

Washington County Schools TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT HANDBOOK



**Washington County Schools Transportation Department
405 W. College Street · Jonesborough, TN 37659
423-753-1172**



Washington County Student Transportation

Welcome to Washington County Schools Transportation Department

The Transportation Department is an important member of the educational team, which includes the school district and community. We will continue to strive for excellence and are always looking for more efficient ways to improve our operation, while at the same time, placing the safety of our students and employees first. We take seriously the trust and confidence that the parents and community have placed in us to transport what is most precious to us: Our Children.

We are committed to operating safe, clean, and mechanically defect-free buses. Our interaction with students contributes to an atmosphere of learning and sets the stage for a positive climate of learning, which should not be underestimated. An effective and efficient Transportation Department will improve the quality of education for our children, and I look forward to working with all to ensure that our mission is accomplished.

Sincerely,

Tony Roberts
Transportation Supervisor
Washington County Department of Education

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Transportation Operation Handbook was based on various versions of current handbooks from other transportation departments. Therefore, it is only right that all those involved in the development of handbooks over the years be acknowledged. Unfortunately, no comprehensive list of those individuals exists. Isaac Newton said, "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." Likewise, those who worked on this handbook have been able to stand on the shoulders of those giants in the field of pupil transportation. We thank you.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOLS CENTRAL OFFICE	(423) 753-1100
WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOLS TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT	(423) 753-1172
WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOLS TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT	(423) 753-1100
WASHINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT	(423) 788-1414
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES (DCS)	(423) 989-5220
JONESBOROUGH POLICE DEPARTMENT	(423) 753-1053
DOCTOR'S CARE	(423) 928-2135

WASHINGTON COUNTY EMERGENCY DISPATCHER**911****SCHOOL CAMPUSES****PRINCIPAL****NUMBER**

ASBURY SCHOOL	JAMIE GRAY	(423) 434-4900
BOONES CREEK ELEMENTARY	JORDAN HUGHES	(423) 850-8580
DANIEL BOONE HIGH SCHOOL	TIM CAMPBELL	(423) 477-1600
DAVID CROCKETT HIGH SCHOOL	ASHLEY DAVIS	(423) 753-1150
FALL BRANCH ELEMENTARY	JIM WERNKE	(423) 348-1200
GRANDVIEW ELEMENTARY	TARA CHURCHWELL	(423) 257-7400
GRAY ELEMENTARY	AMY LAWSON	(423) 477-1640
JONESBOROUGH ELEMENTARY	MATT COMBS	(423) 753-1180
LAMAR ELEMENTARY	MARK MERRIMAN	(423) 753-1130
RIDGEVIEW ELEMENTARY	LESLIE LYONS	(423) 788-7340
SOUTH CENTRAL ELEMENTARY	JOHN McKINNEY	(423) 753-1135
SULPHUR SPRINGS ELEMENTARY	DAVID LITTLE	(423) 753-1140
WEST VIEW ELEMENTARY	ROBIN STREET	(423) 753-1175

Transportation employees play an integral role in the operation of the school district and are a vital part of the educational program. This position makes great demands on the mental, moral and physical strength of the individual. As a representative of Washington County Schools Transportation Department, you are the first person from the school system the student sees in the morning and the last he or she sees at the end of the day. The transportation staff often sets the mood of the day for the children. Contact with children, parents, district staff and the community makes the driver a public relations representation. It is imperative that you approach the job with professionalism, a positive attitude, and a clear understanding of your duties and responsibilities. You must be thoroughly familiar with all traffic laws and the provisions of this manual.

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

- **The school bus is an extension of the classroom and as such, the ride to school should be safe and efficient in an atmosphere conducive to learning readiness.** Open and honest communication between all stakeholders is vital for the success of the transportation program.
- Drivers should be familiar with and abide by all rules, policies and procedures affecting student transportation. They should be trained and display proficiency in the appropriate use of all equipment and tools in the bus, including electronic communication devices.
- Drivers should maintain order and safety and protect the rights of others in the school bus. They should exercise good judgment and prudence in this pursuit, using appropriate verbal interventions. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Minimizing interior noise;
 2. Requiring an orderly entrance and exit;
 3. Eliminating movement or potential movement of objects;
 4. Requiring silence at railroad crossings; and
 5. Prohibiting transportation of unauthorized materials.
- Drivers should be aware that they represent the school district and should present a positive image in dress, language and manner while on duty.
- The school bus driver is the key to an effective daily inspection program. It is the driver's responsibility to make a planned and systematic inspection of the bus before each route and/or trip, to assure that the inspection has been completed properly in a timely manner.
- You must carry your valid CDL driver's license with "S and P Endorsements" with you at all times when operating a school bus.
- Bus drivers will be required to have a complete physical examination each year as specified by the district. **Bus drivers may be evaluated to include behind the wheel observation, attendance, and work habits.**
- School buses should never be left unattended with the engine running. Buses should always be parked with the parking brake engaged and transmission in neutral (i.e. school loading zone, fuel island, etc). **Exceptions: (1) during pre- and post-trip inspections; and (2) when weather is 30° or below and the bus is warming up then buses are to idle no more than 10 minutes.**
- Inform the Transportation Supervisor immediately if you receive a traffic citation for any reason while driving your bus or personal vehicle. **The District has no liability or responsibility for any traffic citation that you receive.**
- You are required to attend periodic safety and in-service training sessions as scheduled by the Transportation Supervisor. A sign-in sheet will be provided at the meeting to verify attendance. If a Driver must miss a meeting, then he/she is responsible for obtaining minutes, notes, and handouts from the transportation office **along with prior approval from the Transportation Supervisor.**
- A school bus must not be driven on personal errands. This is a zero-tolerance policy and will result in termination.
- A bus driver shall not transport any persons other than students, teachers, or staff of Washington County Schools, at any time, unless instructed by the Transportation Supervisor.

- It is a violation of procedure to permit a student to get off a bus and ride with another person or student without having made prior arrangements. Once a student boards the bus, it becomes the driver's responsibility to deliver the student to the school or back home, unless the driver has in their possession a note from school **that has been signed by the Principal/Asst. Principal.**
- Performs other related duties as may be assigned by the Transportation Supervisor or District Level Administrators.
- **All bus drivers report to the Transportation Supervisor.**

You are responsible for, and will be held accountable to, follow the Washington County Schools adopted and/or referenced board policies and expectations in the Transportation Handbook.

Employees are expected to observe the following standards of conduct:

1. Recognize and respect the rights and property of students and co-workers and maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and co-workers.
 - a. Respect the positions and responsibilities of other drivers, superiors, and other personnel.
 - b. Avoid criticizing school personnel to students, parents, other drivers, and to the public.
 - c. Utilize resources of proper personnel, not other drivers, regarding student discipline issues.
 - d. Avoid criticizing students.
 - e. Employees are prohibited from involvement in a physical altercation (fighting, shoving, slapping, poking) on District property while on or off duty. Such action will be fully investigated and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
2. Drivers must not use profane language in the presence of the students. The use of profanity, obscene, lewd language, racial slurs or gestures of any kind are strictly forbidden at all times. Loud yelling or screaming in an angry manner is also not acceptable. Such action will be fully investigated and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
 - a. The use of profanity will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination, commensurate with the severity of the incident. **The use of profanity in the presence of students is a serious incident and will be treated as such with regard to disciplinary action.** Such action will be fully investigated and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
3. Report to work in accordance with your assigned schedule.
4. Know and comply with department and District procedures and policies.
5. Observe all safety rules and regulations and report any injuries or unsafe conditions to the Transportation Supervisor immediately. (Note: failure to report injuries immediately to the Transportation Supervisor may result in loss of benefits.)
6. Use District time and property for authorized district business and activities only.
7. **A school bus driver should be proud of the school bus. A driver's pride in his/her vehicle is contagious; it causes the students to take better care of the bus.**

- a. Some citizens in a community have no other contact with our schools, except the school bus, which they see each day as it travels up and down their road or street. The driver, the vehicle, and the students on that bus route are their only basis to judge the school system. The driver should create a favorable image for the school district.
- b. No trash cans will be permitted on any bus for the 2023-24 School Year. An exception to this will be for long field trips outside of Washington County. The trash can should then be securely fastened to the floor, and riders should only utilize it when the bus is stopped.

Any violation, particularly around children is subject to review, counseling and disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Etiquette at Professional Development Meetings

The department sponsors periodic safety and in-service training sessions that drivers are required to attend. It is important that strict meeting etiquette rules be observed during the meetings.

1. There should be no side conversations or other talking while the meeting is in progress.
2. Cell phones must be turned off or set to silent alert while in the meeting. At no time should a cell phone be answered while the meeting is in progress.
3. Questions should be held until the end of the meeting to keep the meeting on track.
4. Unless you have another assignment in the Transportation Department or other pre-approved excuse, employees are not permitted to leave the meeting early.

Job Misconduct

Job misconduct is the mismanagement of a position of employment by action or inaction or neglect that places in jeopardy the lives or property of others, intentional wrongdoing or intentional violation of a law, or violation of a policy or rule adopted to ensure orderly work and the safety of employees and students.

Disciplinary Action

Occasionally it becomes necessary for the Transportation Supervisor to take disciplinary action toward an employee. Discipline results when an employee's actions do not conform with generally accepted standards of good behavior, when an employee violates work rules, or when an employee's work performance is poor. The severity of the disciplinary action depends upon the nature and frequency of the offense. Discipline may range from oral warning(s), written warning(s), suspension from work (with or without pay) up to and including termination. Nothing in this policy or in this handbook is intended to limit in any way the District's right to terminate employees at any time, with or without cause and with or without advance notice.

Line of Authority

Transportation staff shall adhere to the Organizational Chart of Washington County Schools. You should discuss any problems or misunderstandings which arise in your department with your direct supervisor (the Transportation Supervisor); if you have a problem that you and your direct supervisor cannot work out, the appropriate administrator to speak to is the Director of Human Resources.

Grievances

For information regarding the filing of grievance, please follow District procedures under Board Policy. All [Board Policies](#) are available online via the District's website.

Driver / School Administrator Relationship

Principals and Assistant Principals have supervision over drivers when the driver is on campus. When a Principal/Asst. Principal makes a request (e.g., placing a student in the front seat), the driver should comply and show respect for the Principal/Asst. Principal's decision. If there is conflict, report this to the Transportation Supervisor after the route. Always be polite and respectful.

Personal Possessions

The school district does not assume responsibility for lost or stolen articles.

Weapons

Possession of any weapon on school property, school vehicle, or at any school sponsored activity is strictly prohibited and will result in immediate termination.

Wages

1. Permanent full-time bus drivers are generally assigned four to six (4-6) hours of work per day for 180 working days each school year.
2. The wage scales for all staff are approved by the Washington County Board of Education. Subject to change by the Board of Education, pay raises are generally based on a percent increase.
3. Employees are paid once a month in accordance with the district pay-day schedule.
4. Annual wages are paid over a ten (10) month or twelve (12) month period. You must elect one of these two options prior to each new school year. Each driver will choose one option and sign the form.
5. Bus drivers shall accumulate no more than 40 hours per week, including field trips, **without prior authorization directly from the Transportation Supervisor.**
6. An employee who resigns or is terminated shall receive his or her outstanding pay, if any, on the next regularly scheduled pay date.

7. As a condition of your employment, an employee who resigns or is terminated shall return all school-owned equipment or clothing which was issued to them or pay for the replacement of such item(s) before their final paycheck will be released.
8. **Bus routes and work assignments may be changed at any time during the school year to best serve the needs of the students and of the school district.** The number of hours or route(s) assigned to a driver cannot be guaranteed from one year to the next. The Transportation Supervisor can and will administratively re-assign any driver or route to best serve the district with no required notice.

