Dear School Bus Drivers,

Welcome to the Berkeley County School District Transportation Team. Each one of you has a tremendous responsibility in transporting our children to and from school. As a school bus driver, your responsibility is to provide the safest form of transportation possible to the students of our district.

This safety will begin with you each morning. You will be the first contact our school children have every morning. Please be kind, your positive attitude may make a difference in your student lives each day. Each day you will face challenges which will require you to make decisions while performing your duties. Your decisions should be made with good judgment and professionalism. You are a group of professionals who have an extremely important job in transporting our students each and every school day.

You have been carefully chosen for this position and have had training to be a school bus driver. Please keep this handbook with you at all times and refer to it as needed. Remember, to always follow all of the Rules and Regulations for bus driving, regular driving and rules in this handbook. By following all rules, you will help to make sure all children are transported safely.

I truly do respect each and every one of you for the contribution you make to the education process every day. Without you, some children may not get an education in which they need. You are a very important part of the education system.

Let’s make sure we continue to work as a team, be respectful of others and assist everyone as needed. Let’s hope we do not have any accidents and no problems throughout the school year.

Again, as you work each day, please think of SAFETY FIRST.

Let’s have a GREAT YEAR!

Sincerely,

Wes Fleming
Director of Transportation

BCSD Transportation Manual
Section One

General Policies and Procedures

Open Door Policy

The Director of Transportation is available to meet with any Transportation employee to discuss job related issues. It is always best to call and make an appointment. Whatever your issue, you should give your Transportation Supervisor the opportunity, time, and information needed to help address your issue and help in your situation. A decision may be made to have your Transportation Supervisor attend any meeting requested.

Duties and Responsibilities

Safety is the most important requirement of your job. An employee who endangers students and/or other people or who violate state laws or district policy, will be considered for appropriate administrative actions.

The following is not an inclusive list of duties and responsibilities but a guide to make sound decisions of your duties. Drivers must:

- Have their CDL license, DOT Medical Card, and School Bus Certificate in their possession while operating State or District vehicles.
- Perform appropriate pre-trip and post-trip inspections of your vehicle for each trip. Must drain air tanks (for air brake vehicles), close all windows, make sure all doors are closed, and empty your trash daily from the bus.
- Report safety hazards immediately to your Transportation Supervisor before you leave the bus lot. Other safety issues regarding your route should be reported upon your return to the bus lot.
- Be dependable. Schedule all personal appointments so they do not interfere with you driving your routes.
- Inform you Transportation Supervisor when you are near the maximum capacity of the bus.
- Be polite and report parent complaints to your Transportation Supervisor.
- Report the license plate number, vehicle make, and driver description (if possible) of any vehicle which does not stop when your stop sign is displayed.
- Do not remove a bus from the parking lot without permission, unless driving your normal bus route.
- Do not cover exit signs or emergency equipment.
- Do not store items or block any emergency exit.
- Store brooms only where approved by the State.
- Do not affix stickers/posters to any surface of the bus unless approved by your Transportation Supervisor.

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Report the location of intersections and railroad crossings where your view is obstructed by other objects. (Complete R-7)

- Obey all traffic laws, including posted speed limits, as well as State and Federal Rules and Regulations.
- Observe speed limits on District property.
- Drive your route on time and in accordance with your route description. Do not deviate from your route without your Transportation Supervisor's approval.
- Do not stop your bus at a store, restaurant or any other non-district facility unless authorized by your Transportation Supervisor.
- Check the bus for sleeping students before you depart each school in the mornings and after each route in the afternoons. These checks should be done at the schools in the morning and upon arrival at the next school in the afternoons. Always check your bus again in the afternoons when you park your bus at the lot.
- Immediately report any accidents or incidents to your Transportation Supervisor.
- Submit all reports accurately and on time.
- Drop off students only at their assigned bus stop. Contact your Transportation Supervisor when they do not have the appropriate authorization.
- Do not stop and pick up any student after you have begun your procedures to depart (i.e. closed your door, checked your mirrors) unless directed to do so.
- Notify your Supervisor if you see any student who is at the bus stop you are unable to pick up. You may be directed to circle and pick up the student safely.
- Set the parking brake, turn off the engine and remove the key when leaving the bus for any reason.
- Do not leave the bus when children are on board. Never leave the bus during loading or unloading except in an emergency situation.
- Do not set any rule which contradicts BCSD Policy and Procedures, State Laws or Procedures or Federal Laws or Procedures.
- Do not disconnect or tamper with your video camera or radio for any reason.
- Do not eat or consume beverages while driving.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is not tolerated within this department, either between supervisors and employees, students and employees or between employees. Employees need to report sexual harassment and to follow the School Board Policy.

Under no circumstances will an employee be required to first report allegations of sexual harassment to their immediate supervisor if that person is the individual accused of the harassment.

Drug and Alcohol Testing

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR's) requires each employer to provide education materials which explain the Federal requirements and the employer’s policies

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and procedures concerning alcohol and controlled substance testing, to include pre-employment, random, reasonable suspicion, and post accident.

Federal Law prohibits any driver from performing or continuing to perform a safety sensitive function if they refuse to submit to a random, reasonable suspicion, post accident, or follow-up drug test or alcohol test.

Drivers will submit to a drug and alcohol evaluation within two hours of a traffic accident if they are driving a state or district vehicle and are charged with a moving traffic violation or the accident results in serious injury or death. Failure to submit to a drug and alcohol test is cause for termination of employment from Berkeley County School District. Furthermore, should you not submit to a required drug or alcohol test, according to Federal Law, your results will then show you tested positive (in accordance to the Federal regulations), and you must be cleared by a substance abuse professional before you can operate any commercial vehicle again. For more information on Federal Drug and Alcohol testing, you can look in the FMCSR's under 49 CFR, Part 40 and Part 382. Furthermore, according to South Carolina State law, a report also must be made to the Department of Motor Vehicles of a positive drug/alcohol test and your commercial driver license will be disqualified.

**Reasonable Suspicion Testing:**

The district will test a driver for alcohol or controlled substances if it has reasonable suspicion that the driver is engaging in prohibited conduct as defined as follows:

- Observations, what the supervisor sees, hear, or smells, are not based on reports from other sources.
- Observations based on specific, contemporaneous, and articulated observations concerning the appearance, behavior, actions, speech, or body odor.
- The effects of chronic drug use or withdrawal on behavior and appearance may be considered for a reasonable suspicion drug test.

**Prescription Medications**

Employees taking any Schedule 1 medication, legally prescribed by a licensed health care professional, as per Federal Motor Safety Carrier Administration Regulations must report such usage to their supervisor. Drivers may be required to provide a written statement from the prescribing health care provider which describes the effects such medication may have on the driver’s ability to safely operate a commercial motor vehicle. Over the counter medication that may hinder your ability to safely perform your duties must also be reported. There are some medications, which if prescribed, can be an immediate disqualification of operating a commercial motor vehicle. Please make sure your prescribing health care provider is aware of your job and function. For a list of some medications which can disqualify, the health care professional can look in Part 391.41 of the FMCSR's.

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Bloodborne Pathogens

Bloodborne Pathogens training is required by Federal Law within ten days of initial employment and annually thereafter. Transportation Supervisors will assist you in completing the Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan online. Annual training is provided at the first local in-service meeting of each school year.

Individuals who have been exposed to bodily fluids must immediately report exposure to their Transportation Supervisor and will be referred to a school nurse within 24 hours.

Internet Usage

The use of internet for any purpose other than work related is prohibited. This includes web sites that are considered offensive in nature or for use in communicating with minors for any reason. This policy falls under the inappropriate conduct policies and subject to administrative action including termination. Please follow School Board Policy for internet use.

Cell Phone Policy

BCSD relies on the onboard radio system for daily communication with drivers. Cell phones are not to be utilized while drivers are on their bus; including those with any type of headset or earpiece. Cell phones, speaker phones, headsets, or any similar type device may not be used while performing safety sensitive duties such as pre- and post-trip inspections, while students are loading or unloading, while students are on the bus, while driving a school bus or while in any training environment or meeting. Any such incident will result in administrative action.

Cell phones must be turned off or set to vibrate in order to prevent an incoming call from distracting the driver from performing their duties.

In the event of an emergency, have someone contact your Transportation Supervisor’s office or the BCSD Transportation Office. Information will be relayed as quickly and confidentially as possible.

An assistant on a Special Needs Bus may use a cell phone to communicate with the Transportation Office, parent or school relating to their duties but may not make personal calls.

