

LEARN
TRANSPORTATION
DEPARTMENT

PARENT/GUARDIAN
HANDBOOK

2014-2015

LETTER FROM THE TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR

Dear Parent (s) / Guardian (s):

We want you to know, as parent (s) and/or guardian (s) of students transported by LEARN, that our Transportation Department is committed to providing the highest level of support and service to you and your children.

Our goal is to ensure a safe and pleasant trip to and from school, activity or program which will enhance the opportunity for a positive learning environment for each student on a daily basis.

Please read and familiarize yourself this handbook as it will assist us in providing quality transportation services for the students this school year.

Please feel free to contact me if you have concerns, questions, or comments regarding LEARN's transportation services. Although we will do our best to address any issues you may bring to our attention, it is important to note that on most occasions, LEARN is contracted by your child's school district; while on other occasions, transportation programs may be funded through other sources (local, state, or private). Therefore, there may be times when another office staff or I will refer you to the sending district, or to another representative with your concerns. This must occur if the request impacts on the contract stipulations or on the program(s) being funded.

Thank you in advance for your help, and best wishes for a new and exciting learning experience during the 2014-15 school year.

Sincerely,

Cathy Heath
Transportation Coordinator

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Appendix 1: Parent/Guardian/Group Home Responsibilities

Parent (s), guardian (s), or group home staff are requested to complete the Emergency Information Form provided for the student by the LEARN Transportation Department. There are two (2) copies of the Emergency Information form. One copy is included in the handbook (See Appendix 3: Confidential Emergency Information Form on Page (5) for your records). The second copy (yellow) should be filled out as completely as possible, with special attention paid to phone numbers and/or addresses of responsible persons to be contacted in case of an emergency. This form should then be returned to the LEARN Transportation Department: please also include a picture of the student, if available. The picture is helpful to all parties concerned, in the event of an emergency. **Please attach the picture to the designated area on the form, prior to sending the form back to LEARN (this envelope may be handed to driver or may be mailed to LEARN: a self-addressed envelope will be provided if needed). This information is kept confidential, and is only used in case of emergency.**

Encourage your child to obey LEARN's Safety Rules and Regulations for riding the vehicle, and encourage proper behavior while riding (See Appendix 5: Rules to be Followed While Riding on a LEARN Vehicle on Page 7)

Have your child ready to board the vehicle 3 minutes before his/her scheduled pick-up time. **The driver is NOT REQUIRED to wait more than 3 minutes, to honk the horn, knock on your door, or to return for your child at a later time.** Parent (s)/ Guardian (s) are responsible for assisting the child to and from the vehicle if this assistance is required. The LEARN drivers make every attempt to stay on a regular schedule, but on occasion, time can fluctuate due to traffic, road conditions, or special situations with other students. With your cooperation, vehicles can run on schedule, as much as possible.

In the event your child will not attend school on any given day, please notify the driver ahead of time. Try to inform the driver the day before if you are aware of his/her absence. **If there is an emergency, or you were unable to notify your driver, you can contact the LEARN Transportation Department @ 434-4800. Cathy Heath is in the office as early as 6:00AM and can be reached at extension 163.** As previously explained, voice mail is available before and after normal office hours (8:00AM to 4:30 PM), and someone is usually in the office to take your call by 6:00AM, but please try to inform the driver early. **Please do not call drivers at their residences or on their personal cell phones.**

For easier communication, please learn the number of the van your child rides (white numbers located on both sides, and the rear of each vehicle), as well as the name of your child's driver (they will introduce themselves).

Appendix 1: Parent/Guardian/Group Home Responsibilities, Cont.

LEARN policy does not allow the driver to leave a student unattended on the vehicle, or when delivered to the assigned address at the end of the school day. You must make arrangements for elementary age, and disabled students to have a designated person meet them at the van, and take responsibility for the student. Failure of the parent or guardian to have a responsible person (age thirteen or over) meet the van will be handled in the following manner:

The driver will notify the Transportation Coordinator (or designee), so that proper phone calls can be made (i.e. Board of Education, emergency numbers listed). If possible, the driver will keep the student on the van until he/she has finished the route. If the parent or guardian is still not home, or cannot be reached within a reasonable time, the student will be released to the local law enforcement agency, or local Board of Education office (per District request). However, LEARN will make every possible effort to contact parent, guardian, or a responsible person whom parents or guardians have designated on the Emergency Information Form, prior to notifying the local law enforcement agency.