Supplemental Pay

Any duties performed that are not part of the employee's regular schedule should be reported in accordance with the pay-period schedule. Field trip forms are signed by the School Principal. All other forms documenting extra runs must be signed by the Transportation Supervisor. Examples of duties that should be included on time sheets:

- Extra route assignments, field trips, or Additional duties assigned by Transportation Supervisor

Employees that do not submit time for supplemental pay by the due date for that pay-period will have their supplemental pay delayed until the following pay-period. Any time you are working for the district regardless of route or extra duties assigned you must complete a timesheet to document the extra time.

Paychecks

The District requires that employees enroll in automatic payroll deposit. Employees can have their paychecks electronically deposited into an account at any bank. Contact Washington County Central Office Finance Department (423-753-1105) for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

An employee shall submit a letter of resignation when leaving the school district. Final pay will be released only after the Resignation form is received in the district payroll office and all district materials and equipment (uniforms, keys, identification badges, tools, etc.) are returned. It is requested that all employees give a two-week notice of intent to resign. Two weeks notice of resignation must be given to be considered for a letter of recommendation.

Employee Responsibilities

The department's goal of providing reliable transportation to all students cannot be accomplished without your presence at work on a daily basis.

- All transportation employees are required to be on duty as scheduled unless a request for discretionary leave has been pre-approved, or an unexpected medical necessity has arisen.
- When an employee knows he/she is going to be absent, the employee **MUST** notify the Transportation Office by calling (423) 753-1172 the day before or one hour prior to your

start time for the morning that you will be absent in order to use personal or sick time. The office should be notified by 12:00 noon for the afternoon runs to be approved to use personal or sick time. Please attempt to make appointments during the day to alleviate the need for substitute bus drivers.

- All transportation employees shall fill out a Time Off Request Form to use personal or sick time.
- If an employee is absent and has not made the required communication with the Transportation Office, the absence will be considered a “No Call/No Show”. First “NCNS” will result in counseling with the Transportation Supervisor. Second “NCNS” will result in counseling and a one-day suspension without-pay. Third “NCNS” will result in counseling and may result in termination.
- The Transportation Supervisor or his/her designee will consider exceptions and emergencies on a case-by-case basis.
- An employee absent five (5) or more consecutive work days due to personal illness or illness in the immediate family will need to apply for Family Medical Leave or other designated leave whichever is applicable. For continued absence, the employee shall submit additional medical certification at 30-day intervals thereafter.

Personal Leave

Personal leave is to be taken at the individual employee’s discretion, subject to the following limitations:

1. A written request for use of personal leave shall be submitted to the Transportation Office **a minimum of one (1) day in advance of the anticipated absence.** (Note: submitting a request does not guarantee approval.)
2. Personal leave shall not be approved for more than two consecutive days annually.
3. Personal leave may not be taken on the following days:
 - The day immediately before or immediately after a District holiday.
 - The first or the last instructional day in a semester.

Sick Leave

Sick leave is to be used for personal illness, illness in the employee’s immediate family, family emergency, or death in the employee’s immediate family.

An employee shall submit medical certification of the need for leave to receive compensation if:

1. The employee is absent more than two consecutive workdays because of personal illness or illness in the immediate family;
2. There is a questionable pattern of absences or when deemed necessary by the Transportation Supervisor or Director of Schools;
3. The employee requests leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for the employee’s serious health condition or that of a spouse, parent, or child; or
4. The employee requests FMLA leave for military caregiver purposes.

Upon return to work after any medical leave of absence, an employee shall provide medical certification that he or she can perform the essential functions of his or her job, with or without

reasonable accommodations. **A medical certification for a school bus driver MUST STATE THAT THE DRIVER IS CAPABLE OF DRIVING A SCHOOL BUS IN THE STATE OF TENNESSEE.** Your medical certification form will be evaluated to determine if in fact you are able to return to work. If approval is given, you will receive a return to work notice and will be instructed to report to the Transportation office. Without this notice, the employee is not authorized to return to work.

Leave of Absence

Any employee who exhausts all available leave and misses work will be subject to the following.

- First occurrence; the employee will be counseled and placed on probation for the remainder of the school year.
- Second occurrence; the employee will be counseled and will be required to submit a one-page letter explaining how he or she will be successful in their position for the remainder of the school year. This will be due 24hrs from time of counsel. Failure to provide the letter to the Transportation Director in 24hrs will result in unpaid suspension.
- Third occurrence; the employee will be counseled and suspended without pay for one to three days at the Transportation Director or Director of Schools discretion and may be terminated.

Exceptions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Transportation Supervisor. An occurrence is not the number of days absent but the number of separate ‘occurrences’ the employee has failed to come to work after exhausting their leave.

If an employee qualifies for protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires, as a reasonable accommodation, a leave period longer than 20 workdays after the expiration of all available leave, a decision regarding the length of that employee's additional leave of absence shall be made on a case-by-case basis.

An employee while on Family/Medical Leave, Leave of Absence, or Workers’ Comp is **prohibited** from visiting a job location or other school sites unless for school purposes unrelated to the employee’s position.

Court Appearances

Absences for court appearances related to an employee’s personal business shall be deducted from the employee’s leave or, at the option of the employee, shall be taken as leave without pay.

Jury Duty

- An employee who follows a summons, to appear as a juror, shall not be penalized for compliance.
- An employee serving jury duty will be paid his or her regular daily rate of pay while serving in any and all phases of jury duty, and he or she will not have his or her available leave balance reduced due to absences for jury duty.

- An employee who serves jury duty must provide a copy of the summons immediately upon receipt to the Transportation Department and a copy of the juror time card immediately upon return to work. The employee will be paid the difference of his/her regular daily pay.

Absenteeism

- Absenteeism is defined as not reporting for work except for absences (such as sick leave, vacation, personal leave, or jury duty) resulting in an unexcused absence. **The fact that an employee notifies the department that he or she will be absent does not necessarily excuse the absence.**
- An employee who is absent from work for more than three consecutive workdays without a doctor's excuse may lose their regular route and could be subject to reassignment upon his or her return to work.

Workers' Compensation

An employee absent from duty because of a job-related illness or injury may be eligible for workers' compensation weekly income benefits if the absence exceeds seven calendar days. An employee receiving workers' compensation wage benefits for a job-related illness or injury may choose to use accumulated sick leave or any other paid leave benefits. An employee choosing to use paid leave will not receive workers' compensation weekly income benefits until all designated leave is exhausted or to the extent that paid leave does not equal the pre-illness or injury wage. If the use of paid leave is not elected, then the employee will only receive workers' compensation wage benefits for any absence resulting from a work-related illness or injury, which may not equal the employee's pre-illness or injury wage. All personnel are eligible. Such coverage applies only to injuries sustained by the employee while acting in the course of employment.

All work-related accidents or injuries must be reported immediately to the Transportation Supervisor. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Tennessee Labor Code. More information can be obtained regarding workers' compensation rights from any Office of Tennessee Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation Commission or contact Paul Masters, the District's Workers' Compensation Coordinator at 423-753-1100.

AN EMPLOYEE ON WORKERS' COMPENSATION MAY NOT RETURN TO WORK WITHOUT A WRITTEN RELEASE FROM THE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS COORDINATOR OR PHYSICIAN.

An employee receiving workers' compensation income benefits may be eligible for paid or unpaid leave. An absence due to a work-related injury or illness shall be designated as workers' compensation.

Workers' Compensation Reporting Procedures

- Personnel injured on the job are required by law and local policy to report such injury to the Transportation Supervisor or his/her designee (Transportation Coordinator for Safety) immediately. The Transportation Supervisor or his/her designee must complete and submit a "First Report of Injury" form to Board of Education the day of the injury.
- Any employee who is unable to report to work after an injury will need a doctor's statement before returning to work. This doctor's statement must state "Full Duty-No Restrictions" or specify restrictions.
- If the employee is unable to return to work after seven (7) working days, it will be the responsibility of the employee to call the Transportation Supervisor each week to report the employee's work status. Each time the employee goes to the doctor the employee will, within one day after the appointment date, bring or mail a copy of the doctor's statement to the supervisor or the employee's benefits office. The supervisor will notify the Board of Education of the employees' work status as changes occur.
- Except in the instance of sick/personal leave, absence due to on-the-job injury may be deducted from the employee's applicable accrued sick leave/personal days.

District-issued photo identification

To ensure safety in the workplace, all employees are required to wear the District-issued photo identification badge while on duty. When an employee of the transportation department has a need to enter a school campus building for any reason (to use the restroom, wait in the lounge, visit the office, etc.), the employee must enter the building through the front doors and display their District-issued photo identification badge at the office before going anywhere else in the building. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Alcohol and Drug Testing

Any employee of Washington County Schools who is required to have a commercial driver's license (CDL) is subject to drug and alcohol testing in accordance with federal regulations. This includes all drivers who operate a commercial motor vehicle designed to transport 16 or more people, including the driver.

There are six (6) types of required testing: Pre-Employment, Random, Post-Accident, Reasonable Suspicion, Return to Work, and Follow-up.

Employees shall not unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, use, or be under the influence of any of the following substances during working hours, while at work, or at any work-related activities during or outside of usual duty hours:

- Any controlled substance or dangerous drugs defined by law, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate.
- Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage
- Any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other chemical substance for inhalation.
- Any other intoxicant or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drugs.
- An employee need not be legally intoxicated to be considered “under the influence” of a controlled substance.

EXCEPTION: This policy does not include prescription drugs when taken as directed by a licensed physician as long as the prescribed dosage does not go beyond the legal limit to operate a passenger vehicle.

Disciplinary sanctions will be imposed on employees who violate the Drug Free Workplace requirement. These sanctions (consistent with local, state, and federal laws) include termination of employment and referral for prosecution.

Smoking or the use of any tobacco product is not permitted on the bus (whether or not transporting students), on school grounds (except in designated smoking areas), within the Transportation Department, or while in the company of students or staff on a field trip. Please report violations to the Transportation Supervisor. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Bus Routes and Stops

Washington County School buses are assigned to a route, not a driver. Buses will be allocated in a manner to best serve the students as well as the needs of the department and district as a whole. Factors that will be considered when assigning buses to routes will be route mileage, road conditions, damage caused by students, as well as care and maintenance of the vehicle by the assigned driver. Changes in bus assignments may be made at any time. **DRIVERS MAY NOT MAKE ANY CHANGES TO THEIR ROUTE UNLESS IT HAS BEEN PRE-APPROVED BY THE TRANSPORTATION SUPERVISOR.**

Authorized bus stops shall be designated annually by the Transportation Supervisor. Bus drivers shall load and unload passengers ONLY at authorized stops. Due to liability and maintenance issues, the District shall generally not drive or turn around on private property except as required by the IEP of a student with disabilities and/or as approved by the Transportation Supervisor.

Students from grades Pre-K through 12 shall be unloaded only at authorized bus stops. If at the end of the route, a student has not exited the bus at their appropriate bus stop, the student shall be returned to the school the student attends. The Transportation Supervisor will notify the school administration to contact the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to pick up the student. At no time shall a student be let off the bus at a location other than their designated bus stop unless the parent has requested an exception in accordance with District procedures. District procedures for an exception require the parent(s) to submit a written, signed note to the appropriate school

administrator. School administration will issue a Bus Pass to the student to be delivered to the driver. Bus Passes must be signed, dated, and have a specific address noted.

Students of primary age Pre-K through 2nd Grade shall not be left at home unless a parent/guardian is present to receive the child. If an approved adult is not present, the student may get off with a **brother or sister** in third grade or higher who is riding the same bus except for Pre-K students. If an approved adult or sibling is not present, contact the Transportation Supervisor with the information and return the student to school after dropping off the other students. Transportation will notify the campus administration to contact the parent/guardian.

