Advocates for Children of New York
Protecting every child's right to learn

Resolving Transportation Issues

For more information on transportation eligibility, read AFC's guide to Arranging Transportation Services and refer to the DOE website.

Key Contact Info: OPT Customer Service (718) 392-8855
Bus Companies • NYC School Bus App
Submit OPT Complaint • District Transportation Liaisons

I don't know where my student's bus is.

Check OPT's daily list of bus delays and the NYC School Bus App, which is available to download on the Apple app store and the Google Play app store. In order to use the app, you will need a New York City Schools Account (NYCSA). If you don't have a NYCSA account, ask your child's school's Parent Coordinator for an Account Creation Code and see AFC's NYCSA tipsheet.

I don't know my student's bus route or pick up time.

For your child's bus route, call your child's school or check under "transportation" on your New York City Schools Account (NYCSA). If your child is in a NYC public school and you don't have a NYCSA account, ask your child's school's Parent Coordinator for an Account Creation Code and see AFC's NYCSA tipsheet. If your child is in a charter, private, or non-public school and your school cannot help you obtain a NYCSA Account Creation Code, contact AFC.

The bus company should call you with pick-up and drop-off information the week before school begins. If they do not call, contact the bus company directly and ask for the pick-up time for your child (find the phone numbers here: Bus Companies. Make sure you have your child's route number when you contact the bus company.

I can't reach the bus company to confirm pick up time.

Confirm that you are calling the number listed on the DOE website for Bus Companies. Call during off-peak hours such as midday, when dispatch is not fielding calls regarding the morning and afternoon buses. If your call is transferred and the phone continues to ring without being picked up, try to stay on the line. Dispatch may be on the phone with other callers and you may be on a waitlist. If you still can't reach them, contact OPT (at 718-392-8855 or online) and make a complaint. The OPT recording line may tell you to contact your child's school. However, if you stay on the line with OPT, you will eventually reach someone to speak with directly. Make your complaint and ask for the complaint number. Make a note of the complaint number for each complaint you make with OPT and keep screenshots of any complaints you file online. Then, 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 for additional support.

The bus company has the wrong location to pick up my student or does not have a pick up location for my student.

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/SESIS, contact your district's Transportation Liaison and ask them to give the bus company the correct address. Note: if the address was incorrect when your child was routed, they may need to be rerouted, which can take additional time.

If your student attends a charter, private, or non-public school, contact both the CSE and your district Transportation Liaison to correct the address.

My student is being picked up late or not at all.

Call both the bus company and OPT to make a complaint. Ask the school's Transportation Coordinator to make a complaint with OPT and ask them for the complaint number. To call in a complaint with OPT, call 718-392-8855 and take note of the complaint number. You can also submit a complaint online. Make a complaint every time the bus arrives late or does not arrive. If the OPT recording line tells you to contact your school, if you stay on the line with OPT you will eventually reach someone to speak with directly. If the issues are not resolved after 1 week, contact both your school's Transportation Coordinator and your district's Transportation Liaison, include the complaint number(s), and request a new route.

My student is arriving at school late or being picked up before the school day ends.

Your child should not have to miss class because their bus is late or leave class early to get on the bus. If this is happening, ask your child's school Transportation Coordinator and your district's Transportation Liaison and OPT to work with the bus company to come up with a later afternoon pickup time. Call in a complaint to OPT (718-392-8855) or submit a complaint online to alert them to the issue.

My student is spending too much time on the bus.

If the student is not appropriately routed to meet a limited travel time IEP recommendation, contact OPT (call 718-392-8855 or submit a complaint online) your school's Transportation Coordinator, and your district Transportation Liaison.

For students without a limited travel time IEP recommendation, make an OPT complaint (call 718-392-8855 or submit online) and take note of the complaint number. Make a complaint every time there is an issue. Ask your school's Transportation Coordinator to do the same. If the OPT recording line tells you to contact your school, you can stay on the line with OPT and you will eventually reach someone to speak with directly. If the issues are not resolved after 1 week, contact your school's Transportation Coordinator and your district's Transportation Liaison, include the complaint number(s), and request a new route.

My student qualifies for busing but has not been routed.

For students eligible for busing based on grade and distance from school, 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 attending a non-public school through parental placement, contact the NPS's Transportation Coordinator, the school district's Transportation Liaison, and the 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 your child's school has filled out an online busing request (also known as an Exceptions Request.) If a busing request was filled out but has not been approved after 7–10 business days, email BusingExceptions@schools.nyc.gov, STH Family Assistant, shelter-based Community Coordinator, STH Regional Manager, and Transportation Liaison. If you are still waiting for a route 7–10 business days after the request was approved, email Transportation@schools.nyc.gov or call OPT's call center at (718) 392-8855 or submit a complaint online.

For more information see Tipsheet for Students in Temporary Housing.

For a student in foster care, ask the school to complete the online busing request, also known as a Foster Care Exception Request. If the child's address needs to be updated in the school's system, ask the child's foster care agency to send the school a new placement form.

