



PARENT TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK

(Please fill in the information below when you are contacted by your bus counselor the week before camp)

Bus Counselor: _____ Phone: _____

Bus Driver (big buses only): _____ Vehicle Code: _____

Please call the **Bus Counselor directly** if your child will be absent for one or two days. If your child is absent for more than two consecutive days, please call the office in **addition**. If you determine that your child will be absent after the counselor has left his/her home, place the yellow sign (which you will receive from your bus counselor) in a visible window or on the front door indicating that the bus should not stop; you do not need to call camp.

Camp Office: 516-620-4300
P.O. Box 34, Babylon Tpke., Merrick, N.Y. 11566
mailbox@ColemanCountry.com

Transportation: **Camp Starts Here**

Our transportation system is part of our camp program, and as such, it gets every bit as much attention to detail and safety as our camp day. We know we provide the safest, most efficient camp transportation available.

The length of our bus runs is minimized because we do our routing very carefully, and we send each bus to a small geographical area. Our express service enables us to transport the children from a tight group of streets directly to camp.

Moreover, our bus ride is part of the camp day, and we provide programs coming to and going home from camp! So even the ride is FUN!

How Do We Do It?

We begin by contracting for the best vehicles in the fleet and the best professional drivers. Our large buses are driven by professional drivers, and each one has a Coleman counselor on board. Our vans are driven by Coleman counselors who hold commercial drivers licenses (CDL) and have an assistant counselor or CIT on board. Both big bus and van drivers are trained in the Coleman Country transportation and safety system.

The routing is carefully mapped, and a written schedule is given to each bus counselor. Wherever possible, we try to do dropoffs in the afternoon in the same order as morning pickups to equalize the amount of time children spend on the bus. If a route needs to be altered for improved efficiency, we do it!

Every bus counselor or counselor-driver team does several dry runs before camp begins. After they have approximated the times of pickup and dropoff, they will stop by and introduce themselves and give you a "schedule" for your pickup and dropoff (of course, these times are approximate at first and will settle into an expected time after several days of camp). They will also give each camper a Coleman Country cap -- our gift to you -- and a placard for you to place in your window if your camper will not be riding the bus on a given day.

Who Can I Talk To About Transportation?

If you have a concern about your child's transportation to and from camp, there is a Transportation Supervisory Staff whose sole job is to make for the safe and pleasant transportation of your child. Regarding the timing of the route, we ask that you give your counselor/driver several days for the route to settle into the actual pickup and dropoff times -- in the beginning of camp, they are still getting accustomed to their routes and parents often will understandably detain a bus while getting to know the routine themselves. If, after several days of camp, your concern remains, then please call the Transportation Office at 620-4300.

Remember that buses are scheduled to arrive at camp between 8:45 and 9:00 a.m. On the return trip, we board the buses at 4:25 and pull out of The Ranch at 4:30! (It should be noted that most camps end their day at 4:00 or even 3:45 – so keep that in mind if you see other camp buses rolling through your street earlier than ours!)

Supervisor Peter Bloch is available to address your questions regarding transportation. Simply ask for him or the Transportation Office when you call the camp office. We'd like you to know that he discusses all concerns with the Colemans, and that even if you do not speak directly to one of them, they are aware of your concern and will be actively working to resolve any concern you may have.

What About Bus Attendance?

We're incredibly proud of and confident in our attendance system. We use a bar-coding computer system which is the most accurate and most sophisticated in the industry and was designed at Coleman Country. Our system allows drivers to have up-to-the-minute printouts of which child is staying for a lesson, went home early, or is going home with a friend on another vehicle. Counselors always have a list of campers who are going home with them within five minutes of departure, enabling our supervisors to confirm that everyone is on the right bus before any vehicle departs.

What If My Child Will Be Absent?

If your child is going to be absent for one (or even two) days, call the bus counselor directly; there is no need to inform the camp office. If your child is absent for more than two days, then we would appreciate a call to the office, in addition. If you determine that your child will be absent after the bus counselor has left his/her home, then please place the yellow card which you will be given on Cap Day on the front door or in a visible window so the bus counselor will not have the bus wait. With every family's cooperation, the trip to camp can be shorter! And, of course, our goal is to make it as short as possible!

If your child is absent because of anything contagious, please notify the office so that we may discreetly notify parents of children who may have been in contact with yours. We assure you that we are tactful in this regard and that there will be no stigma whatsoever for your child. By the same token, you should know that you will be notified if your child is exposed by another -- so long as we know about it!

What If I Need To Make a Change?