While on school property or in the Bus Garage, employees' children must remain with the employee. No child is permitted to roam the Bus Garage or any school property unsupervised. No child is to assist with the pre-trip or post-trip inspections.

Children and grandchildren of department employees that regularly ride a bus to school must ride their regularly assigned bus. Employees' children and grandchildren are not permitted to "jump" buses (randomly select a bus to ride.)

Address and Telephone Number

All employees must provide the Transportation Supervisor with an accurate telephone number and mailing address. As changes occur, employees must update the information that the office has on file immediately.

Computer Use and Email Address

All transportation employees are issued a Washington County Schools email address and are **required** to regularly check their email account. Computers are available in the Transportation Department's driver's lounge for retrieving and sending email. Training is offered by our technology department occasionally throughout the year. All district employees who use the District's computer and email system must agree to the Acceptable Use Guidelines as delineated in the Transportation Handbook.

Important messages and notices (such as school closings and weather announcements) concerning the school system as a whole will be posted on the school system's website as well as through the school system's text alert system. The decision to close the schools or to change the starting or ending time is based upon several factors. The main factors are:

- The health, safety, and welfare of the students.
- The transportation of the students to and from school.
- The disruption caused in the home when school starts late, dismisses early, or is closed.

Employee Evaluations

All employees will have their job performance evaluated annually. In addition to this annual review, drivers may have an informal performance review periodically throughout the year to serve as a “guidepost” to the employee. Performance evaluations will determine an employee’s continued employment or the need for remedial training. All employees have the option to respond in writing to the Transportation Supervisor concerning their evaluation.

Restrictions

School buses or district vehicles shall not be driven on personal errands and drivers are not permitted to take a school bus home without prior approval from the Transportation Supervisor. Violations of these vehicle use restrictions are a zero-tolerance policy and may result in disciplinary action including but not limited to letter of reprimand, suspension, and/or termination.

Vehicle Cleanliness

The regular cleaning and housekeeping of the bus is the responsibility of the driver of that bus. If a driver uses a vehicle that is not their regular vehicle, he or she is expected to leave it in the same or better condition as it was found. Regular cleaning includes sweeping the floors, cleaning windows, and keeping the instrument panel and dashboard clean (conducted daily), and washing the exterior of the bus (minimum eight times per year). The only cleaning solvents that should be used are those provided by the District.

Do not sweep trash and dirt into the parking lot or the ditches. Sweep the trash and dirt into a dustpan and take it to a garbage can or dumpster.

Drivers are never allowed to use Armor-All or other greasy substances on the floors or seats of a bus!

Bodily fluid spills (such as vomit, urine, feces, blood, etc.) must be properly cleaned by the driver as soon as possible using the factory-provided body fluid cleanup kit on his or her bus. If a bus is not equipped with a factory-provided kit, then a suitable substitute may be obtained from the shop. Once the body fluid clean-up supplies have been used, submit a work-order to the shop to have the supplies replaced.

Buses may be mopped with the supplies provided at the Bus Garage, **but spraying or washing down the inside of the bus is prohibited.**

We encourage you to decorate your bus for any reason, including the various holidays and/or sporting events. Please note that there will be no hanging decorations in the drivers’ area that may block the drivers’ vision. Also, there will be no items on the windows in the drivers’ area that may block the drivers’ vision. The drivers’ area is defined as anything in front of the barriers for the student seating. Ensure that anything you use to decorate will not offend any member of the community, staff members or students. If you are not sure, ask the Transportation Supervisor to approve your decorations! Have fun with this, your students enjoy the holidays!

REMEMBER: Drivers do not receive supplemental pay for additional cleaning of the inside or outside of their buses.

Licensing

All Washington County Schools employees who operate a school district vehicle must be properly licensed by the State of Tennessee to operate that vehicle.

Employees authorized to drive a school bus are required to have a current Tennessee CDL license with the “P” and “S” endorsements, “passenger” and “school bus”, respectively. The license must be carried by each driver at all times while operating a school bus or other district vehicle. Each bus driver is solely responsible to ensure that his or her driver’s license is kept current. **Failure to maintain the proper certification and license will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.**

Physical Examination

Every bus driver is responsible for maintaining a current, annual DOT medical examination certificate. Each driver must submit documentation of an acceptable physical examination on an annual basis. A physician, advanced practice nurse, or physician assistant may conduct the examination. An ophthalmologist, optometrist, or therapeutic optometrist may conduct the part of the examination relating to the person’s vision. A driver shall not operate a school bus unless he or she has on his or her person driver’s license (if such information has been provided on the license), stating that the driver is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle. **If a driver fails his or her physical and does not pursue corrective measures with their physician, they will remain ineligible to drive a school bus and will be terminated.**

Each driver must report to the Transportation Supervisor any mental or physical condition which may impact his/her ability to safely operate a school bus or other vehicle used to transport students. A medical examination may be required of any employee when, in the judgment of the Transportation Supervisor, the employee’s condition interferes with the ability to perform job-related functions or may pose a direct threat to the health or safety of the employee or others. The District may designate the physician to perform the examination and, in that case, shall pay the cost of the examination. If the circumstances so require, The Director of Schools may place the employee on administrative leave without pay pending the physician’s report and the District’s decision.

Certification

All bus drivers are responsible for maintaining a current Tennessee DOT driver training certification by renewing annually with a 4-hour refresher course. Newly licensed drivers must complete the entry level school bus driver training as required by the Tennessee Department of Education prior to being eligible to test with the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security. Drivers are expected to meet all requirements set forth by the Tennessee Department of Education prior to being licensed to operate a school bus in Tennessee. It is each bus driver’s sole responsibility to ensure that their certification is kept current. Drivers are expected to schedule a

class that will not put them in jeopardy of being non-compliant. **Failure to maintain the proper certification and license will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.**

Documentation

All bus drivers are required to carry with them at all times the following items,
A current, valid CDL with Passenger and School Bus Endorsement;
These items will be checked periodically. If an employee is found without one or more of these items, he or she will not be permitted to drive until such time that he or she can produce these documents. The employee will also be subject to a counseling session or be suspended without pay.

Driving Record

All district employees who operate a district vehicle must maintain a driving record acceptable to the standards developed jointly by the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security and the Tennessee Department of Education. The driving record must also be acceptable to the Washington County Schools fleet insurance carrier at the normal rate.

Driving Record Evaluations

In accordance with requirements set forth by the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security and the Tennessee Department of Education, each school bus driver's driving record will be reviewed annually. A school bus driver is disqualified from driving a school bus once he or she accumulates twelve (12) points on his or her license during any twelve (12) month period. Points are assessed for violations that occur in **any vehicle you drive**.

Criminal History Background Check (FBI and TBI)

The District shall obtain criminal history record information on final candidates for employment. All District positions have the potential for contact with students. The District shall disqualify from employment a person whose criminal history indicates that the person poses a threat to students or employees. Consistent with business necessity, the District shall also disqualify from employment a person whose criminal history is otherwise inconsistent with the job duties of the position for which the person is being considered. New background checks shall be completed every 5 years.

Driver Impairment

No driver shall operate a Washington County Schools vehicle while the driver's ability or alertness is impaired (or likely to become impaired) by fatigue, illness, or any other cause as to make it unsafe to begin or continue to operate the vehicle. **Any bus driver who suspects another bus driver of being impaired is required to inform the Transportation Supervisor and Principal of the school where the impaired driver is driving.**

Traffic Violations

All employees who drive a district vehicle are required to report any moving traffic violation for which they receive a ticket/citation and all collisions in which they are involved to their immediate supervisor by the end of the next business day. (**This includes violations while driving their personal vehicles.**)

Any employee who is issued a citation for violating a traffic law(s) that jeopardizes the safety of students or school property (while performing his or her duties in a Washington County Schools vehicle) is subject to immediate termination.

Any traffic citation that an employee receives while operating a Washington County Schools vehicle is the responsibility of the employee and not the District.

Consequences

Our goal is to be collision free. However, there is a need for guidelines establishing consequences when a driver (employed by Washington County Schools) is involved in a collision considered to be preventable when the driver's actions were a contributing factor to a collision involving a Washington County Schools vehicle.

A collision is defined as any kind of event involving a Washington County Schools vehicle that results in vehicle damage, bodily injury, and/or property damage. All collisions should produce a citation from the local police or Tennessee Highway Patrol.

Collisions involving a district vehicle are classified into two categories:

Non-Preventable: Collisions in which the driver was not the cause of the collision and appropriate caution was exercised. No disciplinary action will result from collisions where the driver is not at fault, however additional defensive driving training may be recommended.

Preventable: Collisions in which the driver was at fault or where the appropriate caution was not exercised. A driver need not be issued a citation to be considered at fault. Disciplinary action will result from collisions where the driver is at fault.

The Transportation Supervisor will work with law enforcement to make the determination of preventable or non-preventable. Collisions resulting from any of the following will result in immediate termination, regardless of the damage/injury cost:

- Driver under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Gross negligence
- Illegal or improper crossing of railroad tracks
- Serious traffic violation (excessive speeding at least 15 MPH over the limit, erratic/improper lane change, reckless driving, fatal collision, following too closely)
- Failure to report an accident or incident.

Collision Procedures

In the event of a collision, the first priority is the safety of your passengers. Remain calm and reassure students.

1. Immediately call 911.
2. Call the Transportation Supervisor.
3. Protect the scene. Set out reflectors as necessary to prevent further collisions.
4. Set parking brake, activate emergency flashers. Leave the bus running with AC on if no damage is present to the engine compartment. If damage is present, shut the bus off and remove the key. Do not move the bus until instructed by a Law Enforcement Officer or school official.
5. Determine the need to evacuate the bus. You must evacuate the bus if...
 - i. The bus is positioned on a railroad crossing
 - ii. The smell of raw fuel is present
 - iii. There is smoke and/or threat of fire
 - iv. The bus is positioned in the roadway in such a manner as staying on the bus would pose a greater threat to the passengers' safety
6. When you contact the Transportation Supervisor provide him with the following information:
 - i. Location of the collision
 - ii. Are there any injuries?
 - iii. Is an ambulance needed?
7. Account for all students as a check is made for injury of students.
8. Care for injuries and take precautions to prevent further injuries. If students are injured follow recommended first aid procedures. **Never leave the scene of a collision.**
9. Start to prepare your seating chart.
10. The Transportation Supervisor will call the appropriate law enforcement agency to investigate. An ambulance will be dispatched to your location if you requested one. If necessary, a bus will be dispatched to your location to transport the uninjured children and/or complete your route. The dispatcher will contact the schools with students involved.
11. Begin to secure the following information for your Vehicle Collision Report: (paperwork is located in the driver's booklet)
 - a. Name, address, telephone number, driver's license number, and insurance information for the other driver involved;
 - b. Name, telephone number, and address of witnesses involved;
 - c. Make, model, and license number of the other vehicle(s) involved;
 - d. Location of the collision, street, intersection, block number, etc.;
 - e. Time and date of the collision; and
 - f. Any unusual street or weather conditions
12. Do not transport students or allow them to leave the scene until instructed by Tennessee Highway Patrol.
13. Driver **must** obtain an accurate list of all students on the bus: Name, Grade, School, Seat number they were sitting in at time of accident and ask each

student during your assessment of their possible injuries if they are okay. Document their answer.

14. All collisions shall be thoroughly investigated by the Transportation Supervisor or his/her designee, and appropriate consequences and preventive measures will be determined.
15. Do not discuss any details of the collision with anyone except the police and Transportation Supervisor. It is not your position to declare fault or responsibility. Tell the investigating officer only what he asks.
16. Immediately upon your return to the Bus Garage, complete any and all collision documentation.
17. If the collision occurs anytime outside of normal operating hours for the Transportation Department, ensure that the following telephone calls are made:
 - a. The Transportation Supervisor
 - b. The fire department and/or ambulance as needed
18. Appropriate law enforcement (county sheriff, city police, metro police, etc.)

