



**Transportation
Department**

**Special
Education**

Handbook

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Responsibilities

The safe and efficient transportation of children relies on the cooperation and efforts of the school staff, transportation office, bus staff, and the parents. The following sections outline some of the various responsibilities of those involved.

Parent Responsibilities:

It shall be the responsibility of the parent to:

Assist the school by submitting accurate and timely information to your child's school. Submit correct information on The Student Emergency Card. Incorrect and untimely information may delay the onset of transportation services.

Inform the school administrator, bus driver or attendant of any medical condition or behavior which might affect the student's safety of health on the bus.

Assure that an authorized person will be at the bus stop on time when the child is dropped off. Provide the school with the correct form to release your student unattended when appropriate.

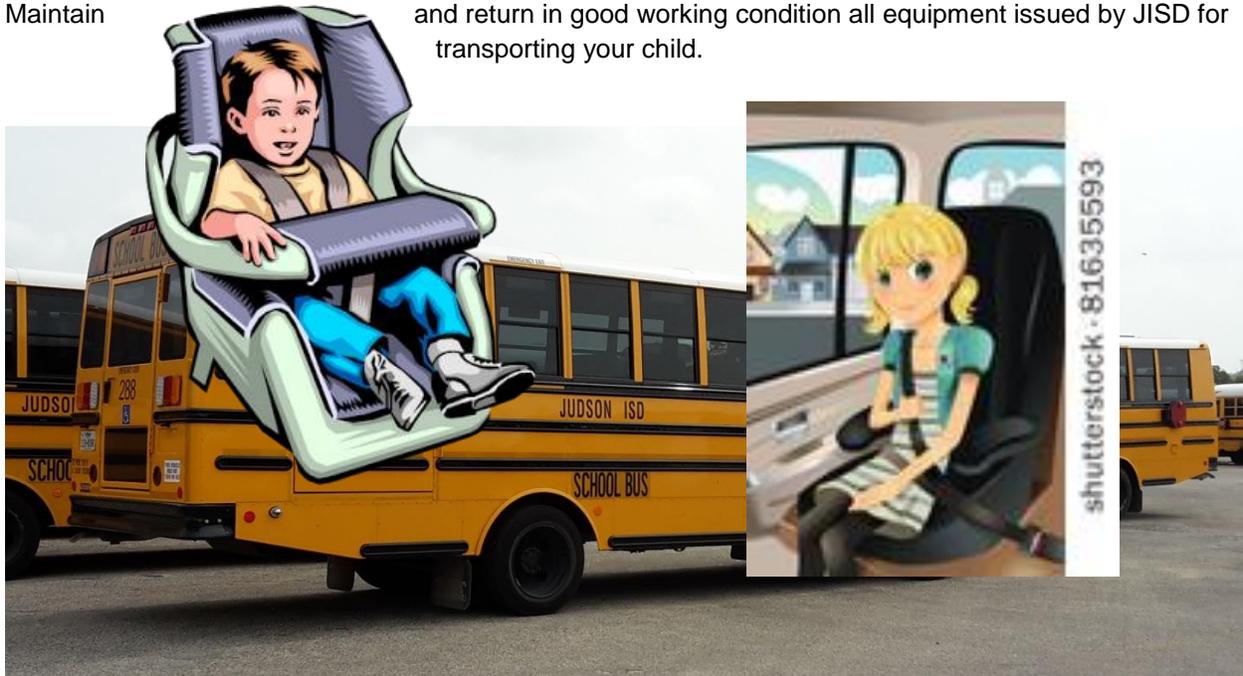
Make sure your child is fully clothed, and toileted and ready at the bus stop five minutes before pickup time. The bus driver is not required to wait for more than three minutes. They may not blow the horn or send the attendant to the door, as this creates late pickups for other students.

If your child misses the bus, the driver cannot come back. Transport your child to school and quickly as possible and notify the school of any problems.

Teach your child school bus safety rules and appropriate bus-riding behavior.

Maintain

and return in good working condition all equipment issued by JISD for transporting your child.



Student Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of the student to:

- Be at the bus stop five minutes before pick up time.
- Always sit down and buckle seat belt.
- Listen to driver and attendant.
- No fighting, smoking, and talk quietly.
- No eating or drinking inside the school bus.
- No cursing, harassing, or abusive language.
- No pets, except service, animals, and disruptive toys on the school bus.
- Respect other students, driver and attendant.
- The rules of the bus are very important.

