OFFICE OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION
ALEXANDRA ROBINSON, *Executive Director*
44-36 Vernon Boulevard, Long Island City, NY 11101
Telephone: (718) 392-8855

General Information for Parents and Guardians Regarding Exceptions to the DOE's Grade/Distance Eligibility Requirements for Pupil Transportation

Please read the following information carefully before applying for an exception to the grade and distance requirements that govern pupil transportation. Unnecessary applications, incomplete or illegible requests or those missing required documentation cannot be processed and will be returned.

In general, the Department of Education provides transportation to pupils under the following circumstances:

- On "door-to-door" buses for those identified with special needs ("special education" or "SE" pupils) who *also* have an Individualized Education Plan ("IEP") that requires specialized transportation,
- On "stop-to-school" buses for students without special needs ("general education" or "GE" pupils) who attend schools that offer bus service *and* who meet certain grade distance eligibility requirements,
- On "stop-to-school" buses for "SE" pupils who do not have IEPs requiring door-to-door busing *and* who also attend schools that offer bus service.

SE pupils without IEPs requiring door-to-door busing and GE pupils who do not meet the grade and distance eligibility requirements and attend schools that do not offer bus service receive MetroCards for MTA bus or subway service for transportation.

Complete information on the DOE's transportation requirements can be found on page four, below, and at the following location: DOE grade/distance eligibility information. Given these requirements, requests for exceptions will only be approved when clear and convincing reasons are presented for the exception. Please review the following information to gain a general understanding of the conditions that justify an exception before completing and submitting a request. In particular, please take note of the following:

- If your child attends a non-public school, including charter schools or other private schools, please confirm with the school that they have used the appropriate pupil enrollment system (ATS for charter schools, NPSIS for other non-public schools) to request transportation **before submitting a request for an exception**. Please also be sure to include the student identification number created when the student is registered on ATS or NPSIS on your exception request. Requests received without complete information, including the student identification number, cannot be processed and will be returned.
- If your child is a GE or an SE pupil eligible for and already assigned to a stop-to-school bus stop (a corner stop), ***do not submit a request for an exception*** if you are asking to have your child assigned to another bus stop. Instead, speak with your school and request that they use the OPT-provided "OPT-199" computer application to assign the child to another stop.
- If your child is an SE pupil already assigned to a door-to-door bus, ***do not submit a request for an exception*** if you are asking for other/additional special medical accommodations. Instead, speak with your school or the Committee on Special Education to have the pupil's IEP amended to include these other accommodations.

General information for parents/guardians regarding exceptions to transportation requirements

Requests for exceptions to the grade and distance requirements that apply to all general education pupils and to special education pupils who do not have IEPs that require door-to-door busing may be submitted under the following circumstances:

- In cases where the pupil's medical condition may require transportation, parents or guardians should use the **"Medical Evaluation Request"** to apply for an exception. Please note that such exceptions are based on the ***pupil's*** condition. Exceptions are ***not*** made in cases where the parent or guardian has a medical condition or disability that may prevent them accompanying their child to school. Evaluations of medical requests are referred to physicians in the DOE Medical Office. Decisions on these cases are not made by OPT.
- In cases where the parent or guardian believes that the child would encounter a hazard on their walk to or from school or on their way to or from an MTA bus or subway stop, parents may use the **"Hazard Evaluation Request"** to apply for an exception. Please note that these exceptions are granted ***only*** in connection with traffic-related conditions such as:
  - The pupil must use a narrow bridge or overpass with no sidewalks or shoulders,
  - The pupil must cross railroad tracks,
  - The pupil must walk in an area lacking sidewalks or shoulders along the route to or from school or to or from a public bus stop or subway station (paved sidewalks are ***not*** required),
  - The pupil must cross one or more intersections without satisfactory traffic control devices.

  Exceptions based on hazardous conditions are limited to the circumstances described above that result from unsafe traffic, traffic control conditions, dangerous crossings, or areas impassable to pedestrians. Students are expected to walk along established streets and sidewalks available to regular auto or pedestrian traffic, or satisfactory off-road paths (paved sidewalks are ***not*** required), in order to reach school. If you are requesting consideration due to hazardous conditions, both the nature and the specific location of the hazard must be indicated. Requests that do not specify the specific location(s) of the areas of concern will be returned. Evaluations of hazardous conditions are completed in conformity with "Child Safety Zone" standards developed by the New York State Department of Transportation. Additional information on the procedures employed to evaluate hazardous areas may be found here.