Except where contract specifies otherwise (IE. **Colchester** contract states that any changes in authorized routes needs to be submitted to the Board of Education for approval), if you wish to have your child dropped off at a different location, please put this request in writing in advance for prior authorization. We understand that emergencies do occur, so in an emergency, please hand the written request to the driver (or have the child give the written request to his/her driver). The driver will forward the written request to the Transportation Coordinator (or designee) immediately following the run for review for proper signature. No guarantees can be made concerning our ability to do this, but we will make every effort to assist you. It is important to note that extra riders (student's friends, parents, guardians, or siblings) are not allowed on LEARN vans without prior authorization from the district and LEARN Transportation Department.

IT IS ESSENTIAL that you provide the Transportation Department with current emergency phone numbers or addresses in the event parents or guardians are unavoidably detained, and cannot meet the vehicle.

Appendix 2: Behavior Expectations

Unless contract specifies otherwise (IE. **Colchester** contract states that all safety and conduct concerns will be referred to the Board of Education), if your child displays disruptive or difficult behavior, the driver may fill out a triplicate Vehicle Safety Report Form, and deliver it to the Transportation Coordinator. One copy of the report will be given to the classroom teacher the day of the incident if possible, but within twenty-four hours of the incident. One copy will be given to the parent/guardian the same day if possible, but no later than twenty-four hours after the incident (if incident occurs on a Friday, all efforts will be made to submit the form by the Monday, following the incident). Depending on the severity of the behavior, a student may receive a verbal or a written warning, may be suspended from the van for a period of 24 or 48-hours (or longer depending on the severity of the incident). Every attempt will be made to contact the parent/guardian for discussion and results of the incident.

The purpose of this report is to establish a communication link between the teacher, school district, van driver, and parents, so that any behavioral challenges your child might present can be monitored and more efficiently resolved. Generally, an incident occurring after one month of incident free transportation will be considered a first offense.

A STUDENT'S SUSPENSION FROM VEHICLE PRIVILEGES DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN EXCUSED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL; therefore parents are responsible for providing transportation to and from school during the vehicle suspension period.

Parents will be responsible for any intentional damage or destruction of vehicle property by their child.

Every student must wear his or her seatbelt at all times the vehicle is traveling on the road.

With all concerned parties working together, it is hoped that any potential problems might be prevented.

A **SAMPLE** copy of the incident report form is in this handbook (See Appendix 4: LEARN Vehicle Safety Report on Page 6).

Appendix 3: Confidential Emergency Information Form

Attach Picture
Here

LEARN TRANSPORTATION

The following information should be provided by parent/guardian for students requiring transportation. **PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION.**

Name of Student _____ Date of Birth _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Home Address _____

Home Phone _____ Parent's/Guardian's Work Phone _____

IF PICK-UP OR DROP-OFF IS DIFFERENT FROM HOME ADDRESS FILL OUT:

A.M. Pick-Up Location _____

P.M. Drop-Off Location _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Name _____ Phone _____

EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION

Student's Doctor _____ Telephone # _____

Hospital Address _____ Telephone # _____

Allergies _____ Current Medication/Dosage _____

Special Instructions: _____

CIRCLE ANY INFORMATION WHICH IS APPLICABLE:

Verbal	Non-Verbal	Ambulatory	Non-Ambulatory
Epileptic	Hemophiliac	Visually Impaired	Autistic
Mentally Challenged	Hard of Hearing	Diabetic	Physically Challenged
Other: _____		Students Primary Language: _____	

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR DEALING WITH STUDENT: (i.e. language, behavior)

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

Appendix 4: LEARN Vehicle Safety Report

Student _____ Driver _____

Date of Incident _____ School _____

Notice to Parents

1. The Purpose of this report is to inform you of an incident involving your son/daughter while riding on the LEARN vehicle.
2. We urge you to appreciate our concern in this matter and cooperate with us in the final action we have taken today.
3. ***Van suspension does not constitute an excused absence. Parents are responsible for transporting their children during van suspension period.***