If the driver must use the cell phone, the bus must be stopped in a safe location.

South Carolina State Law

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Drivers holding a commercial driver license (CDL) are required to comply with all written laws governing the operation of a school bus. The South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 56-1-2060, prevents an employer from allowing, permitting, or authorizing a person to drive a commercial motor vehicle during a period which the person’s CDL is suspended, cancelled, or revoked. This requires the driver to immediately notify their Transportation Supervisor in the event their license is suspended, cancelled, or revoked for any reason. You must notify, by law, within twenty-four hours. An employee who knowingly or unknowingly drives while their CDL is suspended, cancelled, or revoked, may be subject to administrative action. Furthermore, should you be caught while operating a commercial motor vehicle and your privileges have been suspended, cancelled or revoked, you may be subject to a fine from law enforcement of up to ten thousand dollars.

**Driving Record**

Driver must meet all Federal and State requirements for driving a school bus and possess a valid Class B CDL with all appropriate endorsements ("P" Passenger/ "S" School Bus) allowing them to operate vehicles in our fleet. Additionally, drivers must:

- Meet all the requirements for testing for the Commercial Driver’s License and not have more than six points against their license in the previous twelve months. Driver accumulating more than four points after employment will be suspended without pay.
- Know that, if charged with a serious traffic violation, such as, but not limited to, Driving Under the Influence, Driving While Intoxicated, Reckless Driving, or Hit and Run, you will be placed on administrative leave immediately without pay. Should the charge be adjudicated of guilty, then the driver will be recommended for termination.
- Understand driving record checks are performed on employees after the driver is involved in an accident, regardless if the driver is charged. Plus record checks will be done at random and subject to review by the BCSD Transportation Safety/Training Supervisor.

According to the FMCSR’s, Part 391.27, all drivers must immediately furnish their Transportation Supervisor a copy of any violations of motor vehicle traffic laws (traffic tickets) for which they have been convicted or issued. Drivers who fail to notify their Transportation Supervisor immediately after being charged or convicted of moving traffic violations may be placed on administrative leave without pay or given additional administrative action up to and including recommendation for termination.

**Worker’s Compensation**

All employees of BCSD are covered by Workman’s Compensation Insurance for injuries received while on the job. If you are injured while on the job, notify your Transportation
Supervisor or the District Transportation Office immediately for instructions on proper procedures.

_Employees must have approval before seeking medical attention. You will be required to provide a written statement regarding your claim._

**Personnel Leave**

Request for leave (Special Circumstances) must be submitted as far in advance as possible. _Individuals who elect to be absent without approved leave will be charged leave without pay and can be considered for administrative actions._

The Transportation Supervisor will review the provisions for taking leave during the school year, including anticipated or unexpected shortfalls, to determine whether to approve or disapprove the request. It is recommended that drivers do not purchase tickets or make reservations until the leave request has been approved. The District will not refund any monies lost due to disapproved leave request.

**Sick Leave**

Sick leave may be used for an employee’s illness or an immediate family member’s illness. For the purpose of this policy, “Family” is defined as parent, spouse or child.

Cumulative sick leave may be used only for the illness of the employee. When an employee is on BCSD approved Family Medical Leave and has exhausted all other leave, the employee will be granted the use of cumulative sick leave for family illness. An employee _may only use sick leave for_ personal illness, illness of spouse or child, or death in the family.

**Sick Leave Verification**

The use of sick leave, _including family illness, may be subject to verification_. The BCSD reserves the right to require an employee to submit a doctor’s statement verifying an illness when the employee has been absent due to illness, including for absence for spouse or child.

The supervisor will meet with the employee to discuss absenteeism due to illness and inform them that they are required to provide a doctor’s statement to verify the illness. In all cases any individual who is absent for more than 3 consecutive workdays must provide written medical documentation upon return to work.

**Return to Work**

In all cases of absences due to employee illness the driver must be able to provide a doctor’s statement that clearly states the “_driver is able to perform all duties as a bus_”
driver.” Any note limiting the driver in performing any of their required duties will not be acceptable. The terms “light duty,” “restricted” or “limited duty” or other similarly worded excuses are not acceptable. The driver must be able to perform all of the following:

- Must have the ability to climb up and down three steps three times rapidly within 30 seconds, and
- Must be able to alternate quickly between the throttle and the service brake 10 times within 10 seconds, and
- Must be able to depress fully and maintain constant, unassisted pressure on the brake pedal, and
- Must be able to open and close a manually operated bus service door repeatedly and rapidly 3 times in 20 seconds, and
- Must be able to move rapidly through the interior of the bus and exit from the rearmost floor-level emergency door, starting from a seat-belt position within 20 seconds, and
- Must be able to drag 125 pounds 30 feet in less than 30 seconds, without restrictions, (to simulate moving individuals rapidly from a bus emergency).

Absence from Work

An employer has a right to expect reasonable regular attendance of an employee. Irregular attendance warrants a discharge for cause under the South Carolina Employment Security Law, Section 41-35-120(2).

Any employee who fails to report for work for three consecutive days or any two absences, not necessarily in succession, without providing advanced notification will result in administrative action up to and including termination from employment.

Voicemail messages are to be used as initial notification only and are not accepted unless followed up by speaking directly to the Transportation Supervisor on the day of absence. It is the driver’s responsibility to contact and speak directly to the Transportation Supervisor and to keep them informed of their length of absence and their expected return to work.

Verified emergencies are an exception.

Tardiness

Drivers will be considered late (tardy) when they fail to clock-in at the time designated on their RTA. Excessive tardiness is considered three or more times, not necessarily in succession, and will result in additional administrative action. Employees will have their pay docked due to tardiness.

Absence from Additional Duties

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Any absence from additional duties relating to driving a bus (i.e. after school programs, activity trips, etc.) must be coordinated through your Transportation Supervisor.

**Personnel Transfer**

The basic consideration in the assignment of Transportation Personnel is the well-being of the transportation program. The appropriateness of the assignments has a significant impact on the moral of the department and on the effectiveness of the total educational program we support. For the most part all transportation personnel have the same qualifications therefore transfers will be assigned on the basis of the needs of the Transportation Department and the expressed desires of the individual affected. The Director of Transportation is authorized to reassign personnel in the best interest of the district.

Personnel transfers within the district may be affected on a voluntary or involuntary basis. Voluntary transfer may occur as a result of an individual’s request for assignment to another area. Involuntary transfers may be required when schools or buses are added or removed or due to attendance line rezoning.

With regard to voluntary and involuntary transfers, personnel will be assigned first in accordance with the needs of the school district or transportation department, and then as to the expressed preference of the employee.

All other considerations being equal, the preferences of employee will be granted in order of seniority in the district, subject to the approval of the Transportation Supervisors involved. Seniority will be determined by length of continuous service in Berkeley County School District.

Long-term disability leave will not be construed as an interruption of continuous service; however, this leave time will not be included in the calculation of length of service to the district. Seniority of drivers who voluntarily terminate their employment with the school district and return will begin at the first day of work upon their return to the district and will not include previous employment.
Section Two

Standards of Conduct

It is important that employees always use sound judgment in the performance of their assigned duties. Any lapse of judgment can have severe consequences for our students and the general public. Employees must know what protocols are in place to address conduct that is considered unacceptable.

These standards of conduct are not designed to conflict with or supersede the District’s School Board Policy manual but rather to provide a more detail guideline to be followed by Transportation employees and staff. In the event that a conflict occurs between the two, the District’s School Board Policy will be the primary reference to determine the outcome.

The following are some examples of inappropriate conduct for which an employee will receive administrative action. This is not an exhaustive list but a guide which employees should use to help understand what is considered inappropriate behavior or actions.

The District Transportation Office and Human Resource Office reserves the right to implement any form of corrective action relating to employee misconduct whenever it is determined that sufficient reasons exist, such as when an employee’s actions cause a disruptive or hostile work environment or compromises the safety of the employee, student(s), coworkers, staff, or the general public.

The order of the following examples does not represent their importance:

- Failure to follow procedures outlined in the South Carolina School bus Driver’s Handbook or any state or federal law or regulation for Commercial Driver Licenses or the operation of a school bus.
- Present at work or on school grounds, property, or bus while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or any prescription drug that negatively impacts work performance.
- Use or possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products while on the job or while on district property, state or district vehicle. This includes a positive test for drugs or alcohol, refusal to take or unable to perform a drug or alcohol test as directed for periodic random testing or after an accident or reasonable suspicion.
- Any inappropriate conduct which is detrimental to the good order and discipline of the Transportation Office or Berkeley County School District, regardless if the incident occurs on or off school grounds or property. This includes actions directed toward a student, parent, or District employee. Reference: Berkeley County School District Board Policy GBEB-Staff Conduct.

