**SAMPLE DSS TRANSPORTATION PROTOCOL[[1]](#footnote-1)**

1. **OVERVIEW OF TRANSPORTATION OBLIGATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS**
* Under federal law, if a student who is homeless maintains enrollment in the school of origin, the school district must transport the student back to the school of origin.
* Under State law, the transportation responsibility **is shifted to the local department of social services (DSS)** if:
	+ DSS places the student in temporary housing outside of the school district where the student is enrolled AND
	+ The student is eligible for Emergency Assistance for Families (EAF).
* In most cases where a student is homeless, the school district is responsible for transportation and is not entitled to reimbursement from the DSS. For example, school districts are responsible for transporting students in temporary doubled-up arrangements.
* Where DSS is responsible for transportation, DSS **may** request that the school district provide the transportation. Upon such a request, the school district must arrange for the transportation and the DSS **must** fully and promptly reimburse the school district for the cost of such transportation.
* After a DSS has placed a student in temporary housing, it must ensure that a completed designation form is given to the school district where the student is enrolled within 2 days, regardless of whether DSS is responsible for arranging transportation.
1. **KEY CONTACTS AT [INSERT COUNTY] DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**[Insert names and contact information for DSS staff responsible for temporary housing]**

1. **SAMPLE DSS/SCHOOL DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION PROTOCOL**
2. **DSS Completes a Designation Form**.[[2]](#footnote-2) Every time DSS places a family in temporary housing or transfers a family to a different temporary housing location, a designation form must be completed for all children in the household (pre-k-12) **within 2 days**. On the designation form, the parent can choose for their child to attend:
	* The school district of origin, which is where the family was last permanently housed;
	* The school district where the child was last enrolled. This is usually the same as the district of origin, but can be different if the family has moved between different temporary housing arrangements; or
	* The school district of current location, which is the school district where the temporary housing placement is located.
3. **DSS Emails/Faxes the Completed Designation Form to the Designated School District**. DSS staff **[insert DSS staff person’s name who is responsible for signing designation forms]** signs the designation form, gives a copy to the parent, and emails/faxes the completed form to the McKinney-Vento liaison in the school district where the child will attend school. Contact information for McKinney-Vento liaisons can be found here: <http://nysteachs.org/liaisons/>. If the DSS cannot reach the McKinney-Vento liaison, please contact NYS-TEACHS (800-388-2014 or info@nysteachs.org).
4. **DSS Provides or Requests Busing**. Transportation for students in temporary housing must be set up within 3 school days. If DSS is responsible for arranging transportation (i.e., the student has been placed by DSS outside of the designated school district and the student is eligible for EAF), DSS may request that the school district bus the student. DSS will email or fax the busing request to the school district with the completed designation form.
5. **DSS Responds to School District Request for Reimbursement**. Where the school district is busing a student for whom DSS is responsible for arranging transportation, the school district will email **[insert name and email of DSS staff person who is responsible for processing reimbursement requests]** a request for reimbursement. The reimbursement request will include an invoice detailing the transportation expense and the attendance record for the student. Payment will be processed by DSS within 30 days. The school district will contact **[insert name and email of DSS staff person who is responsible for processing reimbursement requests]** with any questions about reimbursement.

