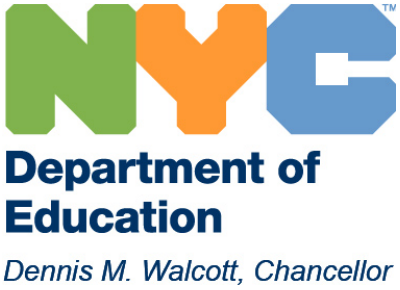

OFFICE OF PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

NPSIS TRANSPORTATION PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES GUIDE

Office of School Support Services
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Long Island City, NY 11101
OPT Customer Service: (718) 392-8855
OPT Web address: http://schools.nyc.gov/offices/transportation/default.htm

Updated 01/2011

Managing Transportation Services using NPSIS

These materials have been created for non-public school staff to assist in managing the critical processes required to provide all eligible students safe, clean, and timely transportation to and from school. This guide focuses on several key functions performed regularly in schools, highlights time-sensitive tasks, and reviews processes necessary during specific times of the school year.

Non-Public schools use three main tools to effectively manage transportation for their students.

Non-Public School Information System (NPSIS)

- Student address and contact information
- Set Transportation function allow schools to identify specific transportation services for eligible students
  - MetroCards
  - Yellow Bus stops
- Ridership Report provides a management tool to review transportation for eligible students
- Deactivation of student MetroCards

OPT 199 Application

- Schools add, adjust, or delete Yellow Bus Stops

Non-Public Schools Calendar Application

- Identify specific dates a non-public school is open and requires service on days when DOE schools may be closed

Non-Public Schools with Special Education students work closely with their CSE chairperson to manage transportation requirements mandated by student IEPs for door-to-door transportation. Non-Public Special Education schools also complete the Non-Public Summer School and Fall reconciliation to identify students that require transportation for summer school programs and students that require transportation for the upcoming school year.

OPT Account Managers for Non-Public Schools

Account Managers are the main contact for schools to resolve transportation issues. Schools should contact their Account Manager for assistance and operational support.

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OPT Overview and Key Terms

Understanding key transportation practices and procedures helps build knowledge and skills for school staff in managing transportation services for students. Review the OPT Web site regularly for additional information, updates, and Frequently Asked Questions that are helpful for both schools and parents.

Eligibility

Eligibility is the key term that identifies which type of transportation service a student may receive. Eligibility for all General Education students is based on the student's grade and walking distance from home to school. A distance code (A, B, C, D) is displayed in NPSIS for each student once the student's address has been validated and school staff selects Set Transportation in NPSIS. The distance code and the student's grade identify the type of transportation a student is eligible to receive.

Full fare eligible means the student may receive full fare MetroCard **or** Yellow Bus transportation
Half fare means the student may receive a half fare MetroCard for use on MTA buses: students pay $1.10 of the required fare

Schools should direct parents to the OPT Web site for information and FAQs regarding eligibility determinations

Yellow Bus Transportation

OPT provides two distinct types of bus transportation for eligible students: General Ed transportation provides stop-to-school service and is managed by schools using NPSIS; Special Ed transportation provides door-to-door service and is managed in consultation with the schools' CSE chairperson.

Yellow School Bus Service (Stop-to-School)

Based on eligibility and existing Yellow Bus service at the child's school, students may be assigned to specific Yellow School Bus Stops. Schools assign individual students to bus stops in NPSIS. A **school bus stop** is a specific intersection where students wait to be picked up each day and are dropped off at the end of the day. A group of stops constitute a **Yellow Bus route**. Routes may serve one or more schools. Ridership Reports available on the OPT web site outline each school's bus routes and stops. Creating new stops, adjusting existing stops, and deleting stops no longer in use is done by school staff using the **OPT 199 application**. A link to the OPT 199 application is available on the OPT Web site.

> **Please Note:**
> While the majority of students receiving stop-to-school service are General Ed students, Special Ed students may also be assigned Yellow Bus service (or a full-fare MetroCard) based on their travel requirements as outlined in their IEP. These services are managed using NPSIS.