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Unsatisfactory work performance including but not limited to: conducting improper pre/post trip inspections, failure to follow route descriptions or instructions given by a supervisor.

Unreliable or irregular attendance, unauthorized absence, tardiness, failure to provide required notification for an absence and misuse of sick leave.

Failure to stop at a railroad crossing, proceeding across railroad tracks with a train in sight, or failure to follow safety procedures at a railroad crossing.

Violation of traffic laws, regardless of whether the employee is cited by law enforcement. This includes violation of any policy or procedure required for the safe operation of a school bus and those incidents that may be observed or identified by the onboard camera/video system. Although no act, intentional or unintentional, regarding the failure to follow of any law, policy or procedure can be classified as "minor," each situation will be categorized based on the actions of the driver, and the mitigating circumstances.

Any inappropriate action directed toward a student including inappropriate physical contact, verbal or abusive language, harassment (sexual or otherwise), public ridicule, or release of private or confidential information regarding a student or parent.

Any act of sexual harassment directed to any employee, student, parent, or staff member including any acts of sexual misconduct.

Falsification of an employment application or any other District record such as time sheets, Route Time Agreements, or any other documents used to verify time/pay or load counts.

Damage to any property in the employee’s care if damage is a result of negligence or willful action.

Creating a hostile work environment including spreading rumors, gossip or confidential information about employees, staff members, students, or parents.

Use of profanity, abusive language or disrespect any one or any act that can create a hostile work environment.

Leaving a student at a bus stop, on a bus unsupervised or at the conclusion of a route, or failure to perform a visual inspection of a bus as required.

Allowing a preschool or kindergarten student off the bus without an authorized parent or guardian present to assume responsibility for the child.

Dishonesty, lying, or making false statements or misrepresentations regarding any work related issues.

Insubordination, including, but not limited to, refusal to cooperate in any investigation or to follow and/or carry out work related instructions of a supervisor, District staff, or other employee.

The use of District property or equipment for personal profit or unauthorized use of District facilities for any purpose other than official business.

Deliberate sabotage or destruction/damage to District, employee, student, parent, supplier, visitor, property or equipment, or commission of act or acts intended to cause or damage to such property.

Allowing an unauthorized person or persons on the school bus.

Interference with an employees’ job performance.
- Careless or reckless driving of any district or state vehicle at any time.
- Transporting students in personal vehicles.
- Driving without or possession of a proper Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) and medical certification or driving while license is suspended.
- Failure to notify supervisor of an injury, illness or prescription drug, including over the counter medications that may hinder an employee’s ability to perform safety sensitive duties.
- Any form of inappropriate contact or physical contact with a student, parent, or employee, except for the purpose of appropriate instruction, self-defense or necessary and appropriate physical restraint.
- Engaging in or attempting to engage in any activity to encourage or which does encourage any inappropriate relationship with a student(s), including dating or inappropriate acts or communications with a student.
- Use of profanity, obscene or abusive language, including derogatory remarks or racial slurs directed toward, or in the presence of any District student, employee, visitor, parent or staff.
- Failure to follow applicable District policy, rules, procedures or regulations regarding reporting or taking leave from regularly scheduled duties, including but not limited to any rules or procedures established, published, or verbally given by a supervisor to an employee.
- Any federal or state court felony criminal conviction, guilty pleas, plea of no contest, deferred prosecution or prayer for judgment continued (or similar convictions, pleas, deferred prosecutions or prayers for judgment rendered in foreign jurisdictions) of any kind, whether felony or misdemeanor.
- Failure to maintain appropriate license or certification required to operate a school bus, failure to notify supervisor when issued a warning, citation, ticket, or suspension against driver’s license.
- Violation of an applicable federal, state, or local statute, regulation or ordinance governing school bus operations or school (district) employees.
- Engaging in or convicted of, any unlawful behavior whether on District property, during work time, while in the course of District business, or otherwise.
- Driving with bus doors open or allowing riders to ride in unauthorized or unsafe locations.
- Violation of any Board policy or administrative rule, procedure, regulation, or standard of conduct regarding but not limited to sexual behavior, discrimination, harassment, alcohol, illegal drugs, unlawful behavior, or violation of safety policies.
- Violation of any procedure published by the School District, Department of Transportation, or verbal instructions by a supervisor, provided such instructions or procedures do not violate or conflict with any Board policy, administrative rule, procedure or regulation.
- Failure to attend mandatory training or meetings.
- Failure to perform pre and post checks or clean bus.
- Failure to report employee or student misbehavior.
Note: A conviction includes any finding, admission of guilt, imposition of a fine, jail sentence, probation, or other penalty including if the incident is expunged.

Character

Berkeley County School District places good character at the top of the list in job performance. As a school bus driver, you must meet high standards of personal habits, cleanliness, and moral conduct. You should never conduct yourself in a manner which would affect your ability to perform your duties professionally and safely. By demonstrating professional qualities of character, you will gain the confidence of parents, students, school officials and the general public.

Your appearance is also important and adds to your character. So please always dress for success. You may not wear:

- Flip Flops, open toed shoes, or sandals
- Immodest jeans, short/short pants, dresses, skirts, tops, etc.
- Clothes with any suggestive pictures, writing, slogans, or have any alcohol or tobacco advertisement.
- Low cut or high cut blouses, sweaters, tube tops, tank tops, or anything with spaghetti straps.
- Always wear your ID Badges and safety vests while working.

Driver Professionalism

Berkeley County School District employees are a vital link to the education process for our students. You influence the actions of the students on your bus by being a positive role model. Therefore, the following guidelines apply:

- Be careful and courteous on the highway.
- Respect the rights and responsibilities of all BCSD Staff.
- Do not publicly criticize school personnel or policies. Discuss your concerns with your Transportation Supervisor.
- Maintain your dignity when dealing with students and parents. Be as polite as possible; remember you are a reflection of BCSD. The driver’s tone of voice and attitude are important in preventing any situation from becoming a bad situation.
- Be cooperative at all times with school officials.

Gossip

Gossip and/or rumors are not tolerated within this department. This type of behavior is not productive to the workplace and in most situations it is used to be hurtful to another employee. All employees are to be professional. If an employee is found to be displaying this behavior, personnel action will be recommended.
Confidentiality Guidelines

While employed with Berkeley County School District, an employee may hear or learn about information which is privileged, confidential, and exempt from disclosure under applicable State and Federal laws. This may include, but not limited to information regarding a student's identification, behavior, family situation, education classification, medical conditions, grades, etc. Disclosing, disseminating, copying or distributing this information is strictly prohibited. Drivers may only discuss this information with the appropriate district personnel, who may offer assistance with the student/situation. Drivers may not discuss student, parent, or employee information with other drivers or individuals not in the position to receive such information.

You are legally bound not to discuss any confidential information you have received or learned while a BCSD employee. Doing so may be a violation of an individual's right to privacy. You can be held personally liable for violation of this policy as well as additional administrative actions.
Section Three

Standard Operational Procedures

School Bus Safety

- School bus drivers occupy an essential position in identifying safety problems on their bus. It is important you take the time to do your job correctly. To ensure the safe operation of your school bus, you should conduct your pre-trip and post-trip inspections as required.
- If you discover a problem while still on the bus lot, contact your Transportation Supervisor immediately. Do not leave unless directed to do so. If you are on your route and a problem develops, stop in a safe location, contact your Transportation Supervisor immediately and wait for guidance. Safety will always take precedence over time.

Bus Schedule Regulations

1. You are expected to be at the schools by your designated times. Any time your bus arrives after your designated time, you are considered late. If you cannot get to school on time due to uncontrolled event, notify your supervisor. The supervisor will determine if adjustments need to be made to the route and notify schools involved.
2. You must arrive at scheduled stops on time, not early and not late. In order to achieve a consistent schedule, you must leave home at the same time every day. Inconsistent schedules cause major problems resulting in students missing the bus, parent being late for their jobs, and conflicts in classroom schedules.
3. You must stop at every regular stop on a morning route, even though you may not see the students. All bus stops must meet state regulations. You may not change a stop at any time without approval by your supervisor.
4. Students making an honest effort to get to the bus should be given time to board. If a student is consistently late, follow the BCSD School Bus Discipline policy.
5. The parking brake must be set and the transmission in neutral gear before allowing any student to board or exit your bus.
6. All students must be properly seated before your bus is put into motion.
7. Bus supervisors will monitor late buses and verify mechanical delays with the school bus maintenance shop.
8. You must check the bus for sleeping students and damage at the end of each route and before new students board the bus. Your failure to do this and a child is discovered sleeping will result in administrative action.

