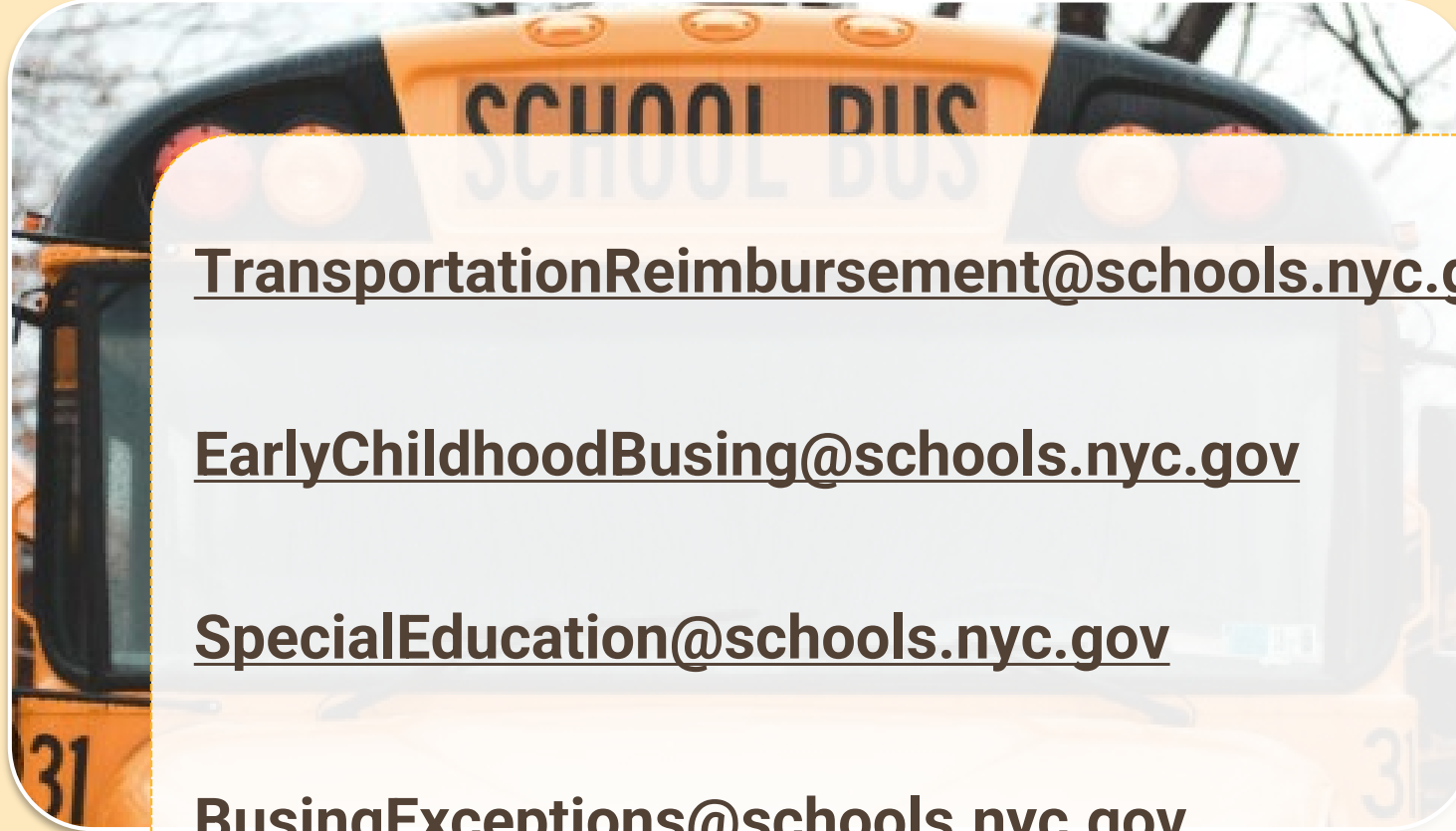
DOE Contact Information



- **STH Regional Managers**
 - Determined by district of residence
 - ✦ <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/special-situations/students-in-temporary-housing/#RegionalManager>
- **Committee on Special Education**
 - Determined by district of school
 - ✦ <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/special-education/help/committees-on-special-education>
- **Superintendent Offices**
 - Search by school:
 - ✦ <https://sites.google.com/a/strongschools.nyc/contacts/>
- **Transportation Liaisons**
 - Determined by district
 - ✦ <https://infohub.nyced.org/in-our-schools/operations/transportation-resources-for-schools/transportation-liaisons>
- **School Contacts**
 - Search for school, then scroll to school contacts
 - ✦ <https://schoolsearch.schools.nyc/>



DOE Contact Information



TransportationReimbursement@schools.nyc.gov

EarlyChildhoodBusing@schools.nyc.gov

SpecialEducation@schools.nyc.gov

BusingExceptions@schools.nyc.gov



Other Resources



- [Resolving Transportation Issues](#)
- [Arranging Transportation](#)
- [DOE Transportation Website](#)

- [Start of School Q&A for Families of Students with Disabilities](#)

- [Tip Sheet: Students in Temporary Housing](#)
- [How to Support Students in Domestic Violence Shelters](#)

- **Complaints:**
 - OPT Customer Service Line: 718-392-8855
 - [Support Hub](#)



Language Access Rights



- Parents whose primary language is not English have a **RIGHT to Translation and Interpretation**
 - Should not be told to bring their own interpreter
 - Should not require children to translate
 - DOE Languages: Spanish, Chinese, Bengali, Russian, Urdu, Arabic, Haitian Creole, Korean, French, Albanian, Uzbek, Ukrainian
- Request from child's school or through DOE [form](#) or call 311
- Remember to request in advance for meetings

No translation or interpretation? Poor quality?
DOE complaint line (718) 935-2013
Email: hello@schools.nyc.gov

Register for the Road
to Better Busing Rally
[here!](#)

THE ROAD TO BETTER BUSING RALLY



Join the Road to Better Busing Coalition,
parents, students, and advocates as we call on
NYC leaders to fix our broken yellow bus system.

 We demand:

- ✓ Yellow bus service that works — every day,
on time
- ✓ Access to after-school, summer, and
weekend busing
- ✓ A modernized system that puts students and
families first



**Monday, September 22nd
12:00 to 1:00 PM
In front of City Hall Steps
Manhattan**

To attend, please click [here](#) or scan
the QR code:





Contact Us!



Please take our survey!

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/EvnnVnFzH5>

- Call Our Helpline: 866-427-6033
 - Toll free
 - Monday-Thursday
 - 10am-4pm
- Email Us: Info@advocatesforchildren.org

Post Training Survey - Busing
Issues 101 (Sept 16, 2025)