Begin filling out vehicle collision report. Regardless of the extent of the accident or injuries, the Transportation Supervisor must have a written statement from you within 24 hours. Do not wait to provide information.

Driver's report shall explain in detail what happened. All information must be provided, including witnesses, injuries, and the actual time the accident occurred. Driver and attendant must provide a written statement of collision details presenting only facts and removing all personal feelings from the report.

All school bus drivers shall be responsible for reporting ALL traffic citations and accidents that occur during non-working hours to the Transportation Supervisor within 24 hours of returning to work.

Post-Accident Drug/Alcohol Screening

If the employee is involved in a collision, regardless of a citation being issued, **a post-accident Drug/Alcohol test is required.** All post-accident drug/alcohol tests will be conducted in accordance with federal law and Board Policy.

Use of Communication Devices

A bus driver may NOT use a wireless communication device while operating a motor vehicle. A wireless communication device shall include cellular phones, GPS units, and other commercial mobile service devices. The operator may be subject to a fine and disciplinary action, up to and including termination. At no time shall a hands free listening device be used while operating a school bus. (See Tennessee Code Annotated 55-8-192; TCA 55-8-101.) A wireless communication device may be used if the vehicle is stopped in a safe location.

Tennessee Code 55-8-192 offers an affirmative defense to prosecution of an offense under this section if the wireless communication device was used to make an emergency call to an emergency response service, including a rescue, emergency medical or hazardous material response service, hospital, fire department, health clinic, medical doctor's office, an individual to administer first aid treatment, or police department.

Cellular Telephones

For safety reasons, cell phones must be put away while operating a school bus. Use of earbuds or any other wireless device is prohibited while operating a school bus. This includes while waiting in the fueling line. Phone calls may not occur while students are on board unless the bus is stopped in a safe location. **USE OF A CELL PHONE WHILE OPERATING A SCHOOL BUS WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE TERMINATION.**

Pre/Post Trip Inspections

One of your most important responsibilities is that of maintaining your bus in a safe and mechanically sound condition. The specific guidelines for conducting a pre-trip inspection and three-step air brake test on your bus are included on the pre-trip inspection form. Thorough pre-trip vehicle inspection and three-step air brake test will be conducted by the driver prior to every route, extra trip, and any time the bus sits idle for 2 or more hours. If any irregularities affecting the safe operation of the vehicle are discovered during your pre-trip inspection, immediately contact the Bus Garage for assistance **before** driving the vehicle.

Failure to perform a proper pre-trip inspection and three-step air brake test will result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, letter of reprimand, suspension, and termination.

All pre-trip inspections must be documented on the daily vehicle inspection form for that day. It is the driver's responsibility to inspect and initial that the bus is checked in the morning to verify that no person or animal has gained entry to the bus overnight.

A thorough post-trip vehicle inspection will be conducted by the driver after every route, and any other time that the bus has been driven during the day. At the end of the day, be sure there are no sleeping children left on your bus. If a student is located on the bus, notify the Transportation Supervisor immediately, as well as the appropriate school or Central Office. **Leaving a student unattended on a bus directly jeopardizes the safety of a student and will result in termination of employment as a bus driver.**

Check each item listed on the pre-trip/post-trip form. If any irregularities affecting the safe operation of the vehicle are discovered during your post-trip inspection, report the problems **in writing** to the bus mechanic using the Pre-Trip Inspection (DVIR) form. During this time, the driver shall be responsible to ensure that the assigned bus or vehicle is in a clean condition (both interior and exterior). If personal items are located on the bus, such as clothes, backpacks, books, etc. they shall be reported to the dispatcher. The driver, the Transportation Supervisor, and

appropriate school principal may determine the most efficient way to return the items to the student.

Fueling Procedures

No route may be started with less than 1/2 tank of fuel. When a driver fails to ensure that his or her bus has sufficient fuel they will be counseled. No bus shall be parked or driven off the lot under half a tank of fuel or DEF fluid.

No driver may use a cell phone while fueling his or her bus. All personnel must be off the bus while fueling.

Safe Driving

Hand Positioning

Drivers are to operate the bus with both hands positioned on the steering wheel at the 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock positions. Drivers are not permitted to lean or rest on the steering wheel while driving.

Pedal Use

Drivers may only use the right foot to operate the accelerator and brake pedals. At no time may a driver use the left foot or both the left and right foot to operate the pedals.

Seatbelt

All school bus drivers are required by law to wear his or her seatbelt ***properly*** while operating the vehicle.

Traffic Rules on Transportation Property

All traffic signs and barricades in place in the Transportation Facility must be observed.

Bus Service Doors

Bus service doors must remain closed at all times while the bus is moving. This is for the safety of passengers and to protect the vehicle from damage.

Passengers

No student may be permitted or required to stand while riding the bus.

A driver may not bring additional riders with them on a route or field trip without first obtaining permission from the Transportation Supervisor or his/her designee at least 24-hours in advance.

The aisle, step well, and emergency exits must be clear of all persons and objects. No passenger may use the emergency exits except for their intended purpose.

Leaving the Bus Unattended

Any time the driver must leave the bus unattended for any reason, he/she must remove the key from the ignition and take it with them and ensure the bus is secured with the transmission in neutral and the parking brake set. Before leaving the bus, you must drain your air tanks.

Idle Time

To help prolong the life of the vehicles and prevent excessive emissions, buses may not idle more than five (5) minutes except during the pre-trip inspection, and except when weather is 30° or below and the bus is warming up. Under the latter exception, the bus may not remain idle for more than 10 minutes. Excessive idling will result in disciplinary action. Idling costs the District money. Please see Board Policy [3.405](#) here which covers our Idling Policy.

Speed Limits

All maximum and minimum speed limits must be obeyed while operating a vehicle owned by Washington County Schools. Remember that school buses should be considered a slow-moving vehicle and operated as such.

Vehicle speed should be adjusted with consideration to road conditions, traffic, and weather conditions. In residential areas, it is recommended to drive 20-35 MPH for the safety of pedestrians. Speeding will be monitored using the GPS in each bus. **Speeding infractions will be subject to disciplinary measures.**

Signaling Intentions

All drivers are required to give an appropriate signal before turning from a direct course on the roadway, changing lanes, or turning right or left at any intersection.

Turn signals shall be given at least 100 feet continuously before turning. (A distance of 300 feet is recommended.)

No driver shall stop or suddenly decrease the speed of his or her vehicle without giving an appropriate signal to any vehicle to the rear when there is opportunity to give such a signal.

Caravan Driving

Any time that buses operate in a caravan or convoy fashion, the drivers should maintain sufficient space between buses to allow other vehicles to enter and occupy that space safely.

Backing Guidelines

Backing should not be done unless absolutely necessary. Prior approval for any backing not listed on your route must be approved by the Transportation Director or his/her designee.

All reasonable and prudent care should be taken if it becomes necessary to back your bus.

The driver of a school bus shall not back unless such movement can be made safely.

If backing the bus is necessary, the following guidelines should be considered:

- If it is necessary to back a great distance, stop halfway and get out to check your progress.
- Never back around the corner of an intersection to turn around except at an approved bus turnaround.
- If it is necessary to back into or out of a driveway, back into the driveway whenever possible. This way, the bus may drive forward onto the roadway with a clear view.
- Do not back your bus in a school driveway unless you have an adult on the ground outside your bus to guide you by signaling. **A driver in another bus signaling you by radio is not acceptable!**
- Do not back your bus on or onto a public roadway unless it is an approved bus turnaround.
- The driver of a school bus shall not back the bus on the shoulder or roadway of any controlled-access highway.
- When it is necessary to back across a sidewalk onto a street, stop at the sidewalk to ensure that there are no pedestrians or children playing, and then proceed, stopping before entering the street to ensure that traffic is clear.
- If you are unfamiliar with an area, call for assistance prior to backing your bus.
- When backing, turn on your 4-way flashers to ensure that other drivers will be alerted to your location.

Lane Selection and Use

A school bus is a slow-moving vehicle by the nature of its use, and therefore should be driven in the farthest right lane whenever possible or lane of least restriction.

It is permissible for a bus to drive in the left-hand lane (of a multiple lane roadway) when that bus is preparing to turn left.

“Weaving” in and out of traffic lanes is not considered a safe driving practice and will not be permitted.

Changing lanes is prohibited within 100 feet of any intersection.

Intersections and Turning

Intersections are one of the most dangerous places for a vehicle to be. With this in mind, the following guidelines should be observed to avoid a collision in an intersection:

1. Prepare early and slow down before the intersection. Intersections are no place for speed.
2. Drivers are required to signal his or her intention prior to turning. Get in the proper lane and signal your turn well in advance.
3. Check traffic in front of, to the sides, and to the rear of the bus.
4. Check for a clear right-of-way

5. Monitor all mirrors throughout the turning process.
6. Make turns smoothly without strain on the engine.
7. Square off your turn. (Don't cut across other lanes of traffic or curbs unnecessarily.)
8. Realign the bus in the proper lane and cancel the turn signal.
9. Steer wheels back into position. Do not allow the wheels to "spin" back into position.
10. Exercise courtesy at intersections:
11. When approaching an intersection, watch for large vehicles already at the intersection that may require a large amount of room to turn. If necessary, stay back from the intersection until that vehicle has completed its turn.
12. Before turning, ensure that you can safely execute the turn without coming into contact with another vehicle at the intersection. If not, allow the other vehicle to proceed through the intersection first.
13. Exercise caution: NEVER wave another vehicle on through an intersection or otherwise direct another driver to do something. You are not authorized to direct traffic. Doing so may place you as the driver in a position of assuming partial liability for any collision that may result.
14. Shoulders are not turn-lanes and may not be used as such. Caution should be exercised when turning near a shoulder to ensure that other vehicles are not illegally using the shoulder as a turn-lane which could impact your ability to safely perform the turn.
15. Right turns on red are allowed, unless otherwise posted.
16. When turning left onto a roadway having a center left-turn lane, you are not permitted to turn into the center left-turn lane and wait for traffic to clear so you may enter the right-hand lane.

Lane Positioning for Specific Turns

Left turn from a two-way roadway onto a two-way roadway

The vehicle must approach the intersection near the center line and must not cross over the center-line of either roadway.

Left turn from a two-way roadway onto a one-way roadway

The vehicle must approach the intersection near the center line and must not cross the center line of the two-lane roadway. The vehicle should turn into the closest possible lane on the one-way roadway.

Left turn from a one-way roadway onto a two-way roadway

The vehicle must approach the intersection in the farthest left lane and must not cross the center-line of the two-way roadway.

Left turn from a one-way roadway onto a one-way roadway

The vehicle must approach the intersection in the farthest left lane as possible and turn into the closest possible lane without contacting the curb.

Left turns with a single left turn lane present

The vehicle must approach the intersection and enter the turn from the left turn lane and then turn into the closest possible lane.

Left turns with multiple left turn lanes present

Because of the room required for a bus to safely execute a turn, buses should turn from the left turn lane that is farthest to the right and then turn into the lane that the pavement markings or signs instruct. If no instructions are present, turn into the farthest right-hand lane of the roadway that you are turning onto.

Right turns

When making any right turn, the bus must approach the intersection and complete the turn as close as possible to the right-hand curb or right-hand side of the roadway. To ensure curb clearance, buses must use the following procedure for right-hand turns:

1. Approach the intersection in the farthest right-hand lane approximately 4 feet from the curb (close enough to prevent other vehicles from passing on the right while you are turning.)
2. Proceed on a straight path of travel until you are certain the rear wheels will not come into contact with the curb or right edge of the roadway.
3. Turn the steering wheel a full lock turn to the right, swinging over the center line of the roadway that you are turning on to if necessary.
4. Realign the bus in the farthest right-hand lane as possible.

