

# **Argenta-Oreana Transportation**

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)**

### **1. How do I arrange bus transportation for my student?**

All registration is now completed online. Be sure to fill out the transportation registration section to ensure your student receives a bus assignment. Additionally, you may call the Transportation Office at 217-795-4417, and we will be happy to assist you.

### **2. How do I know when and where the bus will pick up my student in the morning?**

After all student routing is completed a text message and email notification will be sent to the listed primary guardian for each student. If you have not received the notification, call the Transportation Office and we can give you the bus stop location and the approximate pick up/drop off times for that stop. Students should be at the bus stop waiting at least **5 minutes** before the bus arrives.

### **3. What should a parent do when the parent wants her child to ride home on a different bus than normal?**

The preferred method of communication would be for the parents to send a note to school with the child detailing what bus the child needs to ride home that day. The note should be given to the teacher who will notify the office. A bus pass will be issued. If you have forgotten the note, please call the Transportation Office before 2 p.m. so that the proper arrangements can be made.

### **4. Are districts required to provide transportation for regular education pre-kindergarten students?**

No. Districts may provide transportation to prekindergarten regular education students, but are not required to do so. If a district elects to transport regular education prekindergarten students, they may claim reimbursement if the student(s) rides on a regular route with other kindergarten through grade 12 students. If prekindergarten regular education students are transported on an exclusive pre kindergarten route then they are considered non-reimbursable for claim purposes. Statutory Citation: 105 ILCS 5/29-5 Administrative Rule: 23 Ill Admin Code, Section 120.30(a)

### **5. Are districts required to provide door-to-door transportation for prekindergarten or elementary-age students?**

No, unless it is required per the Individualized Education Program (IEP) of a student with disabilities. Parents/guardians are responsible to see that the child is at the scheduled bus stop in time to board the school bus to go to school and be at the bus stop upon the child's return at the end of the school day. During drop off, a parent or guardian must be present at the bus stop for prekindergarten and kindergarten students (See #21).

6. **Is the driver of a school bus required to see that a child reaches their home or destination safely after the student exits the bus at an assigned stop?**

No. Once the child departs the bus, the parent is responsible between the bus stop and the home.

7. **Is the district required to transport students who live less than one and one-half miles from their assigned attendance center?**

No. School boards may provide transportation for pupils living less than one and one-half miles as measured by the customary route of travel from the school attended and may make a charge for such transportation in an amount not to exceed the cost thereof, which shall include a reasonable allowance for depreciation of the vehicles so used. Statutory Citation: 105 ILCS 5/29-2

8. **How is the one and one-half miles measured?**

State statute defines the measurement as the distance from the exit of the property where the pupil resides to the point where pupils are normally unloaded at the school attended; such distance shall be measured by determining the shortest distance on normally traveled roads or streets. Statutory Citation: 105 ILCS 5/29-3 Administrative Rule: 23 Ill Admin Code, Section 120.30(a)(1)(A)

9. **Who determines the locations of the bus stops (pickup/drop-off points)?**

School bus pickup/drop-off points are determined by the transportation director and the superintendent. The school board of the district is required to establish the bus stops (pickup/drop-off points) for eligible students at a point located not more than one and one-half miles from the exit of the property of each pupil assigned to such point. The school district is not required to provide door-to-door service. Statutory Citation: 105 ILCS 5/29-3

10. **What is a serious safety hazard?**

A serious safety hazard exists when a pupil is required to walk along normally traveled roads or streets where walking is alleged to constitute a serious safety hazard due to vehicular traffic or rail crossings, or is required to walk between their home and assigned school or between their home or assigned school and a pickup point or bus stop along roads or streets where walking is alleged to constitute a serious safety hazard due to vehicular traffic or rail crossings. Statutory Citation: 105 ILCS 5/29-3

11. **Who determines that a serious safety hazard exists?**

The determination as to what constitutes a serious safety hazard is determined by the school board, in accordance with guidelines established by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and in consultation with the State Superintendent of Education. IDOT will review the findings of the school board and approve or disapprove the school board's determination that a serious safety hazard exists within 30 days after the school board submits its findings to the department. If a hazard is determined to exist, the school board shall annually review the conditions and determine whether or not the hazardous conditions remain unchanged. The State Superintendent of Education may request that IDOT verify that the conditions have not changed. Statutory Citation: 105 ILCS 5/29-3

**12. If a parent/guardian believes a serious safety hazard exists for their child, does the school board of the district have to file the required forms with the Illinois Department of Transportation?**

Yes. A parent or guardian can submit a petition in writing (letter or email) on behalf of a pupil for whom adequate transportation for the public is alleged not to exist because the pupil is required to walk along normally traveled roads or streets where walking is alleged to constitute a serious safety hazard due to vehicular traffic or rail crossings or the pupil is required to walk between their home and assigned school or between their home or assigned school and a pickup point or bus stop along roads or streets where walking is alleged to constitute a serious safety hazard due to vehicular traffic or rail crossings. A school board shall conduct a study and make findings, which the Illinois Department of Transportation shall review and approve or disapprove. Statutory Citation: 105 ILCS 5/29-3

**13. Is there a time limit a student can spend on the school bus?**

No. However, districts are encouraged to limit the travel time to not more than one hour one way.