You can understand the reasons we need to know of any transportation change you may have to make so that we can ensure that your child is on the proper vehicle - or not on one at all if you are picking him/her up! The easiest method is to **inform us in writing by giving the bus counselor a note with the details the morning of the day you wish to make the change for.** If there is a problem with space on another vehicle, we will call you. **You can also call the camp office -- before 1 p.m. please!** Of course, emergency changes will be handled for you, but the earlier in the day we know, the easier it is for us to accommodate you. **Make certain to date the note!**

What If I Bring My Child To Camp?

Just let your bus counselor know that your child will not be on the bus. When you arrive at camp, please check your child in at the Gatehouse, located on Babylon Turnpike.

Cap Day Marks Beginning of Summer!

One day, the week before camp begins, your bus counselor will ring your doorbell to meet you. He or she will also give you an approximate schedule for pickup and dropoff and will deliver a Coleman Country cap to you.

The counselor will make every effort to contact you first by phone and let you know when he/she plans to drop by, so that you can try to arrange your schedule -- or he/she can try to rearrange theirs!

We know the week before camp begins is a very exciting time. During this week, drivers will be doing "dry runs," trying to pinpoint their exact times of arrivals. They won't stop by until they are comfortable that their route is fairly settled. So, please be patient -- they will definitely show up before the first day of camp!

The bus counselor will leave his/her name and phone number with you when he or she visits. Please put this information safely in your Parent Handbook folder (and on the cover of this booklet!) so that you may call your bus counselor directly in case of absence.



Bus Mail

In general, "Bus Mail" is an effective and efficient way to correspond with us! Whether it's a message for a transportation change or a message for a counselor, a supervisor, or one of the Colemans, you can give the note to the bus counselor who will bring it to The Ranch - - and we will deliver it to the right person! This procedure helps us stay on time along the route. **Please date all "Bus Mail!"**

How You Can Help Make Our Service More Efficient

1. **Please be patient the first few days of camp.**
2. If a bus is late, **please don't stop the bus** to ask for an explanation; call the office, and we will inform you or get back to you as soon as possible. Wherever possible, we will notify you if we anticipate that there is a bus delay.
3. Please have your child, dressed appropriately, waiting outside your door for the bus. You should be nearby so that you will see when he/she is picked up. On inclement days, please wait right at the door, and watch for the bus.
4. On inclement days, please be ready 10 minutes early; also expect that the return trip may be up to 10 minutes later, in order to allow for unhurried trips to and from camp.
5. **Please say your "good-byes" before the bus arrives!** If your child is at all hesitant about boarding, be positive yet firm as you escort your child to the steps of the bus. Give him/her a quick hug, a few positive words that you know camp is a fun place, and a few words of assurance that you will "be waiting right here" at the end of the camp day. Then let the counselor take over. It is important that you exhibit confidence in your decision when you say goodbye to a reluctant child. This separation anxiety, if it exists at all, will not last long -- as long as your child senses that you are comfortable with sending him/her to camp.
6. **Please don't detain the bus** by asking involved questions of the counselor. We encourage you to send notes through the bus counselor ("Bus Mail") or to call the camp office with your question or comment. Notes to your child's counselor, swim instructor, supervisor, etc. will all be properly delivered.
7. **Requests for changes in pickup and/or drop-off** should be put in writing, specifying exactly when the change is for. The transportation department will ascertain if there is room on the requested vehicle and will call you if there is a problem. **You may also call the office to request a change, but this call must be made**

A Few Tips...

- Teach your child to wait a safe distance away from the street
- Establish a set time in the morning for your child to be waiting in the front of your house (five minutes before the bus is due to arrive)
- Adult supervision is a must for young children.
- Reinforce safety rules (as we do): seat belts, following counselor's directions....

by 1 p.m. on the day you wish the change for. Also, wherever possible, please make your request on the day of the change, unless it is a long-term change you need.

8. **YELLOW NOTICES:** You will receive a yellow sign from your bus counselor, which should be displayed on your front door or in a visible window when no one from your home will be attending camp. In this way, we will not disturb you unnecessarily and can move on without delay to the next pickup. (Of course, if you are aware early enough to contact the bus counselor, please do that instead.)
9. **Someone known to the bus counselor must be at home when your child is dropped off in the afternoon. Your child will not be left unattended. If you or a designee is not at home, your child will be brought back to camp and you can pick him/her up there! If someone unknown to the counselor will be waiting at your home, we must have a written note from you. If you have an older child who you wish to be dropped off without anyone present, we must have a note on file in our office. While we do not advocate this arrangement, we will comply with your wishes only upon written authorization.**
10. **Please indicate promptly to the driver that you are home...** again, so as not to detain the bus. We try to make the trip as efficient as possible!
11. **If you are concerned about any aspect of transportation once camp begins, don't hesitate to write or call!**