

## STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The major purpose of school transportation is to get pupils who live an unreasonable distance from school to school and back in an efficient, safe and economical manner. Other purposes include the provision of transportation for academic field trips in direct support of the curriculum, transportation for support of the co-curricular program (athletics, music, drama, and the like).

### 1. Responsibility for Transportation

While the Director of Transportation bears the overall responsibility for management of the transportation system, it is the driver who has the responsibility for the lives and safety of the pupils he transports every day. During the time that he is transporting pupils to and from school, the bus driver stands in the place of the parent and shall exercise such controls as are necessary to insure their safe trip.

1.1 Discipline: The school bus driver shall see that proper conduct is maintained on his bus. He may assign seats to pupils. Pupils who refuse to comply with proper conduct standards may be excluded from riding the bus at the end of any day.<sup>1</sup> However, said suspension must be by the transportation director or the superintendent. Such exclusion shall be reported immediately to the parent with details of causes.

1.1 The student who attempts to ride the bus in defiance of the suspension should be transported to the school and taken immediately to the principal's office for further discipline. While drivers have the authority to make the decision about whether or not to transport the student in this situation, at no time should a student be left at a bus stop when it is apparent the child would be left unsupervised.

1.2 Condition of Bus: The school bus driver shall see that his bus is in good mechanical condition at all times. He shall also see that it is clean and comfortable.

1.3 Schedule: The bus operator will endeavor to run regularly and promptly on the schedule established. He shall not transport pupils to school when weather conditions make it definitely dangerous to life and limb. He shall check weather broadcasts and school closing reports. In case of doubt about the weather, he shall check directly with the Director of Transportation. In case of serious adverse

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<sup>1</sup>An exception to this would be any incident that requires intervention from law enforcement.

weather conditions on his route, the driver may cancel his morning run; however, he must notify the Director of Transportation, drivers of interconnecting buses, schools served and as many students on the run as possible. The driver is to make arrangements to make the afternoon run, unless school is dismissed early.

- 1.4 Student Information: It is the responsibility of the bus operator to maintain an accurate list of the students who have enrolled on the bus, along with emergency contact information for each child. Because this information is essential to the safe transportation of the child, a driver has the right to refuse to transport a student who has not provided the emergency information in a reasonable amount of time after riding the bus for the first time. For preschool students, emergency contact information shall be provided to the bus operator prior to a child being transported. Five school days would be a reasonable amount of time. Should this occur, the bus operator shall inform the principal and transportation coordinator of his/her refusal to transport the student.

1.4.1 It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school and the bus operator of any changes in this information in a timely fashion.

1.4.2 If a student who has not yet enrolled in school expects to be transported by bus during the morning route, the driver should first be reasonably certain that the student should be transported but once arriving at school, shall notify school personnel so that the student can be directed to the principal's office for enrollment purposes.

## 2. Safe Loading/Unloading

Under State Board Policy, the student is to be loaded and discharged only at designated locations. No change should be made in designated stops without the approval of the transportation coordinator.

- 2.1 When unloading students at a student's home or discharge point, the driver shall first make sure that the exiting students are at his/her authorized stop. A student who gets off the bus at an unauthorized stop has violated both policy and safe practice and should be disciplined by the driver.
- 2.2 Students in grades preschool through grade three are required to be met by a parent or guardian at the bus stop. If there is a question regarding the identity of the person picking up the student, the driver has the right to request identification to insure that the student is released to an appropriate adult as noted in the emergency care forms.

- 2.1.1 If the parent/guardian is unable to meet the bus, there shall be a person designated by the parent/guardian to assist the child. It is the parent's responsibility to assure that the child is met at the bus stop or to notify the school and/or driver of further directions in time for the change to be made. Schools cannot make changes to bus arrangements after 3:00 p.m., except in a dire emergency.
- 2.1.2 If there is no one to meet the PK-3rd grade child at the bus stop, the driver is to keep the child on the bus, and attempt to contact the parent while stopped, either by cell phone if possible, or by radio. If no answer, the driver is to contact the school or transportation coordinator. The information provided by the parent and kept on the enrollment card in the bus, can be relayed to the school or coordinator for the purpose of contacting either the parent/guardian or an emergency contact for the child.
- 2.1.3 Following making that contact, depending on the information received, the driver is to continue on the run, with the child on the bus, until directions for the safe release of the student is relayed to the driver via radio or cell phone, accessed when the bus is stopped.<sup>2</sup> Should there be no resolution to the child's situation at the end of the bus run, the driver shall contact the principal and/or transportation coordinator and return to the school with the child. The principal or a designee shall there take custody of the child until the situation is resolved.
- 2.3 If the driver should happen to miss a child's stop, the driver is not to back the bus, but rather, must turn around and return to the child's bus stop to allow the student to get off the bus. The driver must then return to the regular route to complete the run. Under no circumstances shall the driver discharge the student at any location other than the student's appropriate stop.
- 2.4 If a child should need medical attention while en route, the driver is to contact 911 to get assistance and (if possible) contact the parent/guardian as well. If it is not possible to contact the parent/guardian, contact the transportation coordinator and relay the necessary information so that the parent/guardian can be contacted immediately.

### 3. Communication and Safety

Drivers are strongly encouraged to communicate concerns about students, especially as

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<sup>2</sup>This policy does not in any way condone the use of cell phones or any communication device while the bus is moving.

**they relate to the child's safety, whether it is as observed at the home or if the child's demeanor or appearance gives concern about the child's physical well-being. By informing the student's principal of a concern, the driver meets the obligation to report issues that may be related to child abuse, including neglect or physical abuse. The principal shall follow up on the concern by either interviewing the child or having the guidance counselor involved in observing or interviewing the child.**

**Approved by Board Action: March 3, 2009**

**Upon adoption, this policy replaces the former Student Transportation Services Policy EEA.**

**Reviewed April 15, 2014**