When rules are followed optimal safety is obtainable.

Driver and Attendant Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of the driver and the attendant to:

- Notify parent/ guardian of the bus number and appropriate time of pick up and drop off times.
- Give the parent the phone numbers to JISD Transportation.
- Ensure overall safe operation of the school bus.
- Display care, and patience.
- Be prepared to provide appropriate medical intervention.
- Maintain an emergency evacuation plan that lists the needs and abilities of each student. Be prepared to effectively evacuate the bus in the event of an emergency.
- Understand and maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the families whose children you transport.
- Complete and submit a referral if an incident occurs on the bus that is outside of the child's ARD.
- Report any significant changes in the child's behavior to the school staff.
- Attendant must sit behind all students while they are on the bus. If you have a wheelchair student, sit in between the secured children and the wheelchair student.
- The attendant must help students while in the stairwell when they are boarding and leaving the bus. To avoid risk of injury to students, don't carry any students up and down the stairs.
- The attendant secures the seat belts, secures the wheelchair, and installs the safety vest. The driver must check all wheelchair securements.
- Check bus after every route.
- Safety is the main purpose of transporting children.
- Never attach wheelchair securement straps to removable parts of the wheelchair like the armrests, leg rests, and tires.
- Tie downs can't be twisted or crossed.



Seizures

Seizures are a brief, excessive discharge of electrical activity in the brain that alters one or more of the following:

- Movement
- Sensation
- Behavior
- Awareness

Seizure Triggers:

- Flashing lights
- Missed medications
- Stress/anxiety
- Lack of sleep
- Hormonal changes
- Illness

- Overheating or overexertion
- Poor diet or missed meals

Seizures on a bus

- Find a safe location
- Pull bus over and call dispatch, have nurse meet the bus at the school
- Place student on their side in the seat
- Start timing the seizure
- Keep student safe