Radio Procedures

All drivers will know how to operate and monitor the radio while in and around their vehicle. Radios will be used only for official transportation communication that involves

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safety problems, accidents, discipline problems, and route time delays. Use your radio to contact your Transportation Supervisor to resolve questions that must be handled immediately.

- Drivers should limit conversations with other drivers to only information relating to traffic hazards.
- Before talking on your radio, listen to ensure you are not about to “cut-off” another transmission. Rude, opinionated, personal, or excessive chatter is not permitted. Offensive language will not be tolerated.
- Keep your message brief; remember the person you are trying to contact may be unavailable.
- Use the term “MAYDAY” as outline in your emergency procedures to clear the net.

Contact the District Transportation Office if you need assistance and cannot reach your Transportation Supervisor.

**Video and Audio Monitoring**

Drivers and students are subject to video/audio monitoring while on a school bus. Videos are subject to review to assess driver in the performance of their duties. These videos may be used for training or counseling of drivers.

All recordings are the property of Berkeley County School District. **Due to privacy issues, drivers may not copy or remove videos from the Transportation Office.**

**Required Reporting**

Drivers who have reasonable cause to believe that a student has committed an act(s) upon school property or at any school function, which is prohibited by the Student Behavior Code and School Board Policy or act(s) prohibited by law must report the incident to their Transportation Supervisor.

**Vehicle Checklist**

The State Department of Education’s Office of General Counsel reviewed the statute which reads: “No driver or operator of a school bus shall leave the bus while the engine is running.” The driver must be in the immediate vicinity of the bus during the use of the lift or while conducting a pre-trip inspection. The driver cannot walk away from the bus to let the bus warm up.

A driver must arrive at work in time to complete the necessary checks:

- Set mirrors.
- Check gauges after starting the engine.

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Clean the interior, including gauges.
Check emergency equipment and first aid kit.
Test all lights, air pressure, wipers and horn.
Inspect the exterior, tires, wheels, rims, exhaust, leaks, etc. You are not required to get under the bus, however, you need to do an underneath visual inspection.
Check fuel gauge. Drivers are responsible for ensuring the bus has enough fuel to complete the route.
Report strange noises and odors

Drivers must immediately report the following conditions to your Transportation Supervisor and document them using a School Bus Repair Form.

The following items will deadline a bus from operation:

- Headlight or tail lights out. (Head light, bad weather or darkness)
- Inoperable 8-way or 4-way flashers
- Inoperable child safety gate
- Worn, bald, or damaged tires
- Inoperable windshield wipers
- Broken or missing mirrors or windows
- Fluid leaks
- Inoperable stop arm or door
- Steering problems
- Inoperable brake lights or any brake problems
- Missing or not charged fire extinguisher
- Air brake leaks
- Unsecured seats or inoperable driver’s seat belt

The decision to deadline your bus will be made by a state mechanic or the Transportation Supervisor.

**Unscheduled School Dismissal or Cancellation**

**Before School Opens:**

The Director of Transportation makes a recommendation to the Superintendent prior to 5:00 AM based on road conditions. The decision on school closing or late openings will be provided to local radio and television stations prior to 5:30 AM. Drivers should monitor local television stations and radio stations for updates and announcements.

Drivers are required to be at work on time, unless notified by your Transportation Supervisor. It is better to arrive at work and discover that school has been canceled or delayed than to fail to arrive and have students waiting for you because you failed to
come to work. If conditions in your area do not permit safe driving, employees must notify their supervisor immediately.

Inclement Weather

You are allowed to make more frequent stops to pick up and discharge students during bad weather such as heavy rain. You may stop as close as possible to each student’s home without going off the route during unfavorable weather conditions. Under normal weather conditions all students are required to be at the bus stop when the bus arrives. However, you should have consideration for your students when picking them up during bad weather.

Unscheduled Early Dismissal:

Your Transportation Supervisor will call with instructions however; you are responsible for clocking in (and out) once you reach the bus lot.

Care of Buses

Drivers are responsible for the equipment they use, to include the bus, radio, and video camera equipment. If damage occurs as a result of driver negligence, the driver will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. You must make sure you have assigned seats. This is in case you find a cut seat; you know which students are assigned to the seat.

Make sure you always check gauges while you’re driving. Should you continue to drive your bus and your gauges indicate you are having a mechanical problems, you may liable for those repairs.

For damage on BCSD buses and vehicles caused by driver negligence or carelessness, including vandalism the driver may be required to pay the insurance deductible up to $1000.

Checking of Bus Post Trip

You are required to check your bus at the end of each route for sleeping students. This is to be done for ALL routes. Your failure to follow this requirement may lead to further administrative action.

Items to be on Your Bus

- Fire Extinguisher
- First Aid Kit (with gloves)
- Blood borne Body Fluid Kit

BCSD Transportation Manual
Bus Fueling Schedule

The fueling schedule for school buses will be posted at the beginning of each month in the office. All drivers are responsible for checking the schedule and knowing what day the buses will be fueled. If you are driving on a fieldtrip, you are responsible for making sure your bus is fueled before leaving the bus parking lot. If your bus is used to run double routes causing you to need fuel before the next scheduled fuel day, you are responsible for letting your supervisor know before stating your next trip. A call will be made to make arrangements for your bus to be fueled at the bus shop.

NOTE: Any driver who runs out of fuel while on a route due to not following the above instructions will be responsible for the bill if a service charge is charged to the district by the State Department.
Section Four

Accident Standard Operational Procedures

The following procedures were established to create a clear and consistent accident management system. The procedures will help to ensure correct assessment of a driver's performance, assessment of legal compliance with laws and help prevent accidents by understanding the contributing factors to the cause of accidents. All accidents resulting in property damage or injury to any party will be investigated no matter how “minor.” Additionally, driver accountability is essential to school bus safety and drivers must understand they are held accountable for every incident including “minor” accidents, scratches, and bus lot “dings,” “bumps” and “fender-benders” no matter when or where they occur.

Definitions

School Bus Accident

Any incident involving any vehicle used to transport students (with or without students on board at the time of the incident) resulting in property damage, no matter how minor and no matter where it occurs. Any incident resulting in an injury or claim of injury by any party, including driver or bus assistant, will be considered a school bus accident and investigated in accordance with procedures.

Non-Collision Events

Events resulting in injury arising from a driver action, such as a student falling out of a bus seat during an evasive maneuver, or wheelchair tip-over during loading or transporting.

Bus stop accidents

Any accident that occurs when the bus is stopped or preparing to stop, (with amber warning lights activated) in order to load and unload students at a designated bus stop location. School loading zone accidents should also be considered as “bus stop” accidents and investigated and documented.

Bus stop related accidents

If a vehicle crashes in the vicinity of a bus stop or strikes a student enroute to or from the bus stop, an investigation must be conducted and documented.

Fires

All bus fires, including minor electrical shorts, must be investigated and documented.

*BCSD Transportation Manual*
**Driver, assistant, or student injuries**

Any incident where a driver, student, or bus assistant is injured while on the school bus or in a District vehicle, (even if the injury is not the result of impact from a crash) must be investigated and documented.

**Bus lot accidents**

Any incident, when a District owned vehicle is involved in a “fender-bender” with any other vehicle, stationary object or property while on the bus lot.

**Driver**

Any individual properly licensed by the state of South Carolina and employed by the District to drive a State or District vehicle.

**Bus Accident/Incident Reporting**

Berkeley County School District School Bus Accident Policy and Procedures:

In the event of an accident/incident involving a South Carolina State School Bus or a Berkeley County School District Bus, these procedures must be following to ensure the safety and integrity of all students, bus driver, district staff, and the district.

- School Bus Driver notifies their Transportation Office and states he/she has been involved in an accident/incident. This notification may be done by cell phone or two way radio.
- The Transportation Office obtains the following information:
  - Location of the accident
  - What school(s) they are transporting for
  - How many students on board
  - Any injuries,(students, bus driver, other vehicle(s))
  - What type of accident, what happened
  - Is it a state bus or district bus

- Transportation Office will notify LE/EMS/Fire as needed
- School Bus Driver starts Accident/Incident Roster. Accident/Incident Roster must be completed by each student on the bus. This is done for insurance reasons.
- School Bus Driver should not discuss the accident with anyone except BCSD Officials or Law Enforcement (LE).
- The Transportation Office then creates an accident/incident log.
- The Transportation Office notifies the Director of Transportation and/or the District Transportation Office.
- The Director of Transportation will notify the BCSD Public Information Officer and appropriate Supervisor immediately.