It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that proper curb clearance is maintained when making right turns. Failure to do so will result in obvious tire and/or wheel damage to the bus. Evidence of this type of damage will result in disciplinary action on the driver including but not limited to a letter of reprimand, appropriate retraining, suspension, and termination.

When making tight right turns, you must not take extra room by moving to the left before the turn. If additional room is needed to safely complete the turn, use additional lanes on the roadway that you are **turning onto** to swing out and realign back in your lane as shown in the diagrams below:

**DO THIS!****DON'T DO THIS!**

Freeway Driving

When entering the freeway, accelerate to enter the freeway at a reasonable rate of speed for the traffic present.

Drive in the farthest right-hand lane as possible.

School buses are required to follow the posted speed limit and not to exceed it while in operation. School bus drivers should take great care to adhere to the posted speed limit and adjust speed in accordance with traffic patterns, weather and time of travel.

Watch entrance and exit ramps for vehicles entering or exiting the freeway. As a slower moving vehicle, be prepared to allow these other vehicles to enter and exit freely.

Watch signs and change lanes to prepare for exits early.

When exiting, activate the turn signal, slow the vehicle, and move to the deceleration lane when one is present.

Be prepared to yield to traffic on the access road, even though you may have the right-of-way.

In the event of a flat tire or blowout, follow the procedures given for a tire blow out and get the bus off the freeway and onto the access road. Your concern is with the safety of the students and not protecting the tires.

Night Driving

Maintain a speed at which you will be able to stop within the distance illuminated by your headlights.

Use your high beam headlights only when no other vehicles are present in the lane in front of the bus or approaching from the other direction.

Keep windows and windshield clean.

Take extra caution in watching for pedestrians.

Do not drive when sleepy. Pull off the road and rest.

When an oncoming vehicle approaches, do not look directly into the headlights, but instead at the edge of the vehicle's light spray.

Tire Blow Out

A blow out when traveling is dangerous. Do not jam on the brakes. Reduce speed gradually until the vehicle can be safely brought to a stop. Move your bus off the roadway, if possible, to prevent a collision. Call the transportation garage and advise them that you have a tire blowout and they

shall advise you on your next course of action. Additional procedures can be found below under the subtitle “Mechanical Breakdown Procedure.”

Leaving the Roadway

When it becomes necessary to leave the roadway onto the shoulder, do not jerk the wheel to immediately return to the roadway. Allow the vehicle to slow down, and then gradually ease the wheels back onto the pavement.

Railroad Crossings

Buses are required by federal law to stop at all railroad crossings whether carrying passengers or not. When crossing railroad tracks, observe the following guidelines:

1. When approaching the tracks, Washington County School bus drivers will activate his/her 4-way flashers (hazards) approximately 200 feet before the tracks to alert other motorists of an upcoming stop. (Be sure not to activate your 4-way flashers too early so as not to confuse other motorists.) It is unlawful to use your student loading lights at railroad crossings.
2. Approach the tracks in the far right-hand lane whenever possible. If you must turn left immediately after a railroad crossing, you may approach the crossing in the left-hand lane so as not to require a last-minute lane change.
 - a. Many active railroad-highway crossings have gates with flashing red lights and bells. Stop when the lights begin to flash and before the gate lowers across the road lane. Remain stopped until the gates go up and the lights have stopped flashing. Proceed when it is safe. If the gate stays down after the train passes, do not drive around the gate. Instead, contact your dispatcher.
3. Unless turning left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks, buses must cross the tracks in a single lane.
4. Before crossing a railroad track, the driver must bring his or her bus to a COMPLETE STOP, 15 to 50 feet from the nearest track.
5. Place the transmission in Park, or if there is no Park shift point, in Neutral. Turn off all noisy equipment and signal for students to be quiet.
6. While stopped, the driver must look and listen in both directions for approaching trains and signal(s) indicating the approach of a train. The driver must not cross the tracks when:
 - a. a train is crossing the roadway on which the bus is traveling;
 - b. a train is approaching the tracks as the train is an immediate hazard;
 - c. warning signal(s) or devices are activated, whether or not a train is present;OR
 - d. There is not sufficient room on the other side of the tracks to cross and then stop without the rear of his or her bus being within 15 feet of the nearest track.
7. If the bus must stop to wait for a train or malfunctioning warning devices. The driver will not proceed across the tracks until safe to do so.
8. Do not let the railroad arms come into contact with your bus!

9. When multiple tracks are present, ensure that all sets of tracks are clear before proceeding across all.
10. When there are multiple crossings close together, bus drivers must stop between each set when there is sufficient room to do so safely.
11. When two buses approach a railroad crossing together from either direction, the bus that arrived first may cross first. **Only one bus may cross the tracks at a time.**
12. Cross the tracks in a low gear. Do not change gears while crossing.
13. Buses may not change lanes while on the railroad tracks.
14. If the gate comes down after you have started across, drive through it even if it means you will break the gate.

A school bus is one of the safest vehicles on the highway. However, a school bus does not have the slightest edge when involved in a crash with a train. Because of a train's size and weight, it cannot stop quickly. An emergency escape route does not exist for a train. You can prevent school bus/train crashes by following these recommended procedures. **Failure to follow any of these guidelines for railroad crossings will result in severe disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension or termination pending investigation.**

Special Situations

Bus Stalls or Trapped on Tracks

If your bus stalls or is trapped on the tracks, get everyone out of the bus and off the tracks immediately. Move everyone far from the bus at an angle, which is both away from the tracks and toward the train.

Police Officer at the Crossing

If a police officer is at the crossing, obey directions. If there is no police officer, and you believe the signal is malfunctioning, contact your dispatcher to report the situation and ask for instructions on how to proceed.

Obstructed View of Tracks

Plan your route so it provides maximum sight distance at highway-rail grade crossings. Do not attempt to cross the tracks unless you can see far enough down the track to know for certain that no trains are approaching. Be especially careful at "passive" crossings. Even if there are active railroad signals that indicate the tracks are clear, you must look and listen to be sure it is safe to proceed.

Containment or Storage Areas

If it won't fit, don't commit! Know the length of your bus and the size of the containment area at highway-rail crossings on the school bus route, as well as any crossing you encounter during a school activity trip. When approaching a crossing with a signal or stop sign on the opposite side, pay attention to the amount of room there. Be certain the bus has enough containment or storage area to completely clear the railroad tracks on the other side if there is a need to stop. As a rule, add 15 feet to the length of the school bus to determine an acceptable amount of containment or storage area.

Mechanical Breakdown Procedure

If you have an in-transit breakdown, move your bus from the roadway, if possible, to prevent a collision. Activate your 4-way emergency flashers, set the parking brake, turn off your engine (if instructed to do so), and wait for instructions. **CALL IN IMMEDIATELY.** Contact the Transportation Supervisor that you have a mechanical failure. After the bus is stopped and turned off, you may call in on your cell phone. At this time, set out emergency triangle reflectors in the appropriate locations.

If an engine overheats, the driver should stop the bus immediately. **DO NOT** pour water in the radiator of an overheated engine. **CALL IN IMMEDIATELY.**

In most cases, students should remain on the bus in the event of a mechanical failure. Only when the students' safety is in jeopardy should they be evacuated off the bus.

Write down the following information to be called in:

- Bus number
- Location
- Whether the bus has students on board
- A brief explanation of the problem

If a relief bus is sent to transport the students, it will park as closely to the disabled bus as possible, but no closer than approximately three feet of the rear of the vehicle, leaving sufficient space for the emergency door of that bus to be opened, if necessary. Both buses will activate the red student loading lights, and students will board the relief bus. Transfer the students as follows:

- Both drivers stand outside beside the service door.
- The students walk single file to the relief bus and get aboard.
- The drivers exchange buses and the regular driver continues the run.
- The relief driver assists in getting the relief bus onto the road.

Hazardous Weather Driving Procedures

The school bus driver is responsible for the safety and well-being of passengers as well as for the safe operation of the bus. Adverse weather conditions contribute to many vehicular accidents and it is essential that certain procedures be followed, and considerations be made.

If you are off duty and severe weather conditions are forecasted you must keep yourself informed of developments. If school is to be canceled or dismissed early, the District will inform the media and it will be broadcast. The District will send out information via the text alert system.

If inclement weather develops while regular route services are already in progress, the driver must make sensible decisions using sound judgment and common sense based upon the conditions at his or her location. The general rule of thumb to follow is if you have any doubts that continuing to operate/move your bus down the road based upon weather conditions is unsafe – **STOP** at the first safe opportunity and wait until the conditions improve. Notify the Transportation Supervisor if you are stopped for more than 10 minutes. School schedules are not

disrupted unless conditions threaten the safety of the students. Therefore, you must expect to drive in bad weather from time to time.

When driving in inclement weather, keep in mind that posted speed limits are for ideal conditions only. When the pavement is wet, icy, or snowy, lower your speed. The driver must have complete control of his or her bus always when stopping, starting, and turning.

Rainy Weather

1. Be prepared for flash flooding. Plan alternate routes for your runs if you have low water crossings. Learn the location of low water crossings throughout the district.
2. Do not enter water if you do not know how deep it is. Stay out of the curb lane if water is running in it. Check frequently for wet brakes. Dry out your brakes by lightly riding the brake pedal. In extreme cases, you will have to stop and wait for them to recover. Use lower gears to assist in stopping.
4. Observe water depth markers at low water crossings. If the water is more than 2 feet deep, do not attempt to cross. Be aware that water depths can increase in seconds and your bus may be swept away.
5. During flash flood warnings, the District will monitor hazardous areas and the situation. You must obey instructions given to you by District personnel and police officers.
6. Never enter a body of water if you think it is unsafe; use an alternate route. If that is not possible, park your bus so as not to create a hazard. Notify the Transportation Supervisor of the situation. Keep your students on the bus unless evacuation is necessary for the student's safety.
7. If water gets onto the spark plug wires or other ignition components, your engine may stall out. If this happens, follow this procedure:
 - a. Keep all students on the bus.
 - b. Turn off the ignition key.
 - c. Activate your hazard lights and turn off all other lights.
 - d. After five minutes, try starting the engine. Do not flood the engine. Your problem is electrical, not fuel-related. Also, do not run the starter more than a few seconds at a time.
 - e. If the engine does not start, wait another five minutes and try again. If you manage to get it started, call in and cancel the breakdown call.

Winter Weather

Anticipate weather problems and report early, if necessary, to run route on time. You may require assistance in starting your engine on very cold mornings dress appropriately. Your bus may break down, leaving you stranded in the cold weather. Ice or frost must be removed from the windshield, rear windows and door, the service door, driver's window, and the outside mirrors before your bus may be moved. Use only plastic implements to scrape ice or use De-Icer. Never use water to remove ice--it will compound your problem. If roads are icy, slow down and increase your following distance. Beware of icy overpasses, as they will freeze before the rest of the roadway. Icy hills are difficult to negotiate. Use an alternate route, if possible.

Driving Citations

All the topics discussed in the “In-Transit” section of this handbook are to be observed at all times. If a driver receives two Driving Citations in the same semester, the driver will receive disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Loading and Unloading

More students are killed while getting on or off a school bus each year than are killed as passengers inside of a school bus. As a result, knowing what to do before, during, and after loading or unloading students is critical.

All stops are pre-approved by the school district prior to making the stop. You must never change the location of a bus stop without written approval from the Transportation Supervisor or appropriate school district official.