- Parents or guardians may use the **"Emergency Evaluation Request"** to apply for an exception to OPT's normal rules for pupil transportation in cases where:
  - The pupil was the victim of a crime that occurred on the way to or from school,
  - The parents have joint physical custody and the pupil lives part-time with each parent,
  - The pupil is temporarily homeless and does **NOT** live in a shelter,
  - The pupil is identified as a protected party in a current Order of Protection.

  Exceptions based on emergencies are limited to the circumstances described above. They are not approved because parents or guardians have medical conditions or other disabilities, in cases of financial hardship, when parents or guardians feel that there are unsavory persons in the area the child must pass to get to school, or in connection with general concerns about crime in the area where the child has to travel.

  Requests for emergency evaluations ***must*** be submitted with appropriate supporting documentation (copies of NYPD incident reports, copies of Protective Orders, custody agreements, etc.). Incomplete or illegible forms or those missing required documentation cannot be processed and will be returned to the pupil's parent or guardian.

General information for parents/guardians regarding exceptions to transportation requirements

- Parents or guardians who have a substantial reason to believe that the DOE's measurement of the distance from home to school is incorrect may use the **"Distance Evaluation Request"** to apply for a distance evaluation. Before doing so, however, parents and guardians should be aware of the following:

  - A pupil's eligibility for transportation changes according to the pupil's grade level,
  - OPT's distance measurements are based on data provided by the NYC Department of City Planning and are taken as definitive. The Department of Education does not use commercial software applications such as MapQuest© or Google© for distance measurements and those products occasionally provide different results,
  - The DOE's distance measurement is extremely accurate: of close to 400 requests for distance evaluations received in 2013-2014, only 6 (1.5%) were approved as a result of an error found in the DOE's measurement,
  - As authorized by Chancellor's Regulation A-801, the Office of Pupil Transportation will only evaluate an appeal to a pupil's calculated distance from their home to the school when there is a legitimate question concerning student eligibility.

  Requests for distance evaluations that do not provide any evidence to indicate that the DOE's measurement is in error or fail to identify a legitimate question regarding the distance determination will be returned. Further information regarding how the Department of Education determines the distance between a pupil's home and school may be found of page five, below.

- Parents or guardians with children in school or emancipated minors who are temporarily homeless may use the **"Temporary Housing Transportation Request"** to apply for an exception to OPT's normal rules for pupil transportation in the following circumstances:

  - If they are living in a temporary housing facility or a domestic violence shelter,
  - **And** were placed in that facility or shelter by a New York City government agency,
  - **And** the NYC Department of Education does ***not*** have a Family Assistant assigned to the facility or shelter to provide assistance with school enrollment or transportation.

  Families living in shelters where there are DOE Family Assistants assigned should speak with those individuals regarding school enrollment and to arrange for pupil transportation. Contact information for the DOE Office for Students in Temporary Housing, which supervises the Family Assistants, may be found here. If the pupil is temporarily homeless but does ***not*** live in a shelter, however, transportation should be requested by using an "Emergency Evaluation Request."

Complete information including instructions and the various application forms discussed above will be found at the locations shown on page six, below. **All forms and instructions should be those clearly labeled for the 2014-2015 school year.** If you have received an earlier version of a request form from your child's school, do not submit that. Obsolete forms or those lacking complete required additional documentation cannot be processed and will be returned. In addition, in order to maintain the legibility of these forms, we require that they be returned **BY MAIL**. DOE Interoffice Mail or "regular" US mail is adequate. Certified, express or overnight delivery is not required. **DO NOT FAX** forms to OPT.

Thank you for your cooperation.

GENERAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION ELIGIBILITY

According to Chancellor's Regulation A-801, transportation eligibility is determined on the basis of the student's grade level and the distance between the student's residence and school. The table below shows how student eligibility is determined.