*BCSD Transportation Manual*
Log is emailed in BCSD Outlook Group (BUS ACCIDENT)

- The Transportation Office will try to obtain all information upon first notification. However, in the event all information is not obtained in the first notification, updated information will be distributed in subsequent emails.

- Transportation Office notifies the State School Bus Shop (If a State School Bus)
  State School Bus Shop will dispatch at least one staff member to assess any damage to the bus and to determine if the bus is able to continue or if there is a need to tow the bus. State School Bus Shop will also conduct an investigation. In most cases, once the Bus Shop has finished their portion of the investigation, they will leave the scene. *(The State School Bus Shop does not assist with students.)*
  - If not a State School Bus, the Transportation Office will notify the BCSD Mechanic.

- Based upon the number of students on the bus will determine how many staff members from the Transportation Office will respond. If the accident/incident has 20 or more students another Transportation Supervisor shall arrive on scene to assist with the investigation and obtaining information. All Transportation Supervisors should be wearing reflective vest and have proper communications and accident investigation materials with them. *(Digital Cameras, Clip Boards, Accident Forms, Extra Accident/Incident Rosters, Medical Transport Forms, Accident Notification Cards)*

- The lead Transportation Supervisor shall be the one who is responsible for the School Bus Driver.

- In the event of injuries which require transportation by EMS, one Transportation Supervisor or the Safety/Training Officer will be dispatched to the Hospital

- For students who may be transported from the scene by EMS, students name and information must be written on the BCSD Medical Transport Form.

- In the event there are 20 or more middle/high school students on board the bus, then an Administrator from the closest middle or high school should arrive on scene to assist with discipline and completing the accident/incident roster. In the event the bus accident involves elementary school students, then the elementary school administrators should be on standby and should not arrive on scene unless requested.

- In the event the media should arrive and be present. All request for interviews or information must be directed to the BCSD Public Information Officer.

- All BCSD Officials on the scene must not admit any culpability or advise parents of what may have gone wrong. Only information conveyed to parents should be what procedures need to be followed should the parents wish to have their child checked by medical officials.

- The Transportation Office shall dispatch the earliest available school bus to continue route. *(Special Note, depending on the time of accident/incident, all school buses may be on regular routes. In the event the bus may need to be towed, then the State School Bus Shop will bring a spare bus, if one is available.)*

- Once students arrive at their designated school, students are to be further checked by the school nurse(s). *(This would only occur should the accident/incident be a morning or mid-day route.)* *(In the event of large number of students on the bus, school nurses from another school(s) may be called upon from District Administration to assist the School Nurse at student(s) assigned school(s).)*
Schools are to notify parents of the accident/incident. The Bus Driver will provide all students on board an Accident Notification Card for the students to provide to parents.

Due to Insurance Requirements and Liability issues, students cannot be released to parents on the scene. The bus will need to continue to transport the student(s) to their destination, home or school.

**Responsibilities of Drivers and Assistants**

The driver or assistant will notify their Transportation Supervisor or the District Transportation Office immediately after an accident or incident.

Students must remain on the bus unless their safety requires immediate removal. If evacuation of the bus is required, students should be directed to a safe area away from the road. The bus should not be moved unless directed by law enforcement, EMS, or District personnel, or to prevent further injury to the students.

**Media**

All inquiries from the news media and public sources must be directed to the BCSD Public Information Officer.

**Accident Investigation**

The major function of accident investigation is to identify the cause or causes of an accident in order to prevent future accidents. Important safety lessons can be learned from any accident investigation and provides a learning tool to help identify problem drivers who need retraining and identify training gaps that need to be addressed. It is therefore necessary to investigate all District vehicle accidents regardless of the degree of the accident.

Drivers cited by law enforcement personnel for contributing to an accident are responsible for any traffic violation citations, fines, point assessment, court hearings, and or punitive actions assessed by civil authority.

**Post-Accident Drug and Alcohol Testing**

There are two circumstances under which a post-accident drug and alcohol test must be conducted according to the Federal regulation:

- A test must always be conducted on a surviving driver when an accident involving a state or BCSD vehicle results in a fatality.
- A test must be conducted if the school bus driver is cited for a traffic violation.

*BCSD Transportation Manual*
Any driver who tests positive for drugs or alcohol or refuses testing will be immediately terminated.

Prohibited Conduct

Any driver who engages in prohibited conduct cannot perform safety-sensitive functions and will be subject to the provisions of the district's policy on alcohol and controlled substances testing, as well as other consequences prescribed by any other policy, law, or regulation. The following conduct is prohibited:

- The use or possession of any substance containing alcohol while performing any duties for BCSD or while on any BCSD property.
- The use of alcohol or prescription medication which affects one's performance within eight (8) hours prior to performing any safety-sensitive functions.
- Having an alcohol concentration of any discernible amount while performing safety-sensitive functions.
- Reporting for or remaining on duty after using any prescription medication or controlled substances unless it was prescribed by a physician who advised the employee that it would not adversely affect their ability to perform safety-sensitive functions and the employee notified the district of its use.
Section Five

Managing Student Behavior

Philosophy

- Every time a student violates a bus rule raises the chance the driver is distracted.
- Every time the driver is distracted raises the chance of an accident happening.
- Therefore, *every time a student violates a bus rule directly raises the chance of their bus being in an accident!* 

Student Behavior Code

In order to maintain an appropriate educational climate, it may be necessary to apply disciplinary sanctions to students, including their removal from the learning environment. These sanctions will occur only for good cause and in accordance with due process of law.

The following regulations are designed to protect all members of the educational community in the exercise of their rights and responsibilities. These regulations are effective during the following times and places.

- On school grounds before, during or after school hours
- On school grounds at any other time when the school is being used by a school group
- Off the school ground at any school and/or school-related activity, function, or event
- On a school bus or other school vehicle
- At any time or in any place (including off school ground and during non-school hours) where student conduct will have a direct effect on the school’s ability to maintain an orderly and safe learning environment

School Bus Conduct

Drivers are responsible for student conduct on their bus. The Student Behavior Code is in effect on the bus and at bus stops.

The following rules have been established for students riding the bus and apply to all students on the school bus. These rules are in addition to those rules listed in the Student Behavior Code as they focus on the safe operation of the school bus.

- No glass containers on the bus.
- No spitting, eating, or drinking on the bus.
- No profanity, verbal abuse, harassment, teasing, obscene or sexual gestures.
- No standing while the bus is in motion.

*BCSD Transportation Manual*
No hanging any part(s) of your anatomy out a window.
- No throwing or shooting any type of objects.
- No play fighting or horse playing.
- Do not ride any bus that you are not assigned to.
- Do not ride any bus during a suspension of bus privileges.
- Do not vandalize the bus.
- Do not hold onto the bus from the outside.
- Do not make excessive noise or other disruptive behavior.
- Keep your feet, body, and bags out of the aisle.
- Do not block the aisle with band instruments or book bags.
- Students must obey the directions of the driver.
- Do not exhibit behavior that disturbs other students or the driver.
- Talk quietly. Avoid loud, disruptive behavior including singing, clapping, stomping, or yelling.
- No spraying of cologne, deodorant, body spray or any other type chemicals or aerosols, pump spray, or lotion while on the bus.
- Never tamper with the emergency exits or any other part of the bus equipment, including fire extinguishers and first aid equipment unless an actual emergency situation exists.
- Be at the bus stop fifteen (15) minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time.
- Board and exit the bus at your designated stop or school only.

School Bus Discipline Procedure

The Student Behavior Code applies uniformly throughout BCSD regardless of where the incident occurs ensuring the equitable application of appropriate consequences.

Inappropriate behavior on a bus is treated with the same level of scrutiny as inappropriate behavior in the classroom, and should lead to appropriate school consequences in accordance with the Student Behavior Code.

Drivers must:

- Understand the Student Behavior Code; not every act of inappropriate student behavior requires a bus suspension.
- Use sound judgment in handling problems. Not all cases of behavior require action by individuals other than the driver and the parent.
- Identify, by name, the student who was involved in the incident. Write clear and specific Bus Conduct Reports about what happened. Keep personal comments and opinions off this form.
- Be willing to back up your report in meetings with principals, parents, and students. Keep a detailed log.
- Hand the report to your Transportation Supervisor before leaving the bus parking lot in the evening.
Use the two-way radio to contact your Transportation Supervisor for instructions when a serious incident occurs while driving the route.