Special Ed Transportation (Door-to-Door)

Door-to-door transportation for Special Ed students attending non-public schools is managed by the Committee on Special Education (CSE) for the geographical district where the school is located. Transportation for Special Ed students attending non-public schools outside New York City are managed by the CSE in the district where the student resides. Special Ed students receive door-to-door service based on their travel requirements as outlined in their IEP. OPT handles the routing for these students. Non-Public schools and CSE staff manage student data (address, contact information, medical alert codes that identify specific requirements) in order for OPT routers to effectively provide the correct type of transportation for each student. Parents of Special Ed students are able to request an alternate address for the afternoon (Change of Afternoon Drop) if needed: OPT will make every attempt to honor these requests. Parents complete a Change of Afternoon Drop form (available on the OPT Web site) and forward the completed form to OPT for review

MetroCards

MetroCards are distributed to eligible students for travel to and from school. Specific information regarding proper use and FAQs regarding student MetroCards are posted on the OPT Web site**.**

Full fare MetroCards provide students with **three trips** each school day and allow for one transfer from one type of transportation to another for each trip (bus-to-bus, train-to-bus, or bus-to-train). **Four-trip** MetroCards are available upon the request of the principal for students that must take three types of transportation to school each day (two buses and one train, three buses, etc).

Half fare MetroCards may be provided for students that live close to school for use in inclement weather or times when the student decides to ride public transportation rather than walk to school. Half fare cards are only valid on MTA buses: the student is required to pay $1.10 of the fare after dipping their MetroCard in the card reader.

School staff is responsible for these key actions:

- Identifying eligible students that will receive MetroCards in NPSIS
- Distributing individual cards (and replacement cards) to eligible students
- Recording serial numbers for each card provided to students using a paper log
- Deactivating lost or stolen cards
- Securing MetroCards while stored at the school

Schools receive and distribute different types of MetroCards (K-6 three- and four-trip, 7-12 three- and four-trip, K-12 Half-Fare, etc.) to eligible students. MetroCard shipments to schools are based solely on NPSIS data entry. Schools receive shipments of MetroCards from OPT for school opening (late August) and the start of the new term (mid-January). OPT announces data entry deadlines in advance to all schools: Managing deadlines to review and adjust student records will improve the accuracy MetroCard shipments.

MetroCard Inventory and Shipment Best Practices

- All students properly coded (3-Trip or 4-trip) for the type of MetroCard they require
- Review NPSIS Ridership report regularly to correct error codes
- Keep different types of MetroCards separated to eliminate errors in distribution

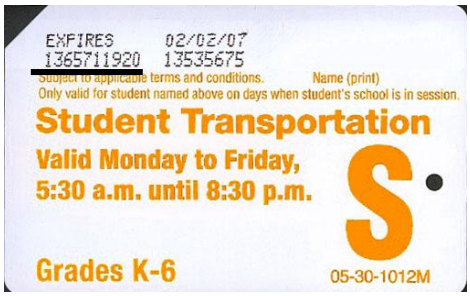
Security and Safety Best Practices

- Keep unassigned MetroCards in school safe
- Report thefts immediately to OPT: Police notification and a police report is required if thefts occur
- Schools may not lend cards to other schools: shipments and inventory updates are for specific schools only

Distribution Best Practices

- Use the Ridership report in NPSIS as the distribution log: Critical tool for auditing
- Have students sign for receipt of MetroCard: Maintain logs for six years
- Distribute cards only to eligible students: Provide correct type of MetroCard based on student's eligibility
- Lost cards replaced as soon as possible: No charge to students for replacement cards

Expiration Date and Serial Number



Each Student MetroCard has a ten-digit serial number

- Schools record the ten-digit serial number when assigning individual cards to students

MetroCards are programmed with a specific date they can begin to be used <u>and</u> a specific date they will expire

- OPT will advise schools which date the MetroCards can be used by students at the beginning of the spring term
  - MetroCards will not work if used before the activation date
- Cards are inactive past the expiration date and will not work in subway turnstiles or bus fare boxes