1. **INFORMATION SHARING**
* In general, school districts cannot share students’ educational records without parental consent.
* In general, DSS also cannot share certain information about families with school district staff without parental consent.
* It is encouraged that schools districts and DSS get signed consent forms from parents so that they can better arrange for transportation. A sample consent form is included at the end of this document.
* **[Insert name of DSS staff person]** from DSS will email/fax the school district a consent form signed by the parent with the completed designation form. If a school district needs information from DSS about a student and hasn’t received a signed consent form, contact **[insert name and email of DSS staff person]**.
1. **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**
2. What if the school district has not received a completed designation form from DSS for a student it believes has been placed in temporary housing by DSS?
	* Contact **[insert name and email of DSS staff person]** to make sure that she/he has the correct email/fax number for the McKinney-Vento liaison in the district.
3. If asked, can DSS confirm whether a student has been placed in temporary housing by DSS?
	* DSS may not release information about placement of families without parental consent. But **[insert name and email of DSS staff person]** can confirm whether a completed designation form has been emailed/faxed to the district.
4. Where DSS requests that a school district transport a student whom DSS is responsible for transporting, must the school district comply with DSS’ request and transport the student?
	* Yes. As of April 20, 2017, if DSS requests that the school district transport a student whom DSS is responsible for transporting, the school district must transport the student. In such cases, DSS must fully and promptly reimburse the school district for the cost of the transportation. Contact **[insert name and email of DSS staff person]** with questions about reimbursement.
5. Will a school district be reimbursed by DSS for transportation expenses where the school district has sent a bus, but the student fails to get on the bus (e.g., the student oversleeps)?
	* Yes. Contact **[insert name and email of DSS staff person]** if this happens.
6. Is DSS responsible for arranging transportation for a child who attends pre-k where DSS has placed the family in temporary housing outside of their designated school district and the child is eligible for EAF?
	* Yes. As of April 20, 2017, DSS is responsible for arranging transportation for children who attend pre-k programs if the temporary housing placement is outside of the designated school district and the child is eligible for EAF. DSS may request that the school district provide the transportation. In such cases, the school district must transport the child, and DSS must fully and promptly reimburse the school district for the transportation expenses.
7. Is DSS responsible for arranging transportation for a student in a special education placement (e.g., BOCES placement) where DSS has placed the family in temporary housing outside of their designated school district and the student is eligible for EAF?
	* Yes. As of April 20, 2017, DSS is responsible for arranging transportation for students who receive special education services, including those students in special education placements if the temporary housing placement is outside of the designated school district and the student is eligible for EAF. DSS may request that the school district provide the transportation. In such cases, the school district must transport the child, and DSS must fully and promptly reimburse the school district for the transportation expenses.
8. Is DSS responsible for arranging transportation where the student is eligible for Emergency Assistance for Families and/or temporary housing from DSS, but the family is in a temporary doubled-up situation with another family instead of a DSS shelter/temporary housing placement?
	* No. In such cases, DSS is not responsible for transportation, because DSS has not placed the family in temporary housing. DSS is only responsible for transportation if DSS has placed the student in temporary housing outside of the designated school district and the student is eligible for EAF. School districts are responsible for transportation for all students who are homeless who haven’t been placed by DSS in temporary housing.
9. Is DSS responsible for arranging transportation for the remainder of the school year after a student becomes permanently housed?
	* No. Students who are homeless can get transportation to the school of origin for the duration of homelessness and through the remainder of the school year in which they become permanently housed. Transportation may also be available for an additional year if it is the student’s terminal grade in the school. In cases where DSS was responsible for arranging transportation while the student was in temporary housing and the student has become permanently housed, the responsibility for arranging transportation shifts from DSS to the school district where the student is enrolled.

**CONSENT TO SHARE INFORMATION**

To help my child receive all of the services to which he/she is entitled,

I, , parent of
 (Name of parent or person in parental relation)

 (Date of Birth: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_), give my

 (Name of child)

permission to the staff from (check all that apply):

* School District(s)
* BOCES
* Department of Social Services
* Shelter Provider
* Other

 to share the information about (checked all that apply):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Identifying information. For example, name of the child, date of birth, temporary housing location, parents’ names; |
|  | Information about where I would like my child to go to school, including the designation form or STAC-202 form; |
|  | Information about the Department of Social Services plan for transporting my child to and from school; |
|  | Special needs of my child that would affect education services, including transportation. For example, physical disabilities or health problems;  |
|  | Attendance records that may be needed to process transportation reimbursement requests; and |
|  | Other educational records, including psycho-social history, Committee on Special Education records (such as the IEP and evaluations), report cards, and any other record that will help with educational planning. |

*This consent shall remain valid until the end of the school year or before that if I withdraw my consent in writing. To do this, I understand that I must write a letter to all of the agencies checked above that says that I do not want the agencies to share information any more.*

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Signature Relationship to Child Date

1. This Sample Transportation Protocol is based on the one in place in Nassau County. School districts and local departments of social services may, but are not required, to use this Sample Transportation Protocol as a model. School districts and local departments of social services are welcome to adapt this protocol to better meet their needs. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The State Education Department is currently using the STAC-202 form (<http://www.nysteachs.org/media/Updated_STAC_202_form.pdf>) as the designation form. Please note: the State Education Department will be updating the designation form later in 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)