- Set the tone for discipline and safety from the first day.
- Establish and enforce clear and consistent standards.
- Ensure students understand safety and behavior rules.
- Be fair and consistent.
- Treat students with respect and they will return it.
- Enforce the seating chart.
- Stop the bus in a safe place and talk to the students when you believe the safety of your bus is in question. If you need assistance have your Transportation Supervisor come to your bus.
- Return to the school for help after contacting your Transportation Supervisor.
- Give students time to react to your request. Be reasonable. Do not pick on every little thing that annoys you.
- Be constructive in your comments to students—not degrading or destructive.
- Look for children’s good qualities. They all have them!
- Never publicly ridicule a child.
- Be cheerful. Your attitude sets the tone for the ride.
- Use the “Assertive Discipline Driver” techniques.
- Greet students courteously as they enter the bus this sets a positive tone for the ride.
- Be sincere and be considerate of a child’s feelings.
- Retain students on the bus for discipline problems after all others have left, and then discuss the problem. Do not discuss issues in public.
- Move disruptive riders towards the front of the bus (within camera range).

**Guidelines for Completing Bus Conduct Report**

- When all other means to correct a student’s misbehavior fail, the driver will complete a Bus Conduct Report.
- Be accurate and specific. Record precisely what occurred—what you saw and heard. Detail the exact inappropriate behavior.
- Do not add emotional or personal comments. (Examples: This student has been a problem all year. They need to be off the bus.)
- Use additional sheets if necessary.
- Be timely. Turn the report in to the student’s school on your next trip.
- If a child becomes sick on your bus, contact your Transportation Supervisor for assistance. If you or any of your passengers are exposed to bodily fluids, report it immediately and refer to the District’s Bloodborne Pathogens Policy.

**Student Rights**

Sexual harassment of students by District employees or other students is strictly prohibited. Employees must avoid any action or conduct which could be viewed as sexual harassment.

*BCSD Transportation Manual*
If you become aware of any case of child abuse or believe a child’s physical/mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect you are required to report this to your Transportation Supervisor immediately.

**Physical Contact with Students**

Physical contact between a bus driver and any student is a very sensitive issue.

Physical contact between a bus driver and a student should only occur when it is necessary to keep a student from harm or harming others such as:

- To keep a student from falling down.
- To keep a student from walking in front of a moving vehicle.
- To keep a student from hitting another student/person.

Example of inappropriate physical contact between a bus driver and a student:

- To restrain or prevent a student from leaving the bus.
- To prevent student from getting on the bus.
- To get their attention while talking to them.
- To move or direct a student to a seat.
- To grab a book, identification card, CD player or cell phone, etc. from a student.

A driver who engages in inappropriate physical contact with a student will be subject to administrative action.

Drivers and/or assistants are not authorized to search a student or their belongings.

**Suggestions for Dealing with Conflict**

- Address the issue quickly. Do not allow it to escalate.
- Choosing the right time and place can help resolve a conflict. Discover what the conflict is all about.
- Allow each student involved to have an equal voice. If one student perceives they have little or no influence, there will not be a positive result.
- Listen carefully to the parties involved so that you are able to repeat what each person says.
- Direct, honest statements can be very helpful in dealing effectively with conflict.
- It is important to help the parties involved feel good about themselves. People who have a positive self-image are more likely to deal effectively with conflict.
- If people believe that they are perceived as competent, helpful and sensitive, they will less likely to spend time trying to prove their worth.
Ask “What” questions and not “Why” questions. A person asked a “Why” question may feel challenged and blamed and often feels defensive.

It is important to understand your own motives, what are the underlying reasons for your taking sides?

Strive for confidentiality as part of the resolution. The conflict is not really settled until the parties respect each other enough to put an end to it.

Review and evaluate your resolution skills, find someone within the Transportation Department to share your experience. The person should be trustworthy so that confidences can be maintained.

## Discipline of Students with Disabilities

1. Violations of the discipline code by students with disabilities may be dealt with according to the consequences specified in the code when the behavioral violation is not related to the student’s disability as determined by the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team. Any suspension or combination of suspensions which exceeds 10 days is considered a change in placement and may occur only when the appropriate procedures are followed according to the special education discipline procedures.

2. For students whose behavioral violations are determined by the IEP/IAP committee to directly related to the student’s disability, any suspension or combination of suspensions which exceeds 10 days is considered a change in placement and may occur only when the appropriate procedures are followed according to the special education discipline procedures. In such case the IEP/IAP committee will determine appropriate behavioral interventions and or consider the appropriateness of the student’s educational placement and need for a change in placement.

3. Administrators dealing with suspension offenses by students with disabilities will consult the coordinator of special services regarding the suspension of students with disabilities.
Section Five

Emergency Procedures

In reality there is no actual way to assess or evaluate every possible crisis or emergency scenario that may occur on or off a school bus. Being prepared for any situation is by far the most important tool that a driver can utilize. Recognize hazards and emergency situations, keep calm, and use your radio for guidance.

Remember, how you react to a potential crisis situation will influence how your student riders react and will ultimately impact their safety, which is your primary responsibility.

Recognize Potential Hazards

Be familiar with your bus! Do the required pre-trip and post-trip inspections inside and outside! Look for any unusual leaks, loose wiring, missing nuts or bolts, cracked windshield or mirrors, tire damage, etc. In addition, look for packages or containers that may have been placed on your bus overnight. Notify your Transportation Supervisor immediately concerning anything unusual. After beginning your route, be aware of suspicious individuals at bus stops or railroad crossings. Do not allow anyone (including parents) on your bus other than eligible students, registered riders, school administrators, State Transportation Department officials, or law enforcement officers.

If a mechanical situation develops on your bus while out on your route, notify your Transportation Supervisor immediately of the situation and your location. Be patient, wait for a response from your Transportation Supervisor or the District Transportation Office.

If it is an emergency situation such as extreme engine temperature, secure your vehicle in a safe location and wait for instructions. If you are involved in an accident, major or minor, immediately notify your Transportation Supervisor utilizing proper radio procedures.

Indicate your location, number of students, injuries if any, and determine if evacuation of the bus is necessary. Remember you must assess the need to evacuate base on two main factors: the situation itself and the location where the evacuation will occur.

First, analyze the situation: is there a fire, is there a fuel leak, is the bus in an unsafe location or is the environment on the bus unsafe?

Second, determine if evacuation is the best response or would removing the students create a worse situation? For example: exposing them to hazardous materials, severe weather, downed power lines, or traffic.

BCSD Transportation Manual
Again, remain calm, assess the situation then act on the best course of action to ensure the safety of your students. Contact your Transportation Supervisor or the District Transportation Office as soon as possible and follow their instructions.

**Emergency Weather Procedures**

Buses may continue to operate during tornado watches. The District Transportation Office will monitor weather and provide guidance to the supervisors and drivers as quickly as possible; however, drivers must use their best judgment in emergencies.

When a school bus is caught on a road by an approaching tornado, the driver should first seek shelter in a building if time permits. Otherwise, children must be evacuated along the road and escorted to low land or a ditch at least 100 feet from the bus—to keep the bus from falling on the children. Instruct the children to hold their hands over their neck and stay face down on the ground.

If you are at the school when a tornado is sighted move yourself and the students into the school. Follow the instructions of the school administrator and notify your Transportation Supervisor of your situation.

**Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

It is important that drivers are prepared for the possibility of an accident and other on-the-road emergencies. As a school bus driver you must know what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. This is a refresher of the skill you will need to prepare yourself and your riders for such emergencies. During each school year you will conduct two bus evacuation drills.

You will be notified by your Transportation Supervisor as to when to conduct these drills. You must prepare your students for the drills and act according to these procedures.

**Preparation for Bus Evacuation Drills**

Inform all riders during the first days of school that two emergency evacuation drills will be held during the school year. Teach them these rules and procedures.

- The aisles and all exits must be free from book bags and other clutter.
- You will tell them how to exit the bus.
- Instruct your students to leave all personal belongings on the bus, including book bags, musical instruments, and school projects.
- They must follow the designated student helper and stay together, well away from the bus and they must stay away until you give the all clear.
- If an accident occurs that makes an evacuation necessary, they are not to leave the scene without your approval even if a parent should arrive.

*BCSD Transportation Manual*
Once evacuated, they are never to return to the bus unless you have directed them to do so.