You must use extreme caution when approaching a school bus stop. You are in a very demanding situation when entering these areas. It is critical that you understand and follow all state and local laws and regulations regarding approaching a school bus stop. This would involve the proper use of mirrors, alternating flashing lamps, and when equipped, the movable stop signal arm and crossing control arm.

Use of Loading Lights

It is unlawful to operate any alternating red-flashing warning signal light on any school bus except when the bus is stopped on a highway or street for school children to board or depart from the bus. This is the sole purpose of red warning lights.

When approaching a bus from behind that is stopped to load or unload passengers, another bus driver may activate his or her **AMBER** (yellow) warning lights to alert other motorists that they should prepare to stop. Bus drivers who are approaching another stopped bus from the opposite direction should **NOT** activate any warning lights on their bus.

As a school bus driver, set the example for the public and ensure that you are stopping for other school buses that are loading or unloading students.

Danger Zones

The danger zones extend as much as 30 feet from the front bumper, 10 feet from the left and right sides of the bus, and 10 feet from the rear bumper of the school bus. Proper adjustment of all mirrors is vital to the safe operation of the school bus to observe the danger zones around the bus and to look for students, traffic and other objects in these areas.

Approaching the Bus Stop

- Approach cautiously at a slow rate of speed.
- Look for pedestrians, traffic, or other objects before, during, and after coming to a stop.
- Continuously check all mirrors.
- If the school bus is so equipped, activate alternating flashing AMBER warning lamps 300 feet prior to the bus stop in accordance with state law.
- Continuously check mirrors to monitor the danger zones for students, traffic, and other objects.
- Move as far as possible to the right on the traveled portion of the roadway.
- Bring the school bus to a full stop with the front bumper at least 10 feet away from students at the designated stop. This forces the students to walk to the bus, so you have a better view of their movements.
- Open the service door, if possible, enough to activate alternating red lamps when traffic is a safe distance from the school bus.
- Make a final check to see that all traffic has stopped before activating the RED loading lights and opening the door and signaling students to approach.

Loading Procedures

(If the bus stop is located at a bus turnaround, load the students before backing the bus.)

- Perform a safe stop
- Students should wait in a designated location for the school bus, facing the bus as it approaches.
- Be sure that all traffic has stopped.
- If students must cross the road, maintain eye contact with the student and signal the student when it is safe to cross.
- Count the number of students at the bus stop and be sure all board the bus. If possible, know names of students at each stop. If there is a student missing, ask the other students where the student is. If you cannot account for a student outside, secure the bus, take the key, and check around and underneath the bus.
- The dome light should be on while loading in the dark.
- Allow all students to board and **be seated** before closing the service door and deactivating the red loading lights. **All students must be seated before moving the bus.**
- Check all mirrors to ensure that there are no students in the danger zones around the bus.
- When safe to do so, pull away from the stop and proceed to the next stop.

Loading Procedures at a School Campus

The loading procedure is essentially the same wherever you load students, but there are slight differences. When students are loading at the school campus, you should:

- Drivers should approach loading zones with extreme caution realizing the possibility of students running out into the path of a bus.
- The driver must be present on his or her bus when students board.
- When entering the loading zone in the mornings to unload students, drive as far forward as possible before stopping to allow as many buses to enter the loading zone as possible.

- Exercise extreme caution around school campuses. Traffic is heavy with parent vehicles and students walking and riding bikes.
- When loading in the afternoons, buses should line-up in the same order as often as possible.
- Once a driver has loaded his or her students and has begun to move the bus, that driver shall not stop again to load students. **All students must be seated before moving the bus.**

Unloading Procedures

(If the bus stop is located at a bus turnaround, load the students before backing the bus.)

- Perform a safe stop at designated unloading areas.
- Have the students remain seated until told to exit.
- Check all mirrors.
- Count the number of students while unloading to confirm the location of all students before pulling away from the stop.
- Tell students to exit the bus and walk at least 10 feet away from the side of the bus to a position where the driver can plainly see all students.
- Require any students that must cross the street to do so **in front of the bus**. Instruct them to watch for you to signal them when it is safe to cross the road.
- Check all mirrors again. Make sure no students are around or returning to the bus.
- If you cannot account for a student outside the bus, secure the bus, and check around and underneath the bus.
- The driver must ensure that Pre-Kindergarten students get off the bus with an approved adult present at the stop. If an approved adult is not present, the student must be returned to school. Call the Bus Garage with the information and return the student to school after dropping off the other students and before proceeding to the next campus. Students who must be returned to school a second time (and each time thereafter) for this reason must be written up on a bus conduct report. **Dropping a Pre-K student off without an approved adult present directly jeopardizes the safety of a student and will result in termination of employment.**
- If a student gives indication that they are scared or uncertain about getting off the bus at their stop, do not force the student to get off. Instead, notify transportation and return the student to school.
- When all students are accounted for, close the service door and deactivate the red loading lights.
- Check all mirrors to ensure that there are no students in the danger zones around the bus.
- When safe to do so, pull away from the stop and proceed to the next stop.

NOTE: If you have missed a student's unloading stop, do not back up. Follow local procedures.

Unloading Procedures at School Campus

When unloading at the school you should follow these procedures:

- Perform a safe stop at designated unloading areas as described in above.
- Have the students remain seated until told to exit.
- Have students exit in orderly fashion.

- Observe students as they step from the bus to see that all move promptly away from the unloading area.
- Walk through the bus and check for hiding/sleeping students and items left by students.
- Check all mirrors. Make certain no students are returning to the bus.
- If you cannot account for a student outside the bus and the bus is secure, check around and underneath the bus.
- When all students are accounted for, close the service door.
- Check all mirrors to ensure that there are no students in the danger zones around the bus.
- When safe to do so, pull away from the unloading area.

Special dangers of Loading and Unloading

Dropped or Forgotten Objects

- Always focus on students as they approach the bus and watch for any who disappear from sight. Students may drop an object near the bus during loading/unloading. Stopping to pick up the object, or returning to pick up the object, may cause the student to disappear from the driver's sight at a very dangerous moment.
- Students should be told to leave any dropped object and move to a point of safety out of the danger zones and attempt to get the driver's attention to retrieve the object.

Handrail Hang-ups

- Students have been injured or killed when clothing, accessories, or even parts of their body get caught in the handrail or door as they exited the bus. You should closely observe all students exiting the bus to confirm that they are in a safe location prior to moving the bus.

Additional Procedures for Students Who Must Cross the Roadway

You should understand what students should do when exiting a school bus and crossing the street in front of the bus. In addition, the school bus driver should understand that students might not always do what they are supposed to do. If a student or students must cross the roadway, they should follow these procedures:

- Walk approximately 10 feet away from the side of the school bus to a position where you can see them.
- Walk to a location at least 10 feet in front of the right corner of the bumper, but still remaining away from the front of the school bus.
- Stop at the right edge of the roadway. You should be able to see the student's feet.
- When students reach the edge of the roadway, they should:
 - Stop and look in all directions, making sure the roadway is clear and is safe.
 - Check to see if the red flashing lamps on the bus are still flashing.
 - Wait for your signal before crossing the roadway.
 - Upon your signal, the students should:
 - Cross far enough in front of the school bus to be in your view.
 - Walk to the left edge of the school bus, stop, and look again for your signal to continue to cross the roadway.
 - Look for traffic in both directions, making sure the roadway is clear.

- Proceed across the roadway, continuing to look in all directions

NOTES:

- The school bus driver should enforce any state or local regulations or recommendations concerning student actions outside the school bus.
- It is important for the driver to understand that any hand or other signal that is given to a student also could be misinterpreted by motorists that are stopped in the area.

Route Descriptions

Bus routes are established with respect to student safety and efficiency in transportation. To maintain this level of safety and efficiency, drivers must observe the following guidelines:

- Drivers are not authorized to change the way in which a route is driven or alter bus stops except in the case of emergency or road hazards. Road hazards include construction, detours, etc. that could impact student safety or transportation efficiency. Report these changes immediately upon completing the run, if not before. All other changes must be pre-approved by the Transportation Supervisor.
- During inclement weather, the driver is given reasonable latitude to exercise good judgment in making additional stops in order to let students off closer to their homes without deviating from the normal route path.
- Drivers must abide by the route time schedule. Drivers should not vary more than five minutes from an established schedule under normal conditions. **YOU SHOULD NEVER BE AHEAD OF YOUR SCHEDULE TIME.** If you do get ahead, wait at your designated waiting area until you are back on schedule. **You should arrive on school grounds no earlier than 5 minutes before the school doors are opened in the morning and no earlier than 15 minutes before school lets out in the afternoon.**
- Only in emergencies, should a bus be driven backwards on school grounds and then only with another adult to assist the driver.
- Students are to load and unload at their assigned bus stops unless the parent has requested an exception in accordance with District procedures. District procedures for an exception require the parent(s) to submit a written, signed note to the appropriate campus. Campus administration will issue a Bus Pass to the student to be delivered to the driver. Bus Passes must be signed, dated, and have a specific address noted. Any temporary changes to a student's pick-up or drop-off location may be communicated directly to the Transportation Department and, in-turn; notification will be made to the driver. Without information from the transportation department, or via a bus pass from the student's school campus, a student may not ride a different bus or get off the bus at a different stop.
- When a new student is present at your bus stop, transport the student to school and give the student a registration form.
- When a new student boards your bus at the school to go home, the student must provide the bus driver with his/her registration form and/or a note from the principal reflecting where the student is to be dropped off and the name(s) of the student's parent/guardian. **The Transportation Department must have a registration form from the school for students in Pre-K before the student begins to ride!**

- As student enrollment fluctuates, the Transportation Supervisor or his/her designee has the option to adjust routes in order to even out student loads or route times.
- If the driver of a vehicle leaves the vehicle at any time (e.g., at school campuses, field trips, etc.), he/she should turn off the engine and any other equipment necessary and **TAKE THE KEY**.

Student Overload

If an overcrowding situation occurs, transport the students (if the maximum seating capacity for the bus is not exceeded) and notify the Transportation Supervisor immediately upon finishing your run. If transporting the students would exceed the maximum seating capacity of the bus, contact the Transportation Supervisor for assistance and another bus will be dispatched to your aid.

Student Bus Pass

A Student Bus Pass is required for a student to change his/her route, drop off location or for a new student to begin ridership if route registration paperwork has not been submitted and approved. The student bus pass provides parental authorization for these changes. Bus Pass Forms vary from school to school but must be signed by school administration.

Emergency Procedures

An emergency situation can happen to anyone, anytime, anywhere. It could be a crash, a stalled school bus on a railroad-highway crossing or in a high-speed intersection, an electrical fire in the engine compartment, a medical emergency to a student on the school bus, etc. Knowing what to do in an emergency--before, during and after an evacuation--can mean the difference between life and death.

Determine Need to Evacuate Bus

The first and most important consideration is for you to recognize the hazard. If time permits, school bus drivers should contact their dispatcher to explain the situation before deciding to evacuate the school bus. As a rule, student safety and control is best maintained by keeping students on the bus during an emergency and/or impending crisis situation, if so doing does not expose them to unnecessary risk or injury. Remember, the decision to evacuate the bus must be a timely one.

A decision to evacuate should include consideration of the following conditions:

- Is there a fire or danger of a fire?
- Is there a smell of leaking fuel?
- Is there a chance the bus could be hit by other vehicles?
- Is the bus in the path of a sighted tornado or rising waters?
- Are there downed power lines?
- Would removing students expose them to speeding traffic, severe weather, or a dangerous environment such as downed power lines?
- Would moving student's complicate injuries such as neck and back injuries and fractures?

- Is there a hazardous spill involved?
- Sometimes, it may be safer to remain on the bus and not come in contact with the material.