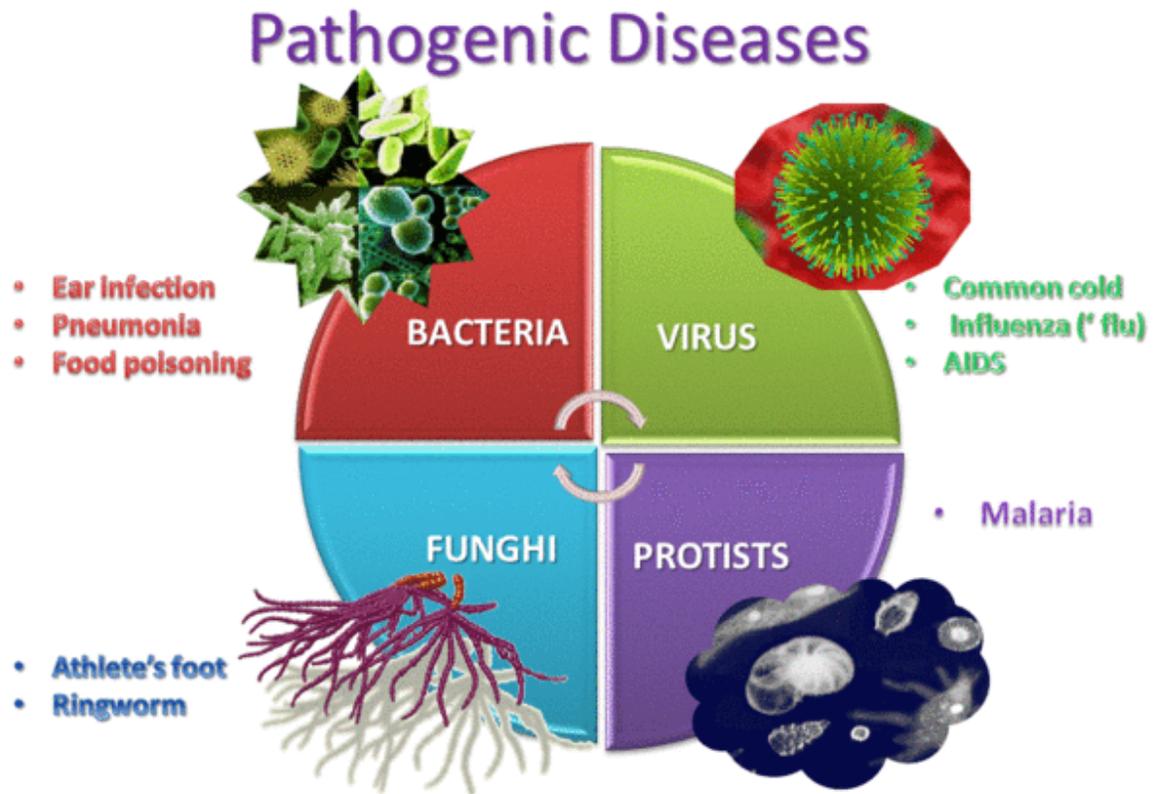
Blood Borne Pathogens

A BBP is a person who is a carrier of viruses. Blood, or any body fluid that is excreted from the body are capable of carrying BBP. This includes: blood, urine, spit, or vomit.

Transportation staff must take precautions to protect themselves anytime they are required to clean up a BBP spill. If a driver or attendant comes into contact with a BBP spill, it is imperative to remember that the virus can enter your body through any opening in the skin. This includes cuts, mouth, nose, and eyes.

Always assume that any spill has the potential for infection. Always wear gloves when performing a task where body fluids are present. Make sure to check gloves for any defects before putting them on. When you are cleaning up a spill and you have used the body fluids kit on the bus, you must place the used items in a bio-hazard receptacle. These are located in your schools' nurses' station, or you can go to the fire department.

If you use any portion of the kit you must replace the whole kit. They are located in the parts room.



Confidentiality of Student Information

The school collects and maintains student information in cumulative record files and other documents (e.g., individual program plans, documented adaptations, etc.). Pertinent personal information may be shared by parents/ guardians directly with transportation staff. Also, parents/guardians may give permission to teachers, health professionals, principals, or special education personnel to share specific information with transportation staff. Personal information shared with transportation personnel with regard to the needs of any student is considered confidential,

Information on the Special Transportation of Special Education Students

Each school board should develop regional guidelines to ensure that information regarding the special transportation needs of students is available and appropriately communicated among parents/guardians, school staff, and Student Services and transportation staff. Guidelines should include procedures to assess and meet the special transportation needs of students and should identify the staff that is responsible for carrying out the procedures. Also, guidelines should address such issues as bus routing, the provision of specialized equipment, emergency medical procedures, and associated criteria for alternative transportation arrangements, including community-based options when appropriate.

Guidelines for the Communication of Information

By the beginning of each school year the principal should have provided the Student Special Transportation Form to the parents/guardians of all new and returning students who are expected to be eligible for transportation and who have special transportation. Once completed, this form provides school and transportation staff with information from the parent/ guardian and/or physician regarding the actions to take in an emergency as well as the particulars of the ongoing support that will be necessary. The form must be updated annually for returning students as part of the registration process and updated during the year if a student's special transportation have changed significantly The school principal should ensure that copies of the completed form are forwarded to the Student Services coordinators or their designate and the transportation manager and file the original form in the student's cumulative record, in accordance with the procedures outlined in the school board policy and Student Records Policy



Transportation Incident/Accident Procedures and Reporting Process

All school boards have established protocols to follow when involved in an accident, and when reporting an incident/accident, involving the transportation of students on school buses. It is important to ensure that protocols exist prior to tendering/contracting transportation. While each board has specific processes and procedures in place, please refer to the Judson ISD Transportation Handbook for the accident procedures.



