





OSSE DOT Vehicle Accommodation Guidance July 2024

Once an individualized education program (IEP) team determines that a student with a disability requires transportation as a related service, it must also determine if the student requires any services or accommodations to be provided during transportation. The following list contains accommodations provided by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education Division of Student Transportation (OSSE DOT) to assist with safe travel to and from school. When documenting necessary services or accommodations on the OSSE DOT vehicle, please note the following:




- All accommodations and student transportation needs must be designated within the Services and Supplemental Aids section of the student's IEP. If a student's transportation needs change, the local education agency (LEA) must ensure the IEP team amends the student's IEP to reflect the change in services or supplemental aids the student may require to facilitate special education transportation services.
- Student needs documented in the IEP are not provided to OSSE DOT. The LEA must provide all relevant student information in the student's transportation request form (TRF). If a student's transportation needs change, the LEA must complete a new TRF to ensure such changes are appropriately communicated to OSSE DOT.
- Service and accommodation designations must be supported by student-level data or information.
- All OSSE DOT vehicles escort the student between the outermost door of the residence or school and the OSSE DOT vehicle. Bus attendants are responsible for safely onboarding students, providing communication updates, and supporting students in safely exiting the vehicle. Bus attendants are automatically assigned to each OSSE DOT vehicle and do not have to be requested as an accommodation. If students need additional supports beyond door-to-door escorts, see the "Aide/Escort/Attendant Assistance" section below for additional accommodations.
- All OSSE DOT vehicles are equipped with seat belts. Students are required to wear seat belts during transport for safety.
- All OSSE DOT vehicles are air conditioned. If OSSE DOT must be aware of student-specific concerns related to vehicle temperature or climate, the LEA must provide such information in the TRF.

OSSE DOT Vehicle Accommodation Guidance
July 2024

OSSE-Provided Medical Devices/ Equipment			
Service or Accommodation	Description	IEP Team Considerations	Picture or example
Ramp/Lift	Students utilizing a wheelchair or transport chair may require a ramp or lift to access an OSSE DOT vehicle. The ramp is a hydraulically operated lift that allows the student to self-transport onto the OSSE DOT vehicle. A dual-arm platform wheelchair lift is an automatic, hydraulically operated lift installed on the side of the DOT vehicle that lifts and lowers the wheelchair and its occupant into the vehicle. Ramps and lifts on OSSE DOT vehicles are compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the student utilize a wheelchair, transport chair, or other equipment that requires specialized equipment to access the bus? • Does the student have a chronic or persistent medical condition that impacts their ability to use stairs, steps, or otherwise access the bus? • Does the student regularly use a ramp, lift, or other similar automated equipment to access vehicles or transportation outside of school? • Does the student have a current transportation plan for navigating the school building and traveling outside school? 	
Buckle Guard	A buckle guard is a seat belt buckle cover that encases a standard-sized bus seat buckle to prevent the seat belt from being released while the vehicle is in motion. It hides the release button from curious fingers and keeps the buckle out of view.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the student have sensory needs that put the student at risk of tampering with a typically secured seatbelt? • Does the student experience difficulty remaining seated on the bus or during transport outside of school? • Does the student lack the safety awareness to remain seated and buckled for the duration of the bus ride? • Buckle guards are appropriate for students regardless of their height or weight. 	