Mandatory Evacuations

The driver must evacuate the bus when:

- The bus is on fire or there is a threat of a fire.
- The bus is stalled on or adjacent to a railroad-highway crossing.
- The position of the bus may change and increase the danger.
- There is an imminent danger of collision.
- There is a need to quickly evacuate because of a hazardous materials spill.

Evacuation Procedures - Be Prepared and Plan Ahead

When possible, assign two responsible, older student assistants to each emergency exit. Teach them how to assist the other students off the bus. Assign another student assistant to lead the students to a “safe place” after evacuation. However, you must recognize that there may not be older, responsible students on the bus at the time of the emergency. Therefore, emergency evacuation procedures must be explained to all students. This includes ensuring that they know the location of and operation of the various emergency exits, and the importance of listening to and following all instructions given by you.

General Procedures

- Determine if evacuation is in the best interest of safety.
- Determine the best type of evacuation:
 - a. Front, rear or side door evacuation, or some combination of doors.
 - b. Roof or window evacuation.
- Secure the bus by:
 - a. Placing transmission in Park, or if there is no shift point, in Neutral.
 - b. Setting parking brakes.
 - c. Shutting off the engine.
 - d. Removing ignition key.
 - e. Activating hazard-warning lamps.
- If time allows, notify the dispatch office of evacuation location, conditions, and type of assistance needed.
- Dangle radio microphone or telephone out of driver’s window for later use, if operable.
- If no radio, or radio is inoperable, dispatch a passing motorist or area resident to call for help. As a last resort, dispatch two older, responsible students to go for help.
- Order the evacuation:
 1. Evacuate students from the bus.
 2. Do not move a student you believe may have suffered a neck or spinal Injury unless his or her life is in immediate danger.
 3. Special procedures must be used to move neck spinal injury victims to prevent further injury.

4. Direct a student assistant to lead students to the nearest safe place.
 5. Walk through the bus to ensure no students remain on the bus. Retrieve emergency equipment.
 6. Join waiting students. Account for all students and check for their safety.
- Protect the scene. Set out emergency warning devices as necessary and appropriate.
 - Prepare information for emergency responders.

Safe Place to Evacuate (Tips):

- A safe place for the students will be at least 100 feet off the road in the direction of oncoming traffic. This will keep them from being hit by debris if another vehicle collides with the bus.
- Lead students upwind of the bus if fire is present.
- Lead students as far away from railroad tracks as possible and in the direction of any oncoming train.
- Lead students upwind of the bus at least 300 feet if there is a risk from spilled hazardous materials.
- If the bus is in the direct path of a sighted tornado and evacuation is ordered, escort students to a nearby ditch or culvert if shelter in a building is not readily available, and direct them to lie face down, hands covering their head. They should be far enough away so the bus cannot topple on them.
- Avoid areas that are subject to flash floods.

Front Door Evacuation:

- Set the parking brake, put on 4-way hazard lights, shut off engine, take the key, and instruct the students to evacuate the bus using the front door and to take nothing with them.
- The front door assistant leads the students off the bus to a safe place, 100 feet or 40 paces from the bus, or instructs the students exactly where to go. **WARN ALL STUDENTS: Walk. DO NOT RUN.** Use the handrails.
- The students follow the door assistant off the bus in numerical order, i.e. seats 1 through 24.
- After all the students are off the bus, the driver walks to the rear of the bus to make sure that all students have departed.
- Take the fire extinguisher, reflectors and first aid kit with you off the bus.
- Make sure the students are in a safe area and behaving in an orderly manner.
- Set out the reflectors.
- Stay with the students until the emergency has been resolved.

Rear Door Evacuation:

- Set the parking brake, put on 4-way hazard lights, shut off engine, take key, and instruct the students to evacuate the bus using the rear door and to take nothing with them.
- The two rear door assistants seated on the aisle exit the rear emergency door, and stand one on each side of the door, to assist the rest of the students off the bus. The third rear door assistant leads the rest of the students to a safe area, 100 feet or 40 paces from the

bus, or instructs the students exactly where to go. **WARN ALL STUDENTS: Walk. DO NOT RUN.**

- Instruct the students to sit on the floor with feet outside and ease out onto the ground when exiting the rear door of the school bus.
- The students follow the door assistant off the bus in reverse numerical order, i.e. seats 24 through 1.
- After all students are off the bus, the driver walks to the rear of the bus checking the bus to make sure that all the students have departed.
- Take the fire extinguisher, reflectors and first aid kit with you off the bus.
- Make sure the students are in a safe area and behaving in an orderly manner.
- Set out reflectors.
- Stay with the students until the emergency has been resolved.

Front and Rear Door Evacuation:

- Set the parking brake, put on 4-way hazard lights, shut off engine, take key, and instruct the students to evacuate the bus using the front and rear door and to take nothing with them.
- The front door assistant leads the students off the bus to a safe area. The two rear door assistants exit the rear emergency door and stand one on each side of the door. The third rear door assistant leads the rest of the students to a safe area, 100 feet or 40 paces from the bus, or instructs the students exactly where to go. **WARN ALL STUDENTS: walk. DO NOT RUN.**
- The students in seats 1 through 12 depart through the front door and seats 24 through 13 depart through the rear door.
- After all students are off the bus, the driver walks to the rear of the bus checking the bus to make sure that all the students have departed.
- Take the fire extinguisher, reflectors, and first aid kit with you off the bus.
- Make sure the students are in a safe area and behaving in an orderly manner.
- Set out the reflectors.
- Stay with the students until the emergency has been resolved.

Special Education Students

The special needs driver is expected to work as a team, sharing in the responsibilities of the safe transportation of students with special needs. Some tasks, due to their nature, are more the responsibility of one team member over another.

Driver Responsibilities

1. Work with the Transportation Supervisor to notify parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year and as new students are added to the route of the anticipated pick-up and delivery time for their student.
2. Any changes that are necessary in the assigned route that is given to you must be discussed with the Transportation Supervisor before implementing the changes.
3. Perform a pre-trip and post-trip inspection of the vehicle.

4. The Special Education Teacher or Instructional Assistant and the driver work together to secure the wheelchairs; however, the person that is outside the bus operating the lift will make the final check to ensure that the wheelchairs are secure.
5. The driver and Special Education Department share the responsibility of ensuring that each student is provided service in accordance with the Special Needs Transportation Request as determined by the IEP meeting. This includes restraints, ride length, leaving the child unattended, ensuring that the student is delivered to the proper location and to the proper person, physical contact, etc.

Attendant Responsibilities (if an Attendant is on the bus)

1. Assist students on and off the bus. (When a student boards the bus, you are to be on the bus to receive the student. When the student is ready to exit the bus, you are to exit the bus first and assist the student off the bus.)
2. Ensure that students are seated with their seatbelt fastened (if the vehicle is equipped with seatbelts.) If the student fastened their own seat belt, check to ensure that the seatbelt is properly fastened and tightened.
3. You are responsible for maintaining discipline on the bus. When disciplining students, keep in mind the special needs of the students and whether the behavior is a result of the students' handicapping conditions. (Remember...not all students with special needs can control their behavior.)
4. Attendants are to sit on the bus in such a manner as to observe and be accessible to all students. Sitting at the front of the bus is not an appropriate place when students are on the bus.
5. If it is unknown whether a student will ride the bus or not, the attendant should call prior to leaving transportation to verify this information. (Example: A student did not ride to school in the morning, therefore the attendant should contact the school before the afternoon route to determine if the child came to school some other way during the day.)
6. If a student has not come out to the bus at the school in the afternoon, it is the responsibility of the attendant to go into the school to determine whether or not the student is at school.
7. If a student is injured, it is the attendant's responsibility to complete the injury report.
8. The attendant and driver work together to secure the wheelchairs; however, the person that is outside the bus operating the lift will make the final check to ensure that the wheelchairs are secure.
9. The attendant is responsible for ensuring that seatbelts and wheelchair tie-downs are neatly arranged and straightened when not in use.
10. The attendant is responsible for maintaining an attendance report for the students on their bus. This report should be turned in weekly to the Director of Transportation.
11. The driver and attendant share the responsibility of ensuring that each student is provided service in accordance with the Special Needs Transportation Request as determined by the IEP meeting. This includes restraints, ride length, leaving the child unattended, ensuring that the student is delivered to the proper location and to the proper person, physical contact, etc.

Loading and Unloading Wheelchairs

1. When opening the exterior door for the lift, make sure to secure the door open with the chain.
2. The wheelchair must always face outside of the bus when on the lift. This places the heaviest part of the chair closest to the bus.
3. Only employees may operate the lift or move wheelchairs. Do not allow other students to do this.
4. While operating the lift, make sure that the brakes are set on the wheelchair and that one employee has at least one hand on the chair at all times.
5. Wheelchairs must face the front of the bus while being transported.
6. When securing the chair, use the lap/shoulder belt unless specifically instructed not to with an individual student.
7. When loading and unloading electrically operated wheelchairs, turn the power off and operate manually when moving the chair onto or off the lift.

Car Seats

Some students require the use of car seats according to their Special Transportation Form. If so, a car seat will be provided and installed in your bus for you. You will be shown how to adjust and operate the particular car seats that are installed on your bus. Observe the following when using car seats:

1. Do not remove the car seats from your bus or change the location of the seats. If you need a seat moved, write it up on your pre-trip inspection form.
2. Periodically check the tightness of your car seat by grabbing it with both hands near the belt path and shake it from left to right. If the car seat moves over an inch at the belt path, then write up on your pre-trip inspection form that your car seat needs to be tightened.
3. Observe the child in the seat and report to the office if the child seems too large for the car seat.

Seatbelts

All students are required to wear seatbelts while on the special needs bus if the bus is equipped with them. Other students may need them according to their abilities. The attendant is responsible for ensuring that students who require seatbelts have them fastened properly before the bus moves.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is of extreme importance when working with special needs students. Discussing the handicapping conditions of students in the presence of other students or parents is unacceptable and a breach of confidentiality.

Student Discipline

Discipline on the school bus is probably one of the biggest problems confronting school bus drivers today. Remember school bus transportation is an extension of a school system and the standards set by the individual school should be carried over into the bus.

Each student's welfare is our 1st priority! All district vehicles shall be operated in a safe manner to ensure the welfare of our students. *The bus driver is typically the first school district employee that the students encounter in the morning. You should greet all students cheerfully and consistently to present a warm and uplifting start to their day.* A courteous greeting from the driver as the student's enter the door in the morning will often establish a friendly atmosphere for the trip to school. A word of encouragement or praise for good conduct is often helpful in preventing problems.

Principals and the Transportation Supervisor or his/her designee are responsible for supervision, direction, and control of all matters relating to the transportation of students for the respective schools. Principals have the same authority and control over students transported by the school bus as they do students on the school grounds and in the classrooms. Principals are responsible for enforcing all rules and regulations approved by the Washington County Board of Education pertaining to bus transportation.

Explain the rules the first day the students are on the bus. We cannot expect children to obey rules if they have not been explained. You will find students more receptive if you explain WHY rules are necessary and important rather than telling them "just because." Do not make your own rules of conduct.

Always obey the rules that apply to you as the driver and set an example. Children are quick to spot a double standard. These rules include traffic laws as well as appropriate school policies.

Students are to follow the rules for good conduct according to the Student Code of Conduct and additionally are expected to:

1. Observe the same level of conduct as is expected in the classroom.
2. Be courteous.
3. Remain ten (10) feet from the bus loading location.
4. Wait quietly until the bus has stopped and the bus door has opened before entering the bus.
5. Refrain from hanging onto the bus before boarding or after leaving the bus.
6. Unless otherwise approved by the Director of Transportation in writing, board the bus with objects limited to the size that can be transported on the lap. Large, bulky fundraiser boxes and school projects are generally not allowed on the bus but may be permitted at the discretion of the Transportation Supervisor if space permits. Parents will need to make arrangements to pick up the boxes and to transport science projects to and from school.
7. Sit in the seat assigned by the bus driver. The bus driver is authorized to assign seats.