I submitted an Exceptions Request, but my student was found ineligible or I haven't heard anything back yet.

Send an email to BusingExceptions@schools.nyc.gov.

We have moved, how do I get the bus to come to the new address?

As soon as you move, give the school your new address and ask them to update ATS and, if necessary, SESIS. If your student is attending a charter, private, or non-public school and is entitled to specialized busing based on an IEP, contact your CSE to share your new address. If your child has busing on their IEP, they should be re-routed automatically once the address is updated. If your student qualifies for busing because they live in a DHS shelter, they should automatically be rerouted. If your student qualifies for busing because you live in temporary housing (other than a DHS shelter), you or the school or the shelter-based Community Coordinator must complete a new online busing request (aka Exceptions Request). For a student in foster care, ask the child's foster care agency to send the school a placement form with the student's new address. Once the school has the form, ask the school to submit a foster care transportation exception request. For all students, it will take about a week for the new stop to be added to the existing route or for them to be added to a different bus route.

I am waiting for busing but I need another way to bring my student to school.

All students living more than a half mile from their schools are eligible for OMNY cards. All students eligible for busing are also eligible for student OMNY cards while they wait for busing. Additionally, the parents of students in temporary housing or foster care are eligible for an adult MetroCard to bring their child to school, regardless of their child's age, and to pick them up at the end of the day Ask your school's Transportation Coordinator for the cards.

If a student is eligible for busing based on their IEP, STH, or foster care status, they may be eligible for prepaid rideshare. If you are interested in prepaid rideshare, contact your school's Transportation Coordinator and your school district's Transportation Liaison. This applies to students with IEP-mandated busing who have not been routed after 10 school days, whose bus route is out of service, or whose busing accommodations are not being implemented. Students who require rideshare because of missing IEP-mandated staff on the bus, should be able to find a rideshare code on their NYCSA account.

Rideshare eligibility applies to students who are eligible for busing based on STH or foster care status who have not been routed after 10 business days as well. Visit the DOE's website for more information.

If a student is eligible for busing based on their IEP, STH, or foster care status, and prepaid rideshare has not been arranged, they may be eligible for transportation reimbursement if their bus does not show up or if services become unavailable after the route start date. If you have to spend money on transportation, save your receipts and submit a Request for Reimbursement.

My student's school cannot/will not provide OMNY or MetroCards.

Contact the district Transportation Liaison. If you are a family in temporary housing, contact the STH Regional Manager.

My student is not receiving IEP-mandated transportation accommodations.

If the student is not receiving accommodations on the bus, like a bus paraprofessional, contact specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov. Make sure to include the student's name and DOB and/or student ID number, parent/guardian's name, school name and what accommodation is not being implemented.

If your student is not receiving their IEP-mandated accommodation of a nurse on the bus, contact OPT (718-392-8855 or online) and your district Transportation Liaison. You can also file a complaint by calling 311. In addition, call AFC's Helpline at (866) 427-6033.

If the student attends a charter school or non-public school, contact the CSE.

If your student is not allowed to ride the bus because their IEP-mandated bus paraprofessional or nurse is not in place or it is a safety concern for the student to ride the bus without limited time travel, contact the school's Transportation Coordinator and district Transportation Liaison to request prepaid rideshare until the bus paraprofessional or nurse is in place.

If the student is not appropriately routed to meet a limited travel time IEP recommendation, contact OPT (718-392-8855 or online) and speak with your school's Transportation Coordinator and/or your district Transportation Liaison.

My student is being treated inappropriately by the bus driver or bus matron.

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.

My student is having issues with other students on the bus.

Contact the school's Transportation Coordinator and report the issue each time it occurs. If there is a bullying issue with other students on the bus, 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. If you want to report a bullying incident anonymously, fill out the complaint form online, call 718-935-2288, or email respectforall@schools.nyc.gov.

I am concerned for my student's safety on the bus.

If there is an immediate safety risk or emergency, call 911, and then contact OPT (718-392-8855 or online). For any other safety issue, contact OPT with the complaint(s) (718-392-8855 or online) and keep a record of complaint number(s).

I have tried to address my issue with the above strategies, but it still isn't resolved.

If your child's busing is IEP-mandated, you have the right to file a request for mediation or impartial hearing over busing issues. You can also file a complaint with the State Education Department or the Office of Civil Rights.

If student lives in in temporary housing: contact the STH Regional Manager for the district where the student lives.

If student is in foster care, contact the Foster Care Coordinator for the district where the student attends school.

Families of children receiving busing for Early Intervention and preschool special education should contact the DOE at EarlyChildhoodBusing@schools.nyc.gov and their Early Intervention Service Coordinator or CPSE office for additional support.

Still have more questions? Please call the Jill Chaifetz Education Helpline:

Monday through Thursday • 10 am to 4 pm • 1-866-427-6033 (toll free)

www.advocatesforchildren.org

This guide does not constitute legal advice. It attempts to summarize existing policies or laws without stating the opinion of Advocates for Children. If you have a legal problem, please contact an attorney or advocate.

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