OSSE DOT Vehicle Accommodation Guidance

July 2024

Service or Accommodation	Description	IEP Team Considerations	Picture or example
Safety Vest/ Harness	The safety vest keeps students comfortable, upright, and secure on the bus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the student’s sensory needs impact their ability to remain seated on the bus or otherwise transporting safely without additional restraints? • Does the student need additional assistance remaining in their seat in addition to, or instead of, the use of a buckle guard? • Safety vests are appropriate for students who weigh 31 pounds and more. 	
Booster Seat	The booster seat is a cushion secured to the bus seat to allow students to sit safely on the bus. Booster seats are found to be effective in reducing child passenger injuries in passenger vehicles for students meeting the size criteria. Booster seats are secured over a student’s lap and shoulders as opposed to regular lap seatbelts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the student require positioning support to safely transport on the bus? • Does the student use adapted seating in the classroom that indicates the student may require a booster seat to facilitate safe transportation on the bus? • Booster seats are appropriate for students who weigh fewer than 65 pounds and are less than 57 inches tall. 	
Transport Chair	A transport chair is a lightweight mobility aid used to assist in transition of students not utilizing wheelchairs but having ambulatory difficulties transitioning to/from the bus. The chair is provided by OSSE DOT and is secured in the bus when not in use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the student regularly utilize mobility support devices such as a stroller, walker, crutches, or cane that will not accompany the student on the bus? • Does the student experience difficulties with ambulatory stabilization? 	

OSSE DOT Vehicle Accommodation Guidance

July 2024

Aide/ Escort/ Attendant Assistance		
Service or Accommodation	Description	IEP Team Considerations
Dedicated Aide (1:1)	<p>A dedicated aide provides direct supervision and assists the student with orientation and mobility needs. Dedicated aides may provide behavioral support, if necessary.</p> <p>Please note that all OSSE DOT vehicles have an assigned bus attendant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the student have a medical condition that requires constant, direct monitoring for the student to safely transport on the OSSE DOT vehicle? Does the student exhibit behavioral concerns that require constant, direct supervision, very frequent redirection, or passive physical management? Does the student exhibit dangerous behaviors that require frequent direct crisis prevention support? Is the student at risk for elopement during transport on the OSSE DOT vehicle? Does the student require direct assistance to safely transport, beyond the general assistance provided by the bus attendant?
Hand-to-Hand	<p>The bus attendant provides hands-on elbow or forearm support for students with slight mobility or gait issues, but who do not require a wheelchair. This is provided by the regular assigned bus attendant while walking the student to and from the OSSE DOT vehicle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the student independently board and disembark from the OSSE DOT vehicle? Does the student have mobility or gait issues that require physical support when standing or walking? Is the student at risk for elopement during transition onto or off the OSSE DOT vehicle?
Communication Needs		
American Sign Language (ASL)	<p>The student communicates using ASL and requires a bus attendant who is fluent in ASL.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is ASL the student's primary mode of communication?

OSSE DOT Vehicle Accommodation Guidance

July 2024

Assistance Needed to Administer Medication		
Service or Accommodation	Description	IEP Team Considerations
Nursing	<p>Support of a registered nurse (RN) or licensed practical nurse (LPN) will be provided to ensure safety as well as emergency medication administration.</p> <p>Medical documentation is required, which must include a signed doctor's justification on letterhead or a DC Health Link form, any prescription information and associated instructions, any seizure-related action plans, and all other applicable medical records for care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a record of a medical doctor's justification for nursing services? • Do the student's medical records indicate that the student requires the assistance of a nurse? • Are medical or nursing services designated on the student's IEP and required during school? • Is there a record of medication prescription information and administration instructions?
Student will self-administer medication	<p>The student self-administers their own medication as documented in the IEP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the student's medical records indicate that the student must self-administer required medications? • Is there a record of medication prescription information and administration instructions?
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	<p>Support of an LPN will be provided via private vendor for transportation to ensure safety as well as emergency medication administration.</p> <p>Medical documentation is required, which must include a signed doctor's justification on letterhead or a DC Health Link form, any prescription information and associated instructions, any seizure-related action plans, and all other applicable medical records for care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a record of a medical doctor's justification for services provided by an LPN? • Do the student's medical records indicate that the student requires the assistance of an LPN? • Are medical or nursing services designated on the student's IEP and required during school? • Is there a record of medication prescription information and administration instructions?