Assisting Students Who Use a Wheelchair/Mobility Aid

Basic Facts about Wheelchairs

- **Brakes:** There is a separate brake for each side of the wheelchair. Brake function varies from chair to chair; some brakes are pushed out and some are pushed in to activate. Brakes are located on the large rear wheels toward the front of the chair. The chair should not be left unattended unless the brakes are engaged. The brakes should be securely engaged when a person is moved in or out of the chair.
- **Armrests:** These may be removed in order to give the student more room to grasp the wheel for movement. Transportation personnel should not remove armrests or other parts of the wheelchair without authorization from the principal and permission from the parent/guardian. Never lift a wheelchair by its armrests as this may cause the armrests to come out or the chair to tip.
- **Footrests:** The footrests may be out of the field of vision of the person pushing a wheelchair. Therefore, caution must be exercised to avoid colliding with obstructions and jarring the person in the chair.
- **Wheels:** Loose clothing, scarves, etc., must be kept away from the wheels. The rim of the center of one of the large wheels and any stationary part of the front of the wheelchair should be held to lift it into a trunk.
- **Security Belts/Inserts:** Students who cannot sit unsupported, or who are in danger of serious injury from a fall, should always wear security belts when in wheelchairs/mobility aids or bus seats. Inserts can be made for most chairs, and these often come equipped with their own seat-belt system. Inserts must be removed from the chair before folding it for transport or storage. If there is a security belt in the chair, it is meant to be used. The security belt must never be used to substitute for a motor vehicle seat belt.
- **Tilting Rods:** Most wheelchairs have two rods close to the ground in the rear that serve as foot pedals for the pusher. To tip the chair backward the pusher should grasp the chair handles firmly and put downward pressure on the rod with one foot. This procedure is used on inclines, stairs, or curbs.
- **Folding:** Inserts must be removed from chairs before they are folded. Chairs should not be folded by using the armrests. After the footrests are up, the chair can be closed by lifting up on the flexible seat.



Assisting Students Who Use a Wheelchair

Wheelchairs come in a variety of designs and styles. Anyone assisting a student in a wheelchair should understand the mechanics of the wheelchair and consider the following before moving it:

- To successfully and safely load student passengers – approach the wheelchair from the front so that the student anticipates contact – check for anything that could be caught in the wheels (e.g., coat, blanket, scarf, hand, etc.) before moving the wheelchair – never move the wheelchair before telling the student – ensure that the student’s hands are clear of the wheels and spokes – ensure that the student’s feet are on the footrests – check to see that the brakes are off, because a fast start with brakes on could jar the student out of the wheelchair
- On rough ground pull the wheelchair by tipping it backward and moving it with the big wheels (if possible) rather than pushing it. – Advise the student before tipping the wheelchair backward. – Place your foot on the tilting rod on the lower part of the chair and apply a pushing motion. At the same time, pull back and down on the hand grips and continue to tilt the chair backward until it requires little or no effort to stabilize it. It will then be at its balance point and can be maneuvered on its big rear wheels quite easily. – Advise the student of your intention to return the wheelchair to its upright position; then simply reverse the procedure. – Keep your foot on the tilting rod until the front wheels are on the ground. The front wheels should be prevented from dropping to the ground too quickly as this could jar the student and/or cause him or her to pitch forward out of the wheelchair.
- To take a wheelchair up and over a curb – move forward to the curb and tilt the wheelchair backward to its balance point – move the back wheels in as close as possible to the curb and lower the front wheels onto the top of the curb – to safely lift the wheelchair, ensure that both of your feet are securely planted on the ground then bend your knees and take a firm grip on the chair – lift and roll it by extending your knees and pushing it onto the sidewalk
- To go down a curb, back yourself and the chair off the curb by lowering the big wheels to the ground and then carefully lowering the small wheels to the ground, taking extra precautions to prevent the wheelchair from dropping off the curb and jarring the student.
- When pushing the wheelchair, be considerate of the student’s comfort, e.g., avoid sudden movement, and avoid pushing the back of the chair against the student’s back.
- When walking with a student in a wheelchair, be aware of the student and his or her interests. While walking in a crowd when it is difficult to hear, keep in touch with the student by leaning over and making comments.
- When speaking with a student in a wheelchair, consider sitting down or kneeling to get on the same level as the wheelchair user if the conversation lasts more than a few minutes.
- Be aware of eye level for viewing. Often, bars, railings, etc., block the student’s vision. Bend down to his or her eye level and check out what he or she can see.
- Assist a student in a wheelchair to stand up by first making sure that the chair brakes are on. Give the student a waiting time so that his or her body can adjust to the new position. Do not let go until the student says or motions that he or she is ready
- When a student wants to transfer to the seat of a car, make sure that the wheelchair is brought as close as possible, with the brakes applied, and preferably, at a right angle.

- Check before assisting a student using crutches or a cane. A too-helpful arm can throw the student off balance.
- Keep dignity and safety in mind at all times. Let the student do his or her own inquiring and speaking whenever possible.