Schools handle expired MetroCards by cutting them in two and discarding them

Code on Invoice	MetroCard Type
MetroCards for K-6 students are Orange	
E1	**K-6** Full Fare Three-Trip
E3	**K-6** Full Fare Four-Trip <u>Four-Trip</u> cards are identified by the line underneath the words "Student Transportation"
E5	**Special Ed K-6** Full Fare
E6	**Special Ed K-6** Full Fare Four-Trip
MetroCards for 7-12 students are Green	
H1	**7-12** Full Fare Three-Trip
H3	**7-12** Full Fare Four-Trip Four-Trip cards are identified by the line underneath the words "Student Transportation"
H5	**Special Ed 7-12** Full Fare
H6	**Special Ed 7-12** Full Fare Four-Trip
H2	**K-12** Half Fare Student pays $1.10 fare Half-Fare MetroCards are **Green** and have **Bus Only** on the face of the card
<u>Good on Sunday</u> MetroCards are valid Sunday through Friday	

P1	**K-6** Full Fare Good on Sunday
P3	**K-6** Full Fare Four-Trip Good on Sunday
P5	**Special Ed K-6** Three-Trip Good on Sunday
S1	**7-12** Full Fare Good on Sunday
S2	**K-12** Half Fare Good on Sunday
S3	**7-12** Full Fare Four-Trip Good on Sunday
S5	**Special Ed 7-12** Three-Trip Good on Sunday

Variances

Variances address exceptions to standard OPT practices and procedures. Parents can request variances through OPT for the following issues:

Medical

Student requires exception due to medical issue. Medical documentation reviewed by DOE Medical for approval

Hazard

Student requires exception due to hazardous condition on walking route to school

Access

Student requires exception due to lack or infrequency of public transportation service

Emergency

Student requires exception due to emergency situation

Distance

Parent feels distance calculation is incorrect

Parents and schools can download Variance request forms from the OPT Web site. Instructions for completion and submission are included with the documents. If approved, schools will receive a letter with a **variance number** for entry on the student's individual record.

Main Transportation Functions in NPSIS

In general, schools manage student transportation issues using NPSIS by performing the following basic functions:

New General Ed Student: Place student in school roster

1. Add student using Student Info/Survey link on NPSIS home page
2. Validate address and save student data
3. Select "Set Transportation" to identify the type of transportation the child will use

   Select 3-trip or 4-trip for students eligible for a MetroCards for travel to and from school

   OR

   Assign eligible students Yellow Bus Stops for stop-to-school bus service

   Use an existing stop from the list of approved stops for the school

   If a stop does not exist use the OPT 199 application to add a stop: once approved and active, add the stop number to the student record
4. Enter Variance codes for students based on variance letters received from OPT.

Making a change to an existing General Ed Student: Locate student in school roster

1. Select "Set Transportation" to enter or adjust the type of transportation the child will use

   Select 3-trip or 4-trip for students eligible for a MetroCards for travel to and from school

   OR

   Assign eligible students Yellow Bus Stops for stop-to-school bus service

Use an existing stop from the list of approved stops for the school
If a stop does not exist use the OPT 199 application to add a stop: once approved and active, add the stop number to the student record

2. Enter Variance codes for students based on variance letters received from OPT.

Special Education Students:

1. Add student to school roster

   Special Education students that will use Yellow Bus transportation or receive a special education MetroCard

   Select Set Transportation

   - Select **Y** on Special Education drop-down menu
   - Select 3-trip or 4-trip for students eligible for a MetroCards for travel to and from school

OR

   - Assign eligible students Yellow Bus Stops for stop-to-school bus service
     1. Use an existing stop from the list of approved stops for the school
     2. If a stop does not exist use the OPT 199 application to add a stop: once approved and active, add the stop number to the student record

   Special Education students requiring door-to-door transportation

   - Contact CSE chairperson to discuss arrangements for door-to-door transportation. CSE will make necessary updates to inform OPT of the student's special transportation requirements.

   Please Note:

   School staff should always consult with the CSE and Transportation Account Manager to resolve issues and discuss best practices

Key terms and functions on the student screen in NPSIS

The main fields on a student's individual record in NPSIS are key areas: school staff makes adjustments or enters new information that affects the student' record and transportation. To open these fields for editing, click the "edit" button after selecting an individual student's record from the roster list.

Transportation Change Request

In this field schools have the ability to change the type of transportation for a student. A full-fare eligible student may be assigned a MetroCard or a Yellow Bus stop.

