Evergreen Charter Elementary School
605 Peninsula Blvd
Hempstead, NY 11550
P: (516) 292-2060
F: (516) 292-0575

Evergreen Charter Intermediate School
436 Front St
Hempstead, NY 11550
P: (516) 226-8680
F: (516) 226-8658

Evergreen Charter Middle School
120 Greenwich St.
Hempstead, NY 11550
P: (516) 399-1020
F: (516) 292-0575

Evergreen Charter High School
33 Laurel Ave.
Hempstead NY 11550
P: (516)-216-5981
F: (516) 216-1973

Evergreen Charter Office Building
28 Richardson Place
Hempstead NY 11550
P: (516)-226-8680
F: (516) 226-8654

Evergreen Charter School (ECS) Foster Care Transportation Policy & Procedures

(NYSED-Compliant)

I. Purpose and Legal Framework

This policy establishes procedures to ensure that Evergreen Charter School (ECS) complies with federal and New York State requirements regarding the transportation of students in foster care. ECS will ensure educational stability by maintaining students in their school of origin when in their best interest and by coordinating transportation in accordance with:

- **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**
- New York State Education Law §3202 and §3244
- Guidance from the New York State Education Department
- Coordination expectations with districts of residence, including Hempstead Union Free School District when applicable

---

II. Policy Statement

ECS shall implement written procedures to ensure that students in foster care receive transportation to and from their **school of origin** without delay. ECS will collaborate with the district of residence (district of registration) to ensure transportation arrangements are

consistent with New York State requirements and that cost-sharing disputes do not interrupt service.

III. Definitions

- **Student in Foster Care:** A child placed in foster care as defined under ESSA.
- **School of Origin:** The school the child attended when placed in foster care or the school last enrolled.
- **District of Residence (District of Registration):** The school district legally responsible for the student's education based on residency.
- **Best Interest Determination (BID):** A documented, student-centered process to determine school placement.
- **Transportation Plan:** A written agreement outlining how transportation will be provided, including roles and cost allocation.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

ECS Foster Care Liaison (or Designee):

- Serves as the primary point of contact
- Coordinates with child welfare agencies and districts
- Ensures immediate enrollment and transportation arrangements
- Maintains documentation for audit purposes

District of Residence:

- Collaborates with ECS to determine and implement transportation
- Participates in BID decisions
- Shares responsibility for transportation costs per NYSED guidance

Child Welfare Agency:

- Notifies ECS of foster care status
- Participates in BID and planning

V. Required Procedures

1. Identification and Notification

- ECS will identify students in foster care at enrollment or upon notification.
- The ECS liaison will verify foster care status through appropriate documentation.
- Notification will trigger immediate initiation of transportation procedures.

---

2. Best Interest Determination (BID)

- ECS will actively participate in the BID process with:
    - District of residence
    - Child welfare agency
    - Parent/guardian or foster parent
- The BID must be:
    - **Documented in writing**
    - **Timely (no delays in enrollment or attendance)**
- Unless otherwise determined, the student will remain in the school of origin.

---

3. Transportation Coordination (Audit-Critical)

ECS will **formally coordinate with the district of residence** to:

- Develop a **written transportation plan**
- Ensure transportation complies with NYSED requirements
- Follow applicable district procedures, including those of Hempstead UFSD where relevant
- Establish cost-sharing agreements consistent with state guidance

Key compliance requirement:
Transportation must be arranged **immediately**, even if cost responsibility is unresolved.

---

4. Transportation Implementation

ECS will ensure that transportation:

- Begins **without delay (next school day whenever feasible)**
- Is consistent and reliable
- Minimizes disruption to the student's education

- Is appropriate to the student's age and needs

Allowable methods may include:

- District-provided bus service
- Contracted transportation
- Public transit (when age-appropriate)
- Mileage reimbursement to foster parents/guardians

---

5. Cost-Sharing and Fiscal Procedures

- ECS and the district of residence will share transportation costs in accordance with NYSED guidance.
- ECS will document:
    - Cost agreements
    - Billing arrangements
    - Any reimbursements

Audit expectation:
Documentation must demonstrate that cost disputes **did not delay transportation**.