		DISTANCE FROM RESIDENCE TO SCHOOL			
		Less than ½ mile A*	½ mile or more, but less than 1 mile B*	1 mile or more but less than 1½ miles C*	1½ miles or more D*
GRADE LEVEL	K-2	Not Eligible**	Eligible for Full Fare Transportation		
	3-6	Transportation Not Provided			
	7-12		Not Eligible**		

For example, reading this table will show that:

- A first-grader who lives 3/4 of a mile from school is eligible for full fare transportation.
- An eighth-grader who lives one mile from school is not eligible for full fare transportation.

*The A, B, C, and D designations are used by DOE computers to indicate these distance groups.

** Students in these categories are not eligible for full fare transportation. These students may receive a half fare student MetroCard good for use on buses only. These half fare MetroCards are provided as a courtesy by the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA).

FULL FARE TRANSPORTATION—Yellow Bus Service

Yellow bus service is provided from designated stops at designated times to and from schools receiving this service. In order for a student to receive yellow bus service, all of the following criteria must be met:

- The student must be eligible for full fare transportation as shown in the chart above.
- The student's school must have yellow bus service.
- The student must be in grades K-6.
- The student's residence must be in the same district as the school (if attending a public school) or the same borough (if attending a charter or non-public school).
- The bus route must have at least eleven students.
- The bus must travel on a route that travels no more than five miles from its first stop, through all of the stops on the route, to the schools.
- If all of the above criteria are met, students may request yellow bus service at their school. Eligible students may be assigned to a bus stop by the school if a stop exists or can be created within their grade and distance eligibility. Students must use the same stop both in the morning and the afternoon.

More information about general education eligibility is available at
schools.nyc.gov/Offices/Transportation/ServicesandEligibility/BusTransportation

Office of Pupil Transportation
44-36 Vernon Boulevard
Long Island City, NY 11101
(718) 392-8855
schools.nyc.gov/offices/transportation

06/18/14AVN

How does the DOE determine the distance from home to school?

The Office of Pupil Transportation measures a student's walking distance from home to school using precise map data including home address locations and school front entrance locations identified by latitude and longitude at a point perpendicular to the street centerline. The shortest pedestrian accessible walking path between these points is measured using a street map called LION that is maintained by the New York City Department of City Planning. Since the measurement is through the street centerline, it does not include any distance that would be travelled to cross property to reach the street or any vertical distance that would be travelled from the upper floors of a building to reach the street. LION is a highly detailed and accurate map used by many NYC municipal services, including the NYC Police and NYC Fire Departments.

Though the process by which OPT determines the shortest walking path to school for each student may be similar to that used in Google Maps and other mapping products, the underlying map is different and a distance determination by OPT may vary from the result obtained by Google Maps or other commercial products such as MapQuest, BING, etc. The vendors of commercial products such as Google do not make the procedure by which they determine distance available to the public, so OPT cannot evaluate their result in comparison to LION and, since this is not publically available, also cannot evaluate why they may arrive at one measurement while LION provides another. LION is the NYC standard: it is the DOE's "official map" for distance determinations, and many other City agencies also rely on it when providing public services. For more information on LION, please visit the New York City Department of City Planning's LION webpage at this location: NYC DCP LION information.

OFFICE OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION
ALEXANDRA ROBINSON, *Executive Director*
44-36 Vernon Boulevard, Long Island City, NY 11101
Telephone: (718) 392-8855

Emergency Exception Request Form and Instructions:
http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/Transportation/ServicesandEligibility/BusTransportation/Variances/Emergency Exception Request Form and Instructions

Medical Exception Request Form and Instructions:
http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/Transportation/ServicesandEligibility/BusTransportation/Variances/Medical Exception Request Form and Instructions

Hazard Exception Request Form and Instructions:
http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/Transportation/ServicesandEligibility/BusTransportation/Variances/Hazard Exception Request Form and Instructions

Distance Evaluation Request Form and Instructions:
http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/Transportation/ServicesandEligibility/BusTransportation/Variances/Distance Evaluation Request Form and Instructions

Temporary Housing Exception Request Form and Instructions:
http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/Transportation/ServicesandEligibility/BusTransportation/Variances/Temporary Exception Request Form and Instructions