School Bus Wheelchair Lift

There are several types of school bus wheelchair lifts that are operated through electrical/hydraulic controls or manually through a hydraulic system. Drivers and/or adult supervisors must ensure that they fully understand the methods of operation. The lift has several safety features that the operator must become familiar with to ensure that the lift is used in accordance with the manufacturer's operating instructions.

- **End Gate:** The lift has an end gate that opens automatically as the lift touches the ground, becoming the loading/unloading ramp. As the lift is raised clear of the ground, the end gate will rise and lock to form a barrier to prevent the wheelchair from accidentally moving off the lift. However, the security provided by this end gate must be considered to be a back-up to the protection provided by the wheelchair brakes and lift belt. This end gate does not replace the wheelchair brakes or the lift belt
- **Safety Handles:** There are two safety handles to which the lift belt is attached that automatically unfold with the lift. The purpose of these handles is to provide protection to the student from the sides and handrail support for mobility aid and ambulatory passengers. The driver and/or adult supervisors must ensure that they are standing clear of the lift area and out of the way of the handles when unfolding the lift.
- **Lift Belt:** Another safety feature is the lift belt itself. When it is in its proper place across the front of the wheelchair occupant, it will prevent him or her from toppling out of the chair and will stop the chair from moving forward. Under no circumstances should the lift be operated without the belt lift being securely fastened. Accidental run-off of the wheelchair from the lift could result in serious injury. The driver of a lift-equipped bus should perform a daily inspection of the safety components of the lift prior to the first trip to ensure that the assembly performs safely and smoothly.

NOTE: The combined weight of the wheelchair and its occupant must not exceed the original equipment manufacturer's weight specifications.

Not all wheelchair lifts have lift belts.

Emergency (Manual) Operation of the School Bus Wheelchair Lift

Each lift must have the capacity to be manually operated should the electrical system fail. Instructions for the manual operation of each lift should be affixed to the lift, and the manual operation of the lift should be fully explained during a training program. The driver and/or adult supervisors should be familiar with these instructions. If training or assistance is required, the transportation coordinator should be notified immediately.

Safety Procedures and Precautions for the School Bus Wheelchair Lift

The driver and/or adult supervisors if present must be aware of the following safety procedures and precautions concerning the operation of the wheelchair lift:

- The lift will operate only if the vehicle's parking brake is applied.
- The lift belt must always be used. (If available)
- The security of the lift end gate must be checked each time the lift is used.
- Drivers and assistants must not wear open-toed shoes.
- Drivers and assistants must ensure that their feet are clear of the lift and the wheelchair wheels.
- The wheelchair must always be positioned on the lift so that the passenger is facing away from the vehicle.
- The brakes on the wheelchair must always be applied while it is on the lift (or the power turned off on an electric wheelchair).
- Drivers and assistants must use caution when maneuvering wheelchairs to ensure that they reduce the potential of personal injury or injury to passengers.
- The driver and assistant should be on board the lift (when possible) when raising or lowering the wheelchair passenger. All other students must be in their seats while the lift is operating.
- Only qualified personnel are to operate the lift



is used.

School Bus Wheelchair Lift Check

The check of a lift-equipped vehicle is identical to that of a regular school bus except that the lift operation must also be checked and it must be established that all necessary equipment is on board. In conducting a check of the lift, the operator must:

- open and secure the lift door
- check that the lift light is on
- unfold and lower the lift, checking for smooth operation • check the end gate on the lift to ensure that it locks and folds correctly • check the lift belt for security and serviceability
- visually inspect the floor area around the lift for fluid leaks • raise the lift approximately 15 centimeters (six inches) and check the lift end gate to ensure that it has locked securely
- Raise and attempt to fold the lift into its stored position, with a minimum of 25 kilograms positioned in the center of the platform (If the lift folds, the safety mechanism should be repaired before it is used.)
- fold the lift into its secured position and check the securement of the entire assembly
- check the hydraulic cylinders for leakage and proper function

Assisting the Loading of Students Who Use a Wheelchair/Mobility Aid

When operating a lift to load a student with a wheelchair/mobility aid, the operator must

1. Exit the vehicle .
2. Open the lift door and secure it, using the clip provided.
3. Take the lift control and stand well clear of the lift area.
4. Lower the lift to the ground.
5. Where possible, walk backward onto the lift with the wheelchair/mobility aid, maneuvering it into position so that the student is facing away from the bus.
6. Apply the wheelchair brakes (If it is an electric chair, apply the brakes and turn off the power.).
7. Fasten the lift belt across the front of the wheelchair passenger.
8. With the lift control in one hand, begin raising the lift—an operator who is on the lift should hold on to the wheelchair handle with the other hand.
9. Stop the lift just as it clears the ground and check to ensure that the end gate has raised and is locked.