Training Student Helpers

At the beginning of the school year, select six students (age nine or older) to help you in an emergency. Identify and utilize students who are mature and responsible.

A. Train two of these students to take charge if you are disabled in the event of an accident or other emergency situation. (*Point out to the students that this is quite unlikely to happen.*) These designated student helpers should be taught to do the following:

- Secure the bus.
- Call for help, using whatever communication is available.
- Safely flag down passing motorist for help.
- Know where the fire extinguisher and first aid kit are located.
- Operate all emergency exits, including window and roof top exits.

B. Train two other students to carry out emergency equipment including reflector triangles, first aid kits, emergency packet, and fire extinguisher.

C. Train all other student helpers to:

- Assist students to evacuate the bus.
- Monitor other students once they are evacuated.
- Estimate a distance of 100 ft away from the bus.
- Know in which direction to lead students if they have to evacuate on a railroad track, busy road, or other situations.

Positions and Duties of Designated Student Helpers

The position and duties of student helpers for front door only evacuations: One front student helper should be seated next to the aisle in a seat near the front door. This student helper will lead the students off the bus and to a safe area at least 100ft away from the bus and keep the students together.

Two other student helpers should take the emergency equipment with them as they leave the bus.

D. The positions and duties of the student helpers for rear emergency door evacuations: (conventional buses only)

- Two student helpers should be positioned in the seats nearest the rear door, one on each side of the aisle.
- A third student helper should sit on the next-to-the-last seat nearest the aisle.
- When the driver gives the command to exit, the two helpers nearest the rear door should open the rear emergency door and should exit first.

*BCSD Transportation Manual*
The third student helper should be the third student off the bus. This third student helper will lead the other students at least 100 ft away from the bus to a safe place and keep the students together.

The position and duties of the helpers for front and rear door evacuations: (conventional buses only)

All six student helpers should assume their positions (front and rear) and carry out their assigned duties for rear only or front only evacuations.

The only difference will be that each group will have fewer students and be conducting their duties at the same time.

The driver will stand slightly in the back of the middle of the bus to direct students to the appropriate door for exiting.

E. The position and duties of the student helpers for front and side door evacuations: (Transit buses only)
   - Two of the student helpers should be seated near each of the side emergency doors.
   - The front door student helpers should assume their regular positions near the front door.
   - The student helper nearest the emergency door should open the door and exit. This student helper should help other students as they exit.
   - One student helper for each door should lead the students at least 100 ft away from the bus to a safe place and keep them together.

Remember that you may need to evacuate when none or only some of your trained student helpers are on board. In that case, you must immediately assign certain students to lead the other students away from the bus and to assist in evacuating. The driver should always be prepared to assume most of the evacuation duties yourself.

Evacuation Drills

Twice each school year you are required to conduct emergency evacuation drills with all students.

- All drills must take place on school grounds.
- The Transportation Supervisor and/or a School Administrator must observe the bus evacuation drills.
- The driver should stay on the bus during the drill.

Before an Actual Drill

1. While the students are on the bus, secure the bus.

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2. Stand and face your students and say to them: “During an actual emergency, you will be directed to exit through one of the several possible emergency exits. We will practice some of those ways. If you look around the bus you will see the various ways we can exit.”

Note: If your bus is equipped with rooftop or window emergency exits state “We will not practice exiting through the roof hatches or windows exits but I will show you how to use them in case you should ever need to get out that way. They are to be used in the unlikely event the bus turns on its side and the other exits are blocked.” If your bus is equipped, you must demonstrate how to open the window and roof hatches.

3. Then say: “We will practice using the door emergency exits. You must leave all personal items, i.e. book bags, musical instruments, class projects, etc. on the bus.”

4. Remind your students not to jump up and go but to walk and never run. Also remind them to use the handrail, using every step as they exit the bus.

5. Instruct students that they are to follow the student helper away from the bus. Stress that once they are away from the bus, they are to remain together as a group away from the bus until you join them.

Front Door Evacuation (All type buses)

1. See that your student helpers are in place.
2. Secure the bus.
3. Stand and face your students and say to them, “Emergency evacuation drill—front door evacuation. Remain seated until it is your turn to exit.”
4. One student helper should be assigned leader and be the first one off the bus. He or she can lead the students away from the bus.
5. Two other student helpers will exit next so they can assist other students as they evacuate.
6. You should stand between the first two seats facing the door. Tap the shoulder of the rider on the right, closest to the aisle, and say, “Walk, don't run. Use the handrails.” Continue backing up the aisle and evacuate from right to left until all students are evacuated.
7. Check to make sure those students responsible for removing emergency equipment have done so.
8. Check the bus as you exit to make sure no student is left.
9. Exit through the front door and join the group.
10. Thank the students. Tell them how well they did or point out areas for improvement.
11. If necessary ask some or all of the students to repeat the evacuation drill.

Front and Rear Door Evacuation (Conventional buses only)

1. See that your student helpers are in place.
2. Secure the bus.
3. Stand and face your students and say to them, "Emergency evacuation drill-front and rear door evacuation. Remain seated until it is your turn to exit."
4. As you walk toward the middle of the bus, direct students to exit through the front service door at your instruction.
   - Walk to the middle of the bus, slightly closer to the back door rather than the front. (You may want to place a piece of tape on the roof to indicate this dividing line.)
   - Most of the student will exit through the front service door because this is the fastest way to exit.
   - Begin with your three front student helpers. Then direct the other students to exit, alternating left and right side of the bus.

5. As students are exiting through the front door, direct student helpers to open the emergency rear door and exit.
6. Direct the students nearest the back door on the left to exit first, followed by those on the right.
7. One of the student helpers will lead the students away from the bus.
8. Continue to direct both the front and rear evacuation until the bus is empty.
9. Walk through the bus and check to make sure all the students have exited. Exit through the front door.
10. Join the group of students and thank them for their participation. Tell them how well they did or point out areas for improvement.
11. If necessary ask some or all of the students to repeat the evacuation drill.

**Front and Side Door Evacuation** (Transit buses only)

1. See that your student helpers are in place.
2. Secure the bus.
3. Stand and face your students and say to them, "Emergency evacuation drill. Front and side door evacuations. Remain seated."
4. Open the front service door. As you walk to the middle of the bus, slightly closer to the back door rather than front, direct students to begin exiting at your instruction through the front service door, alternating the right and left seats.
5. Direct students nearest the front door to exit, beginning with the three student helpers and continuing with other students.
6. Walk backwards towards the back of the bus, evacuating students through the side door, alternating right and left seats.
7. Walk through the bus and check to see that all students have exited. Exit through the front door.
8. Join the group of students and thank them for their participation. Tell them how well they did or point out areas of improvement.
9. If necessary, ask some or all of the students to repeat the evacuation drill.
Keep in mind that there may be situations in which you can use both side exit doors to evacuate if no dangerous traffic poses a threat to students exiting through the left side exit door.

**When to Evacuate**

Evacuating a school bus is a very rare event. It is usually safer to keep students inside the bus.

For a routine breakdown or fender bender, the students should be kept inside the bus. They are less likely to get into trouble or be injured if kept inside.

As a check to determine when an evacuation is necessary, as yourself if the students are in more danger if they stay on the bus. If you think so, then get them off.

**A bus evacuation is necessary if...**

The bus breaks down or the bus is in danger:

--from being on a railroad track, on a blind curve, or near a crest of a hill
--from poisonous gas or toxic fumes, from catching on fire or is on fire
--from being submerged in water or rolling over
--from heavy fog

**Danger Zone**

The best solution to the issue of safety is one of prevention. Children and their parents, as well as educators and community members, need to be aware of the risks involved with children and school buses.

The **DANGER ZONE** is the area immediately surrounding the school bus. It extends 10 feet in front and behind the bus, and 10 feet from the sides. The area of greatest danger is immediately in front of the front bumper and right wheel. Teach your students “If you can touch the bus, you are TOO CLOSE,” and “If you can’t see the driver as you cross the street in front of the bus, you are TOO CLOSE.”

Students should always cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus and wait for the driver's direction. Have students look both ways for traffic before crossing the street, and never stop to pick up anything that falls in front of the bus bumper or wheels. Teach students to watch for moving vehicles when exiting a stopped school bus. Vehicles do not always stop for a school bus with red lights flashing, even though it is the law.
Section Seven

Transporting Special Needs Students

The assistant will ride at the back of the bus or behind the last student. This allows for observation of the entire bus. Wheelchair bound students will be checked every ten minutes or during the loading or unloading of other students. All safety straps will be utilized at all times. It is the responsibility of the transportation assistant and driver to ensure the students are properly secure at all times.