8. Go to your seat immediately upon entering the bus and be seated, facing forward.
9. Do not bring pets or live animals on the bus.
10. Do not bring flammable materials on the bus.
11. Do not bring glass containers on the bus.
12. Do not eat, or chew gum on the bus.
13. Keep the bus clean.
14. Cooperate with the driver.
15. Do not smoke, use tobacco products, or facsimiles of tobacco products.
16. Do not damage the bus or tamper with the equipment.
17. Remain seated.
18. Keep head, hands, and feet inside the bus.
19. Do not fight or throw objects out the window.
20. Profanity is not allowed.
21. Students are prohibited from possessing drugs, weapons, and other contraband on school transportation.
22. Do not bring skateboards, balls, roller blades, golf clubs, or balloons on the bus.
23. Use of electronic devices is allowable without audible sound (no volume).
24. Never dispose of trash out the bus window or on the ground at the bus stop.
25. Ride assigned buses unless provisions for an exception have been made in writing through the campus.
26. Leave the bus only at the designated bus stop unless provisions for an exception have been made.

Bus Stop Guidelines

1. Arrive at the bus stop five minutes before scheduled pick-up time.
2. Follow all school rules at and around the bus stop.
3. Respect other people's property and keep your bus stop clean.
4. Enter the bus quietly and move directly to your seat.
5. During unloading, move away from the bus quickly.
6. After exiting the bus, stand on the side of the road, at least ten (10) feet in front of the bus and wait until the driver signals before crossing the street

Additional Conduct Guidelines

1. Students transported in school buses shall at all times be under the authority and responsibility of the bus driver and attendant.
2. Be friendly, courteous, but firm.
3. Do not allow children to run, crowd, or push when loading/unloading.
4. Students are NOT allowed to stand on a moving bus or vehicle.
5. Insist that the children remain in their places until advised to unload by the driver.
6. Check and be sure that children always use steps when leaving the bus.
7. Any student caught cutting seats or damaging the bus in any manner will be asked by the Principal/Asst. Principal to pay for the same, parts and labor.
8. The assignment of seats can be implemented at the driver's discretion.

9. Any student attempting to carry any type of weapon on the school bus must be refused permission to ride and the incident reported.

By and large, the vast majority of our students will act within the established rules. There are, of course, some who will misbehave and require some type of response or action from you. This is the point where you should have already considered those reasonable expectations we can anticipate from students and deal with the incident accordingly. In many cases, a verbal reprimand or warning will suffice. Keep in mind that it is not always advantageous to acknowledge **all** rule infractions. If you pull out the “big guns” for the small things, then you leave yourself little direction to go for more serious incidents.

Bus Safety Referral

The continuing misbehavior or misconduct by a student may require further action such as a notification to the student’s school. In this situation, the driver should report the matter on the Bus Conduct Report (see Appendix). The discipline report should be given to the Principal or Assistant Principal. Consequences and corrections are the principal/asst. principal’s responsibility **ONLY**. The action taken will be commensurate with the safety infraction and student’s bus behavior history. **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO REPORT THE INFRACTION THAT YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO CORRECT BY INSTRUCTION.** It is imperative that you learn the names and identity of the students that ride your bus.

Bus conduct reports must be submitted by 10:00 am the same day that an incident happens (if it occurred in the morning) or by 10:00 am the following morning (if it occurred in the afternoon). After such time, the report may not be able to be filed.

Drivers must include a written detailed description of the incident when submitting a bus conduct report. Simply placing check marks in the boxes is not sufficient!

Rules for the Bus Driver

1. The first day is the most important of all! This is when children learn what you expect of them, and you set the pattern for the whole year. Children must know their limits. The set rules should be posted on the bus. You should be sure they understand these rules.
2. You must be careful to strike a happy medium by not being too lenient or too harsh. Both extremes are equally bad for the morale of the school bus.
3. Loud talking on the bus is a problem that requires much patience on the part of the driver but absolute silence among pupils is not a healthy school bus atmosphere.
4. Rules must be patiently and constantly repeated in order to complete the teaching process. Never hit, spank, or grab a student.
5. Never put (or let) a child off the bus except at the proper destination (bus stop). Drivers do not have the authority to deny riding privileges.

6. Keep in mind that your purpose in correcting a student is simply to change undesirable behavior. The less corrective action that can be used, the better. Always focus on correcting future actions rather than punishing past actions.
7. Never give an order you do not intend to (or cannot) enforce.
8. Never use a student as an example to others. Don't discipline a student in front of his or her peers when possible.
9. Have a reason for what you ask a child to do and take time when possible to explain the reason to the student.
10. Be honest in what you say and do. A child's faith in you is a great help.
11. Be fair and consistent with discipline. Don't discipline a student for something and then permit other students to do the same thing. Don't enforce a rule today and then not tomorrow. This confuses the students about the rules and expectations.
12. Be friendly, but not familiar. Show interest in the students and their activities, but don't be a buddy.
13. Remember that a sense of humor is extremely valuable.
14. Do not take personal feelings or prejudices out on the students.
15. Maintain poise and control at all times. **Do not lose your temper.**
16. Look for the good in everyone – all children have good points.
17. Don't pick on every little thing that the students do. Sometimes it pays not to hear and see certain things. For example, minor offenses such as being too loud will result in a verbal reminder warning issued by the bus driver.
18. Be sincere in your work.
19. Any student carrying any type of weapon on the bus must be reported to the School Principal.
20. Jokes or idle remarks about suicide, homicide, assault, drugs, terrorist threats, or the like must be treated as serious statements. These must be reported immediately to the School Principal.
21. Follow-up with all students who have been disciplined or bullied. Ensure that you have maintained the confidence and respect of the child. Similarly, if you have students who you know, or suspect have been the target of bullying, inform the School Principal. Monitor and follow-up with the students to ensure their safety. Document these conversations and the student's response, as well as any related observations or concerns.
22. "Remember to forget." Start each day with a clean slate and allow the child to have a fresh start each day.
23. Verbally harassing students individually or as a group is counter-productive to any situation and will not be tolerated.

Every Washington County school bus is equipped with equipment to record audio and video. This equipment is active anytime the vehicle is turned on. This equipment is extremely helpful in deterring student misconduct and mischief as well as identifying students who are misbehaving. **Videotape/Hard Drive contents are confidential student records and cannot be taken off District property.**

Confiscated Items

An item that a driver confiscates from a student because the item is prohibited on the bus (i.e. cd electronics, laser pointers, etc.) is to be returned to the student when they get off the bus or taken to the office at the student's school to be given to the Principal. Drivers may not confiscate items and hold them past the end of the day. **Any item that is confiscated and then lost or stolen becomes the responsibility of the driver to pay for or replace such item.**

Child Abuse

All employees have the responsibility of reporting known or suspected cases of child abuse. If you are the first person to become aware of such abuse, you are responsible for calling the Department of Children's Services at (423) 989-5220 or the Washington County Sheriff's Department at (423) 788-1414 within forty-eight (48) hours of the incident. You must also notify the School Principal immediately.

Complaints/Concerns

All complaints and concerns will be received by the Transportation Supervisor or his/her designee. The Transportation Supervisor will document and file a written report on all complaints/concerns dealing with unsafe operation of a school bus. The Transportation Supervisor will investigate the complaint/concern and try to resolve the situation pursuant to Public Chapter 289.

If the complaint/concern involves student misconduct, the Driver and/or Transportation Supervisor will immediately notify the campus principal. The principal is the authority figure for any student disciplinary action necessary.

Any complaints/concerns involving a transportation employee will be investigated and handled by the Transportation Supervisor. In both situations, the Transportation Supervisor will use customer care and keep an open line of communication until the complaint/concern is resolved in some manner.

If the complaint/concern cannot be resolved by the Transportation Supervisor, the chain of command will be followed as described in the organizational chart. Parents and students also have the option of filing a formal complaint under Board Policy.

Student Injury

Anytime that a student is injured while loading the school bus, riding the bus, or unloading from the bus, the injury must be reported and documented on the Student Injury Report form (see the exhibit section for a sample form). The report should include all details of the incident including cause, actions of other students, names of all people involved, etc.

If the injury or illness is not serious enough to require immediate treatment by professional medical personnel, continue with your run. When you get to your destination, release the student

to a responsible individual or call transportation and ask them to have the nurse of said campus to meet the bus.

If the injury or illness is serious and requires immediate medical attention, pull to the side of the road at the safest point and call 911 immediately. Perform first aid according to First Aid/CPR if necessary.

Inform the Transportation Supervisor of the situation as soon as possible. The Transportation Supervisor will attempt to call the parent to inform them of the injury and will contact the School Principal.

Handling Bodily Fluids

The body fluids of all persons should be considered to contain potentially infectious organisms. Communicable disease is more likely to occur from contact with infected body fluids of unrecognized carriers than from contact with fluids from diagnosed individuals because simple precautions are not always carried out.

Any body fluid spills (Vomit, Urine, Feces, and Blood) will be treated as follows:

1. Wear gloves when anticipating direct contact with body fluids.
2. Apply a sanitary absorbent agent to the area and wait 1 minute.
3. Scoop with scraper into bag.
4. Wipe the area clean with paper towels.
5. Remove gloves and clean hands with wipes.
6. Place all contents into a bag.
7. Tie bag and dispose of properly.
8. Instruct students to avoid stepping or seating in contaminated areas.
9. On your return to the Transportation Facility, you will need to clean the bus as outlined above under "Post-Trip Procedures."

Student Confidentiality

Drivers are exposed to information regarding the students who ride our buses. This information is considered to be an "educational record" and is protected by federal law (FERPA). Transportation Department employees are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding students that are transported by the Washington County Board of Education. Discussing students' behavior, address, handicapping conditions, or any other information with anyone except for the parent, Director of Transportation, or other Washington County Schools administrators is considered a breach of confidentiality and will result in termination of employment.

Bus Garage Procedures

If you need to bring your bus in for routine maintenance, washing, etc., and it is not an emergency, call the Bus Garage to schedule an appointment. Please do not come to the garage for non-emergency maintenance issues unannounced. The only exception is if you need DEF fuel.

If you need to meet with the Transportation Supervisor, please call to make an appointment.

The mechanics will take lunch between 11:30 -12:30 PM so no appointments will be scheduled during this time period.

For safety purposes, no driver is permitted to enter the Mechanic or Service bays unless escorted by the Transportation Supervisor or Support Supervisor for Transportation, or appointed garage personnel. Drivers are to remain in the driver's lounge unless directed by garage personnel. Drivers are only permitted to enter the Bus Garage through the front entrance door.

Bus drivers will be given a service date and time to bring their bus in for inspection every 45 days. It is the driver's responsibility to bring the bus to the garage for service and inspection. It is at the Transportation Supervisor and Support Supervisor's discretion if there are special circumstances requiring garage personnel to retrieve a bus for service and/or inspection.

Certification of Receipt Transportation Handbook

Transportation Department

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Washington County Schools Transportation Handbook. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

Employees may also access a copy of this handbook at the Washington County Schools website at: www.wcde.org.

The information in this handbook is subject to change. I understand that changes in District policies may supersede, modify, or render obsolete the information summarized in this book. As the District provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes.

I understand that no modifications to contractual relationships or alterations of at-will employment relationships are intended by this handbook.

I understand that I have an obligation to inform my supervisor or department head of any changes in personal information such as phone number, address, etc. I also accept responsibility for contacting the Transportation Supervisor if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

Signature

____/____/____
Date

Print Name

Position

Please sign and date this receipt.