10. When the lift is fully raised, release the wheelchair brakes; pull the chair into the vehicle, or, if it is an electric chair, turn on the power.
11. Move the wheelchair to the tie-down position; secure it and the wheelchair occupant in accordance with the procedure outlined in this handbook or the manual supplied by the restraint manufacturer.
12. Fold the lift into the vehicle and close the lift door (This step may be completed before tying down the wheelchair in inclement weather—if so, the wheelchair brakes must be applied.).

Assisting Students Who Use Other Mobility Aids or Devices

Some students who are ambulatory and use devices such as walkers or crutches may use the wheelchair lift to enter or leave a school bus. Others may be capable of getting out of a wheelchair and sitting in a bus seat while the wheelchair is secured in the bus. These students may tell transportation personnel if they want or need assistance and how best to assist. Transportation personnel should

- Ask if help is needed or let the student or parent/guardian explain how to help
- Stay close by and be ready to assist if the circumstances warrant
- Load the ambulatory student by using the lift, if appropriate
- Secure walkers and other aids (if any) before proceeding to the next stop

School Bus Standards for the Transportation of Students with Special Disabilities

School buses that have been constructed for the transportation of students with physical disabilities must meet the requirements of FMVSS. Occupant Restraint Systems, In the event that the program planning team recommends that a restraint/ harness is required for a student to travel on a school bus, the use of such devices must follow the manufacturer's instructions. Typically, these devices are prescribed by a physician or an occupational therapist.

Support Equipment and Accessories

Every vehicle that is set up to accommodate wheelchairs or other assistive or restraint devices that use belts must contain at least one belt cutter, properly secured in a location within reach of the driver while she or he is belted into the driver's seat. The belt cutter must be durable and designed to eliminate the possibility of the operator or others being cut during its use. Special equipment or supplies that are used on the vehicle for mobility assistance, health support, or safety purposes must meet all local, federal, and federal, and engineering standards that may apply, including proper identification Support equipment and accessories include but are not limited to

- Wheelchairs and other mobile seating devices • crutches, walkers, canes, and other ambulatory devices
- Assistive technology or augmentative communication devices, etc.
- Medical support equipment (This may include respiratory devices such as ventilators or oxygen bottles, which should be no larger than 0.6m³ [22 cu. ft.] for liquid oxygen or 1.1 m³ [38 cu. ft.] for compressed gas. Tanks and valves should be located and positioned to protect them from direct sunlight, vehicle heater vents, or other heat sources. Other equipment may include intravenous and fluid drainage apparatus.)
- All portable equipment and special accessory items must be secured at a mounting location and be able to withstand a pulling force of five times their weight or be contained in an enclosed, latched compartment (The compartment must be able to withstand forces applied to its interior that are equal to five times the weight of its contents without failure to the compartment's integrity and securement to the bus. If standards cited elsewhere in this handbook provide specific requirements for the securement of a particular type of equipment—e.g., wheelchairs—the specific standard will prevail.)

Service Animals



Service animals are recognized as a valuable source of assistance for students with disabilities who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, or physically challenged. Decisions regarding the use of service animals at school (including transportation) should be addressed and documented during the program planning process. Boards should have policies and procedures for the review of service animal certification, required immunizations, and the care of service animals while at school and a process of communicating to the parents/guardians of other students on the same route that a service animal is on the school bus. These procedures should include the seating arrangements and location of the animal, emergencies, evacuations, and other student needs, such as allergies, fears, etc. Providing an orientation to parents/guardians and students to address questions and concerns is recommended.

Acknowledgement

I have received a copy of the Special Education Handbook. It is my responsibility to read and understand the information contained in the handbook. I further understand in my position as a Special Education Team Member it is important to ensure the safest and most secure transportation of the students that are assigned to me.

Name

Date