Distance Codes

Distance codes are automatically calculated when a student's address is validated. This field cannot be edited at the school level and transportation must be assigned according to the eligibility based on distance code.

Distance Code	Grade	Student Eligible For
A Less than ½ mile	K-2	**Half-Fare** MetroCard
	3-6	Not Eligible for Transportation
	7-12	Not Eligible for Transportation
B More than ½ mile, less than 1 mile	K-2	**Full Fare** MetroCard **OR** Yellow Bus
	3-6	**Half-Fare** MetroCard
	7-12	**Half-Fare** MetroCard
C 1 mile or more, less than 1½ miles	K-2	**Full Fare** MetroCard **OR** Yellow Bus
	3-6	**Full Fare** MetroCard **OR** Yellow Bus
	7-12	**Half-Fare** MetroCard
D 1 ½ miles or more	K-2	**Full Fare** MetroCard **OR** Yellow Bus
	3-6	**Full Fare** MetroCard **OR** Yellow Bus
	7-12	**Full Fare** MetroCard

Remember that eligibility is based on both grade and distance: Students will change eligibility as they advance in grade even though their home address remains the same.

Special Education

1. For SE students that will use Yellow Bus Service enter **Yes** and the assigned bus stop on the student's record
2. For SE students that receive a MetroCard enter **Yes** and select 3-Trip MetroCard – Schools will be sent Full fare Special Ed MetroCards for these students–Special Ed students, regardless of eligibility receive full fare SE MetroCards
3. For SE students with IEP-mandated door-to-door service requirements, contact the CSE chairperson to confirm student records are up to date and correct. No other data entry on the student screen in NPSIS is required. Check the Special Education Ridership Report on the OPT web site to verify door-to-door transportation for special education students.

Variance Number
Enter the variance number provided by OPT for when transportation is provided outside of regular OPT protocols.

MetroCard/Yellow Bus
This field will display the type of MetroCard that should be provided to the student.

Bus Stop (Change) Requested
At this drop-down menu choose an existing stop for the student from the list of approved stops available. If a stop does not exist, use the OPT 199 application to request a new stop. Once a new stop has been routed, enter the new stop number on the student's record.

OPT Granted Stop
This field will display the approved stop the child has been assigned.

Save Changes
This button must be clicked after making any changes during the edit process in order to save the changes made. Schools will see updated information 24hrs after making any changes to student records.

Negative List/Deactivate MetroCards
This function, available by clicking the transportation link on the left side of the NPSIS home page, allows schools to deactivate lost or stolen MetroCards so they cannot be used at subway or bus turnstiles and fare boxes. School staff can deactivate an individual card or multiple cards at the same time.
These procedures should be followed when a student reports a lost, stolen, or unusable MetroCard:

1. Deactivate the MetroCard assigned to the student
2. Provide the student with a new MetroCard
3. Document the serial number of the replacement card

NPSIS Reports

Ridership Report
This report should be used as the key management tool for managing transportation for students. The Ridership Report should be reviewed regularly to identify and correct any transportation issues. Error codes will display on the ridership report that require adjustments to student data to correct or remove the error.

MetroCard Shipment Report
List of all MetroCard shipments sent to the school by type of MetroCard. Schools use this report to verify shipments received or investigate inventory issues.

> Best Practice: Schools can see anticipated shipments on the report 2-3 weeks before they will be received by the school. This can be a valuable tool to review pending shipments and identify potential shortages. Contact OPT Account Managers to address these issues.

Deactivated MetroCards Report
Lists the serial numbers of each MetroCard deactivated. The report can be downloaded and sorted as a Microsoft Excel file to allow school staff to review and verify that a specific Metrocard has been deactivated.

Managing Yellow Bus Stops

Schools manage Yellow School Bus stops using the OPT 199 application on the OPT Web site. Schools can add, adjust, or delete stops for their students. When logging in to add a new bus stop, schools can select from a range of intersections available for their school's location. If the stop meets all criteria schools will receive instant notification and the stop will be routed in 5-7 business days. Once routed and posted on the list of the school's approved stops (this report is available on the OPT 199 application), schools can notify parents and children to begin using the new stop. Stop numbers are four digits and can be selected form the drop-down list "Bus Stop (Change) Requested on the student screen. User guides for the OPT 199 application are available upon login and can be downloaded and printed for reference.