OSSE DOT Vehicle Accommodation Guidance

July 2024

Service or Accommodation	Description	IEP Team Considerations
Registered Nurse (RN)	<p>Support of an RN is provided via private vendor for transportation to ensure safety and/or administration of emergency medication administration.</p> <p>Medical documentation is required, which must include a signed doctor's justification on letterhead or a DC Health Link form, any prescription information and associated instructions, any seizure-related action plans, and all other applicable medical records for care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a record of a medical doctor's justification for services provided by an RN? • Do the student's medical records indicate that the student requires the assistance of an RN? • Are medical or nursing services designated on the student's IEP and required during school? • Is there a record of medication prescription information and administration instructions?
Other medically trained professional	<p>The student's IEP requires specific services to be provided by a specifically identified, medically trained professional.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a record of a medical doctor's justification for services provided by a specific medical professional?
Air-Conditioned Vehicle	<p>All OSSE DOT school vehicles are equipped with air conditioning. Selection of this accommodation highlights the need for an OSSE DOT vehicle environment that supports students who are prone to seizures and other health-related concerns triggered by excessive heat and provides an opportunity to share student-specific needs with OSSE DOT.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the student have chronic or persistent medical conditions? • Is there a record of relevant medical diagnoses provided by a medical professional? • Is the student at risk for seizures in high temperatures?

OSSE DOT Vehicle Accommodation Guidance

July 2024

Ride Time Constraints		
Service or Accommodation	Description	IEP Team Considerations
Last Morning Pick-Up	Due to student-specific needs or limitations, the student requires the latest possible morning pick-up from their home residence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a record of a physician’s note providing medical reasoning or justification for the student to be picked up last in the morning? • Does the student have specific needs (behavioral, physical, or other) or medical concerns that affect the student’s ability to sit for long periods or pose additional risk during long car rides?
First Afternoon Drop-Off	Due to student-specific needs or limitations, the student requires the earliest possible afternoon drop-off at their home residence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a record of a physician’s note providing medical reasoning or justification for the student to be dropped off first in the afternoon? • Does the student have specific needs (behavioral, physical, or other) or medical concerns that affect the student’s ability to sit for long periods or pose additional risk during long car rides?
Ride Time Constraint	Due to student-specific needs or limitations, the student’s scheduled ride time cannot exceed a duration defined by the IEP team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a record of a physician’s note providing medical reasoning or justification for the student to be transported within a specific timeframe or limitation? • Does the student have specific needs (behavioral, physical, or other) or medical concerns that affect the student’s ability to sit for long periods or pose additional risk during long car rides?

OSSE DOT SUPPORTS FOR LEAS

In addition to student-level accommodations and services, OSSE DOT provides supports for LEAs in ensuring the appropriate utilization of OSSE DOT services and the safe transport of students with disabilities. These supports include:

- *IEP Team Meeting Facilitation:* A member of the OSSE DOT Safety and Training Team can provide support to LEAs or IEP teams in reviewing a student’s specific needs to provide guidance on appropriate accommodations, services, or supports to ensure the safe transport of the student on OSSE DOT vehicles.
- *Student Behavior Observation:* A member of the OSSE DOT Safety and Training Team will ride the OSSE DOT vehicle to observe a student after repeated documented behavior incidents. OSSE DOT will then meet with the LEA and parent to discuss necessary changes to the student’s transportation services to address behavior challenges or needs.
- *LEA Training:* A member of the OSSE DOT Safety and Training Team can provide broad training for LEA staff to support understanding of OSSE DOT operations and available student-level OSSE DOT vehicle accommodations and services.

OSSE DOT Vehicle Accommodation Guidance
July 2024

For more information on supports for LEAs available from OSSE DOT, please contact the OSSE DOT Safety and Training Team at DOT.safetytraining@dc.gov.

If you have questions regarding LEA special education obligations, please contact the Division of Systems and Supports, K-12 special education policy team at OSSE.DSEpolicy@dc.gov.

If you have questions regarding the provision of student transportation services, please contact the Division of Student Transportation at osse.dot@dc.gov.