---

6. Documentation and Recordkeeping (NYSED Audit Requirement)

ECS will maintain a **centralized foster care transportation file** for each student, including:

- Foster care status verification
- Best Interest Determination documentation
- Written transportation plan
- Communication logs with districts/agencies
- Cost-sharing agreements
- Transportation start date and method

Records must be:

- Accurate
- Up-to-date
- Readily available for NYSED review

7. Dispute Resolution

- In the event of a dispute:
    - ECS will ensure transportation continues uninterrupted
    - ECS will work collaboratively with the district of residence and relevant agencies
    - NYSED guidance will be followed to resolve disputes

---

8. Written Procedures Requirement (Explicit Compliance Element)

ECS affirms that it maintains **formal written procedures specific to foster care transportation**, which:

- Are reviewed **annually**
- Reflect current federal and New York State requirements
- Clearly define staff roles and timelines
- Include step-by-step implementation protocols

---

9. Training and Internal Controls

- ECS will provide **annual training** to relevant staff on:
    - Foster care rights under ESSA
    - Transportation requirements
    - Coordination with districts of residence
- ECS will implement **internal controls** to ensure:
    - Timely identification of foster care students
    - Immediate initiation of transportation
    - Complete and accurate documentation

VI. Monitoring and Accountability

- ECS administration will periodically review compliance with this policy
- Any deficiencies will be corrected promptly

- This policy will be updated to reflect changes in law or NYSED guidance

---

VII. Approval and Review

Approved by: ECS Board of Trustees
Effective Date: [Insert Date]
Last Reviewed: [Insert Date]
Next Review Date: [Insert Date]

Compliance Statement:
ECS certifies that it has established and implemented foster care transportation procedures aligned with NYSED expectations and ensures coordination with districts of residence, including Hempstead Union Free School District where applicable, to maintain educational stability for students in foster care.

Evergreen Charter School (ECS)
Foster Care Transportation Compliance Checklist

I. Identification & Enrollment

☐ Student identified as in foster care at enrollment or via notification
☐ Foster care status verified with appropriate documentation
☐ ECS Foster Care Liaison notified immediately
☐ Student enrolled **without delay** (no records required for initial entry)

II. Best Interest Determination (BID)

☐ BID meeting conducted with required stakeholders:

- ☐ ECS representative
- ☐ District of residence
- ☐ Child welfare agency
- ☐ Parent/guardian or foster parent

☐ BID decision documented in writing
☐ Determination includes rationale for school of origin vs. new school
☐ Student remains in school of origin unless otherwise determined

---

III. District Coordination (Critical NYSED Look-Fors)

☐ District of residence identified and confirmed
☐ Communication established with district (email/log maintained)
☐ Coordination documented with district, including
    ☐ Hempstead Union Free School District (if applicable)

☐ Written transportation plan developed jointly with district
☐ Evidence that NYSED transportation guidance was followed
☐ No delays in implementation due to cost disputes

IV. Transportation Implementation

☐ Transportation arranged **immediately** (next school day when feasible)
☐ Start date of transportation documented
☐ Mode of transportation documented:

- ☐ School bus
- ☐ Contracted vendor
- ☐ Public transit
- ☐ Parent/guardian reimbursement

☐ Transportation is:

- ☐ Safe
- ☐ Reliable
- ☐ Age-appropriate
- ☐ Minimizes disruption

V. Cost Sharing & Fiscal Documentation

☐ Cost-sharing agreement documented between ECS and district
☐ Billing/reimbursement process established
☐ Records of payments or invoices maintained
☐ Evidence that transportation occurred regardless of cost disputes

---

VI. Documentation File (Audit-Critical)

☐ Foster care status verification on file
☐ BID documentation on file
☐ Written transportation plan on file
☐ Communication logs (emails, calls, meeting notes)
☐ Transportation start date and method documented
☐ Cost-sharing documentation included

☐ File is:

- ☐ Complete
- ☐ Organized
- ☐ Readily accessible for review

VII. Dispute Resolution

☐ Any disputes documented
☐ Evidence transportation continued during dispute
☐ Resolution aligned with NYSED guidance

VIII. Written Procedures (Required Policy Evidence)

☐ ECS has formal written foster care transportation procedures
☐ Procedures include:

- ☐ Step-by-step process
- ☐ Staff roles and responsibilities
- ☐ Coordination with district of residence
- ☐ Timelines for action

☐ Procedures reviewed **annually**
☐ Procedures aligned with New York State Education Department guidance

---

IX. Training & Internal Controls

☐ Staff training conducted annually
☐ Training attendance documented
☐ Staff understand:

- ☐ Immediate enrollment requirements
- ☐ Transportation obligations
- ☐ Coordination responsibilities

☐ Internal monitoring process in place
☐ Periodic compliance review conducted

X. Compliance Assurance (Final Check)

☐ No delays in transportation for foster care students
☐ All required documentation is present and current
☐ Coordination with district of residence is evident and documented
☐ ECS can demonstrate compliance during NYSED audit or site visit

---

Reviewer Name: _____

Date: _____

Notes/Findings: _____

EVERGREEN CHARTER SCHOOL
HEMPSTEAD, NEW YORK

TRANSPORTATION FOR STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE FLOWCHART

Ensuring School Stability, Immediate Enrollment, and Full Participation

In accordance with ESSA, NYS Education Law, NYSED, and OCFS guidance.

Our goal:
Every student in foster care has the right to a stable education and safe, reliable transportation.

1. STUDENT ENTERS FOSTER CARE

- Student is placed in foster care or placement changes.
- Child welfare agency notifies school and/or district.
- Immediate enrollment in school (no delay).

2. IDENTIFY SCHOOL OF ORIGIN (SOO)

School of origin is the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled.

Presumption: The student remains in their school of origin.

3. BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION (BID)

A Best Interest Determination must be completed to decide whether the student should:

- Remain in the school of origin, OR
- Attend a new school.

Team includes:
School, District of Residence, Child Welfare Agency, Foster Parent/ Guardian, and others as appropriate.

4. TRANSPORTATION NEED IDENTIFIED

- Transportation is needed to support the decision (SOO or new school).
- Lack of transportation will not delay enrollment or attendance.

REMAIN IN SCHOOL OF ORIGIN

It is determined to be in the student's best interest.

NEW SCHOOL PLACEMENT

It is determined that a new school is in the student's best interest.

5. COORDINATION & TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

- School collaborates with:
  - ✓ District of Residence
  - ✓ Child Welfare Agency
  - ✓ Transportation Providers
- Determine the most appropriate transportation option.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ✓ Student safety
- ✓ Educational stability
- ✓ Distance & travel time
- ✓ Student preference (as appropriate)
- ✓ Feasibility & cost

- Develop transportation plan.
- Determine cost-sharing between district and child welfare agency.
- Document all agreements and decisions.

6. IMPLEMENT TRANSPORTATION

- Transportation arranged promptly.
- If needed, use interim solutions to prevent delays, such as:
  - ✓ Public transportation passes
  - ✓ Reimbursement to caregiver
  - ✓ Temporary transportation arrangements
- Communicate plan to caregiver and student.

7. ONGOING MONITORING

- Monitor transportation effectiveness and student attendance.
- Make adjustments as needed.
- Continue communication with caregiver, school, and child welfare agency.

8. CHANGES IN PLACEMENT OR SCHOOL

- If placement or school changes, revisit transportation needs.
- Complete a new Best Interest Determination if necessary.
- Update transportation plan immediately.

DISPUTES (TRANSPORTATION)

If a disagreement arises about transportation:

1. Student remains in the school of origin and receives transportation while the issue is being resolved.
2. School, district, and child welfare agency work together to resolve the issue.
3. If unresolved, follow NYSED dispute resolution process.
4. All parties cooperate to ensure the student's education is not disrupted.
5. Documentation of the dispute and resolution is maintained.

9. ACCESS TO FULL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Transportation will be provided, when necessary, for:

- ✓ Regular school day instruction
- ✓ Academic supports & interventions
- ✓ Extracurricular activities
- ✓ Extended learning opportunities

Goal: Ensure full participation and academic success.

KEY CONTACT

FOSTER CARE POINT OF CONTACT

Name: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Serves as the liaison between the school, district, and child welfare agency to support the student.

10. DOCUMENTATION

SCHOOL
- Ensure immediate enrollment
- Participate in BID
- Coordinate transportation
- Monitor and support student success

DISTRICT OF RESIDENCE
- Collaborate on transportation
- Share costs as required
- Ensure timely implementation

CHILD WELFARE AGENCY
- Participate in BID
- Share costs as required
- Support transportation arrangements

OUR COMMITMENT

ECS is committed to providing safe, reliable transportation that supports school stability and helps students in foster care thrive academically and personally.

School stability leads to educational success. We are committed to keeping every student on the path to success.