INFRACTION

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improper Boarding/Departing Procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> Failure to Remain Seated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bringing Articles Aboard Vehicle of Injurious or Objectionable Nature | <input type="checkbox"/> Refusing to Obey Driver |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fighting/Pushing/Tripping | <input type="checkbox"/> Hanging out of Window |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Throwing Objects in or out of Vehicle | <input type="checkbox"/> Unnecessary Noise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rude, Discourteous and Annoying Conduct or Language | <input type="checkbox"/> Destruction of Property |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tampering with Vehicle Equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please Explain) |

DESCRIBE INCIDENT OR BEHAVIOR

ACTION TAKEN BY TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discussed incident with driver | <input type="checkbox"/> Telephoned parent/guardian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Investigated incident further | <input type="checkbox"/> Informed student of proposed final action |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter to parent/guardian | <input type="checkbox"/> Informed LEA of incident |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 24-hour suspension from vehicle | <input type="checkbox"/> 48-hour suspension from vehicle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 72-hour suspension from vehicle | <input type="checkbox"/> Informed teacher/SPED Dept. |

Appendix 5: Rules to be Followed While Riding on a LEARN Vehicle

These rules were established with your child's safety in mind. These rules must be followed.

1. **All students must wear a seatbelt at all times.** Offenders will be written up on a Vehicle Safety Report form.
2. **Students will be picked up at a designated time.** Please be looking for your child's vehicle, as the Driver will wait three minutes and then leave. If your child misses his/her ride more than twice in one week, please notify the Transportation Coordinator. **Drivers are not required to wait more than three (3) minutes, to "honk" their horn to alert a student of their arrival, or to return to pick a student up at a later time.**
3. **NO EATING OR DRINKING.** Offenders will be written up on a Vehicle Safety Report form.
4. **NO FIGHTING OR HITTING.** Offenders will be written up on a Vehicle Safety Report form.
5. **NO THROWING ARTICLES IN OR OUTSIDE OF VAN.** Offenders will be written up on a Vehicle Safety Report form.
6. **NO SMOKING.** Students are not allowed to smoke on LEARN vans. Offenders will be written up on a Vehicle Safety Report form.
7. **NO SWEARING.** Offenders will be written up on a Vehicle Safety Report form.
8. Generally, animals are not allowed on LEARN vehicles. Prior authorization may be given.
9. **NO YELLING.** Students are encouraged to communicate among themselves, but noise levels should be kept to a minimal, so as not to distract the driver.
10. Prior to leaving the van, each child or parent should make sure all personal belongings have been collected. Students should go directly to their designated drop off point.

Appendix 6: Holiday Calendar and/or Inclement Weather

Generally, LEARN does not transport any students when the LEARN Administrative office is closed due to Holiday, inclement weather, etc. Please see enclosed LEARN Holiday calendar for observed holiday schedule, and when the LEARN office will be closed (See Appendix 7: LEARN Holiday Calendar on Page 9).

Snow and inclement weather may be a problem throughout the winter months. The following explains LEARN's policy for transportation when schools are closed . LEARN drivers and parents should listen to local radio stations for school closings and delays. The decision as to whether or not a student will be transported to school is based on two factors:

1. If the school district in which the student resides has closed school, LEARN will not transport. When the town has canceled school it is because the roads are considered unsafe for transporting school children. Therefore, LEARN will not transport children in that town.
2. If the school district to which the student is being transported to cancels, the student is not picked up by the LEARN vehicle.

LEARN will also follow the same guidelines for DELAYS due to inclement weather. When a delay has been established by a town or school, the LEARN driver will attempt to contact all the parents of his/her students to let them know when to expect the van. When there is a 60-minutes delay or 90-minutes delay, this will mean that normally the driver will be there to pick the student up 60-minutes or 90-minutes later than the normal pick up. There are occasions when there are numerous delays, and when road conditions are more challenging. During these times, we would greatly appreciate your patience and understanding, since there may be a fluctuation in these times.

Appendix 7: LEARN Holiday Calendar