Please Note:

Students eligible for full-fare transportation receive either a MetroCard **or** Yellow Bus service: students waiting for a new stop to be approved may either be assigned to an existing stop or provided a MetroCard until the new stop is activated.

Stop requests may be rejected for one of the following reasons:

Stop exists

Resolution: Assign the student to the existing stop

Stop less than ¼ mile from existing stop

Stops must be a minimum of ¼ mile apart

Resolution: Options include having the student use an existing stop, requesting another new stop using a different intersection, or adjusting an existing stop

Adding stop makes existing route exceed 5 miles

OPT generally keeps bus routes less than five miles in length

Contact your Account Manager to discuss this issue

Schools can also review existing stops and delete unused stops in order to keep the route less than five miles

Managing Stops using the OPT 199 application is an important tool for schools to use in order to make sure buses are utilized as effectively as possible. School staff should periodically review the list of approved stops and delete unused stops. A stop number must be assigned in NPSIS for each student using yellow bus transportation.

Non-Public Schools Calendar Application

Schools use the calendar application to identify dates their school is open when public schools may be closed. Full utilization of the calendar prevents emergency calls to vendors and parents to alert them to pick up or to not pick up students on specific days. OPT asks schools to edit their calendar for the upcoming school year by mid-June. Schools that have both general education and special education students are required to complete two separate calendars: one for each group of students. Access the non-public school calendar application from the OPT Web site under School Resources – School Applications Login.

Calendar Best Practices

Review

Assign staff to review the calendar monthly to verify correct information for the following month. October should be reviewed in mid-September, November reviewed in mid-October, etc.

Manage 180 days of service

New York State Education department guidelines state that, like all public schools, all non-public schools are entitled to receive 180 days of transportation services. Transportation services required over the 180-day limit requires schools to provide reimbursement for the additional service. Manage your calendars effectively to eliminate this issue.

Inform parents

Communicate with parents regarding days the school will be open and remind them the school calendar is available on the OPT Web site under Parent Resources.

Managing Transportation Deadlines

At specific times of the year OPT will notify schools to review and, if necessary, correct or update NPSIS data in order to manage key processes. Schools should review the main NPSIS page and the OPT Web site for instruction and assistance in managing these functions. Generally, OPT will identify and communicate deadlines in advance of a large project: new MetroCard shipments; summer school information; and review of session times and school information. Because OPT relies so heavily on accurate data it is important for school staff to be aware of these critical deadlines and take appropriate action to ensure transportation services for students are not interrupted.

Key Factors that Impact Transportation

Understanding how accurate school information and correct session times effect transportation services is critical to better manage transportation services for students. In each case, schools should rely on their Transportation Account Managers for guidance and support.

School Information

Up to date contact information is vital to maintain communication regarding services for students. School staff updates contact information in NPSIS using the "School Info" link on the left side of the NPSIS home page. Schools should periodically review and update this information as needed.

School Session Times

Accurate session times are critical in order to route buses effectively to ensure students arrive on time in the morning and buses arrive in the afternoon at the correct time—this information is key to hold vendors accountable for services and contract compliance. Schools request session time changes in late May that will be in effect the following September. OPT will not be able to adjust transportation if session times are changed at the school level after the school year has begun. Schools should contact their Transportation Account Manager for more information and assistance.

Assistance and Support

Managing NPSIS and student data can be complicated when discussing guidelines and procedures for specific programs and students. Schools should rely on support and guidance from their Transportation Account Managers, and, for SE door-to-door students, their CSE Chairperson. Schools should review and print the current CSE Chairperson Phone contact list posted on the DOE web site.
http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/ISC/SpecialEducationServices/CSE/default.htm

School staff with questions regarding NPSIS access and specific non-transportation related NPSIS procedures should call the NPSIS Help Desk (718) 935-3515.

The OPT Customer Service Unit (718) 392-8855 takes calls from school personnel requesting transportation-related ATS assistance. Agents will record contact information and OPT training staff will contact customers to provide assistance and walk-through procedures as needed. Issues requiring additional research or higher level help services will be elevated to speed resolution.