**14. Can a district install recording devices on school buses?**

Yes. Public Act 95-0352 allows both a visual and audio recording to be made on the interior of a school bus when transportation is provided for any school-related activity. Notice of such recordings will have to be provided to parents and students and be clearly posted on the entrance door and inside the school bus. Recordings must be kept confidential and can only be used by school officials and law enforcement personnel for disciplinary actions or prosecutions related to incidents occurring in or around the school bus. Statutory Citation: 720 ILCS 5/14-3(m)

**15. Can a school bus enter private property to drop off or pick up a student?**

No. A school bus cannot enter private property without the written consent of the owner of the property. If the roadway being traveled is not maintained for the weight of the vehicles using the roadway and turn-arounds are not provided for school buses, bus drivers should not endanger other children on the bus by making pickups that are hazardous.

**16. Are districts required to provide regular education transportation for summer school?**

No. A district that provides transportation for pupils to and from the school attended may provide transportation for students of the district to and from summer school and may charge for such transportation in an amount not to exceed the cost thereof, which may include a reasonable allowance for depreciation of the vehicles so used, provided no charge is made for students with disabilities. Statutory Citation: 105 ILCS 5/29-3.2a

**17. Are districts required to recognize day care centers for transportation purposes?**

No. If a pupil is at a location within the school district other than his residence for child care purposes at the time for transportation to school, that location may be considered for purposes of determining the one and one-half miles from the school attended. Each school board must locally decide if it will adopt a local policy for transportation to and from day care centers. At the district's discretion, its policy may limit pickup and drop off to students in day care locations along the district's regular routes, or it may extend services via newly established routes. In either case, the district shall not

discriminate among types of locations where day care is provided, which may include, but need not be limited to, the premises of licensed providers, the homes of relatives, or the homes of neighbors, any of which must be located within the district's boundaries. Statutory Citation: 105 ILCS 5/29-5

**18. Are students allowed to eat or drink on a school bus?**

The Illinois State Board of Education highly recommends that all districts adopt a policy prohibiting eating on a school bus. This includes the school bus driver. The primary responsibility of the school bus driver is to transport children to and from school, between attendance centers or on extracurricular or interscholastic trips safely. To do that, the driver must keep his/her eyes on the road, mindful of the movement of traffic around the school bus. The driver also has responsibility to control the conduct of the students on the bus. The close-spaced, high seatbacks prevent the driver from seeing all of the activities of the students on the bus, including eating. Depending on the circumstances, the driver may not be able to reach a child in time to prevent the child from choking to death. Coaches or other teachers or chaperones on extracurricular trips are not necessarily certified to administer first aid in an emergency. The driver is ultimately responsible for what happens on the school bus. If students are on a trip and eating is scheduled on the way, the bus must be stopped long enough for students to safely eat and the bus to be cleaned of trash.

**19. What should I do if my student is being bullied on the bus or at the bus stop?**

The school bus and the bus stop are considered an extension of school grounds. Any bullying, fighting or other incidents should be reported to the applicable school principal immediately. The principal will investigate the incident and determine what action should be taken to prevent future incidents. Disciplinary actions up to and including expulsion from district transportation CAN result from incidents occurring on the bus and at the bus stop.

**20. My student's bus is late who do I call?**

Please understand that poor weather conditions or other unavoidable situations may delay a bus for five to ten minutes. If the bus is more than ten minutes late, please feel free to call the Transportation Office at 217-795-4417

**21. I have a Pre-K or Kindergarten student. Do I have to be at the bus stop for drop off?**

Yes, for the safety of our younger students Argenta-Oreana Transportation requires that a Parent/Guardian ***must*** be visible or present at the bus stop for all students under first grade.

**22. Do our School Buses have seatbelts?**

There are no seat belts on our school buses. School buses are the safest way to transport your children to and from school. The color and size of school buses make them easily visible and identifiable, their height provides good driver visibility and raises the bus passenger compartment above car impact height.

School buses are carefully designed on a different transportation and protection model than the average passenger car. The children are protected like eggs in an egg carton – compartmentalized, and

surrounded with padding and structural integrity to secure the entire container. The seat backs are raised and the shell is reinforced for protection against impact.

There are other differences to consider between your car and your child's school bus. In your car, you can supervise your child and ensure that your child's belt remains properly secured. School buses use what is called "passive restraint," meaning all a child must do to be protected is simply sit down in a seat. School buses also must be designed to be multi-purpose, fitting everything from a six year-old to an 18 year-old senior on the high school football team in full uniform. Sometimes it's two to a seat, other times three. Because of this, emphasis is placed on protecting the entire valuable cargo. There has been much debate as to whether or not school buses should be required have seat belts, at this time seat belts are **NOT** required on school buses in the state of Illinois.

**23. What should I do if I believe a bus is driving unsafely?**

If you believe a bus has been driven in an unsafe manner, please contact A-O Transportation at 217-795-4417 immediately.

**24. What should I do if I believe a bus driver has behaved inappropriately?**

Argenta-Oreana operates under a well-defined chain-of-command. The best place to take a concern is to the person(s) most directly involved. You are encouraged to call the bus driver; however, if the situation cannot be resolved at the lowest level or if you are uncomfortable taking your concern to the bus driver, you can take it to the next level in the chain-of-command by calling the Transportation Director, Trevor Rigg, at 217-795-4417. If this does not resolve your concern, you can contact AOHS Principal, Sean German at 217-795-4821. If this does not resolve your concern, you can contact District Superintendent, Damian Jones at 217-795-2313. Finally, the last contact in the chain-of-command is the board of education.

Meetings between parents and the transportation director can be arranged at the bus garage.

NOTE: It is illegal for a parent to board a bus to confront the driver about a concern.

**25. After an incident on the bus, can I review video surveillance footage of my student?**

Due to other students being on the bus, all video surveillance footage is considered a confidential student file and ***cannot*** be reviewed by parents upon request.