Procedures

Loading at Home or School

- Secure the bus.
- Guide the student onto the bus or load the student in a wheelchair onto the bus.
- Secure student properly or secure the wheelchair.

Unloading at Home or School

- Secure the bus.
- Undo restraints.
- Guide the student off the bus into the charge of parent or authorized person (home) or teacher or other school personnel.
- Make sure all belongings are removed from the bus.
- Report any concerns about student health or behavior to appropriate personnel.

Handling Wheelchairs: General Guidelines

Always treat the wheelchair as if it has no brakes. The brakes should be locked when the chair is on the lift or when the student is being transferred from the chair to a seat (or vice versa).

Whenever possible, place yourself on the downhill side of the wheelchair when moving it up and down curbs, steps, and ramps.

Avoid lifting wheelchair by the arms or large rear wheels; the arms may be removable and could come off when lifted, causing the student to fall. Lifting by the rear wheels can shift the chair’s center of gravity and cause it to spin on the casters.

Moving a Wheelchair up Curbs or Single Steps

The preferred method for moving wheelchairs up curbs or single steps is as follows:
- Position the chair facing the curb or step, making sure the child’s feet are not in contact with it.

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Firmly grip the push handles and place a foot on one of the tipping levers. Push down on the tipping lever while pulling the push handles backward and downward causing the front casters to rise off the ground. Tilt the chair so that the footrests are slightly higher than the curb or step. Make sure the chair is properly balanced and move forward until the rear wheels are both in contact with the curb or step. Lower the chair until the casters touch the top surface of the curb or step. Push the wheelchair up and over the curb by lifting the push handles and pushing forward. Make sure the chair is pushed forward far enough past the curb to allow the child to continue on his/her own without possible rolling backward over the curb.

The second method for taking a wheelchair up a curb or single step is as follows:

- Face the chair away from the curb or step and back it up until the large wheels are snug to curb or step.
- Tilt the chair and pull it up and over.
- The chair should remain tilted until the casters clear the edge of the curb or step.

**Moving a Wheelchair down a Curb or Single Step**

- Back the chair to the curb or step.
- Firmly grip the push handles and pull the chair toward you until the large wheels are at right angles to the edge of the curb or step. Do not tilt the chair.
- Slowly pull the chair toward you.
- Be aware that the weight of the chair will shift quickly from the edge of the curb or step to push handles as the chair moves downward.
- Lower the chair gently until rear wheels touch the ground.
- With casters still raised, move backward until the footrests are clear of the step or curb and bring the chair to its normal upright position.

**Using a Lift**

During a pre-trip inspection:

- Run the lift through a complete cycle.
- Check for frayed or damaged lift cables.
- Check for binding, physical damage, leaks and erratic operation.
- Check to be sure that all hazardous protrusions and edges are padded and protected.
- Check to see that the equipment for securing the wheelchairs are properly secured and in good condition.
- When stopping your bus to load or unload students, you must observe your clearance at the curb. You must leave enough room to avoid hitting objects with the extended lift, such as telephone poles or mailboxes. Also, pay attention to the

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path along which the wheelchair will approach. Look for cracks in the pavement and any other irregularities that may cause problems during the loading and unloading process.

**Loading/Unloading a Child on the Lift**

- Open and secure the lift door.
- Use the control pad to unfold lift.
- Let the lift down (stop downward motion as soon as the lift touches the ground).
- Back the wheelchair onto the lift and lift platform and position it properly.
- Lock the brakes.
- Place the child’s hands and arms in his/her lap to avoid injury while moving.
- Check that the safety rail is in place and that the child's feet are clear of the toe guard flap.
- Activate the lift.
- To unload the student in a wheelchair from the lift, reverse the above procedures.

**Securing a Wheelchair**

There are two types of wheelchair securement systems, the forward facing and the side facing. The forward facing system utilizes a lap/shoulder harness; both systems require the use of a four-point securement system. You may use more than four securements, but not less.

*Forward Facing Securement System*

- Secure the front straps into the outer track at an angle of 30 to 60 degrees.
- All track fittings should be secure in the track.
- Hook the upper end of the strap into the lowest forward point of the wheelchair on a secure part of the frame.
- Pull the ends of the strap until slightly tight.
- Lock them into place and Velcro the loose ends. The straps should be at 45-degree angle to the floor.
- Secure the rear straps.
- Position the straps between 30 and 60 degrees.
- These straps usually hook to the two inner tracks.
- Secure using the same procedures as the front straps.
- Release the wheelchair brake and pull the chair back to tighten.
- Secure the lap/shoulder belt.
- Secure the lap belt adjustment straps to the back floor tracks.
- These straps will usually be placed in the slots behind the rear straps.
- Insert the side lap pelvic straps. On some systems, the side lap belt and lap belt adjustments are all in one belt, the same theory applies when hooking them up.
- Tighten the lap belt at the bottom and then tighten the shoulder harness so it is comfortable for the student.

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Side Facing Securement System

The side facing system does not use a lap/shoulder belt.

- Back the wheelchair against the side wall of the bus.
- Secure the back straps to a stable part of the chair.
- Secure the front straps. These are a ratchet type strap and cannot be interchanged with the back straps.
- Use the ratchet to tighten the wheelchair.
- Set the brakes.
- Check for sideways movement; adjust accordingly.

Point on a wheelchair that should never be used for securing the chair to the bus:

- Removable or elevating leg rest.
- Removable chair arms.
- Recline mechanisms.
- Snap-On wheels with quick release mechanisms.
- Anti-tippers.
- Upholstery attachments.
- Power wheelchair battery hangers, gearboxes, or joystick/steering assembly.

Assisting Students to Sit or Stand

Some students with disabilities do not require a wheelchair, but may require minimal assistance in sitting or rising from a sitting position.

The preferred method for helping a child to sit or stand:

- You extend your arms; firmly grasp your wrists.
- The child grasps the arm nearest to them with both hands.
- You then pull the child up slowly to a standing position or lower the child into a sitting position.

One-arm method

- You grasp the child’s right or left arm slightly above the elbow with your right or left hand.
- The child grasps your arm in a similar manner.
- You pull the child up slowly to a standing position or gently lower the child into a sitting position.
Section Eight

Activity Buses

Every activity trip driver must understand that they are not just driving a bus; they are transporting students to special events in their lives. Activity trip drivers must use good judgment to solve problems, and be customer service oriented. First and foremost, you must be safe and on time. You are an official representative of the Transportation Department and BCSD. Allow enough time to perform all checks and travel time:

- Park your car and secure it
- Locate the bus and start it
- Do a complete pre-trip inspection
- Check your fuel gauge and all other gauges
- If there are any problems call for assistance
- Depart and lock gates
- Travel to your assigned pick-up point

Be sure to read and understand your trip request before the day of the trip. Report to the school listed on your trip request. Ask questions of the activity trip scheduler or your Transportation Supervisor before your departure.

Activity bus operators must be able to think clearly and handle unexpected events. For example, students or staff may not be at the designated pick-up location when you arrive; be smart, read your directions again and call your supervisor or someone on the emergency telephone roster. Do not “just go home.” Try to solve the problem or get help.

Activity Trip Information

Drivers are required to operate the buses in accordance with BCSD policy and State and Federal laws and regulations. Drivers must have their State CDL License with proper P and S endorsements and Medical Examiner’s Certificate in their possession while driving activity trips.

In accordance with Federal Highway Safety Program Guideline No. 17 which states: “Prior to each departure, each pupil transported on an activity or field trip in a school bus or district owned activity bus should be instructed in safe riding practices and on the location and operation of emergency exits.” Drivers must inform riders of the location and proper use of all emergency exits.

Federal Transportation Safety Laws restrict a driver to a maximum of 10 hours continuous driving time, maximum of 15 hours on-duty time followed by 8 consecutive hours, off-duty. Drivers are not authorized to operate a vehicle on a BCSD sponsored
trip beyond these time limits and will report any violations to the BCSD Transportation Office.

For trips, that are likely to incur 10 hours continuous driving time or 15 or more on-duty hours, sponsors must either:

- Spend the night and return the following day, or,
- Allow the driver to rest in a motel/hotel, at the sponsor’s expense, while the group is conducting their scheduled activities, or pay, for two drivers. The second driver must be resting in a hotel for the return trip, or relieve the first driver if they meet the 20/15 hour limitations.
- The group may be required to wait for a second driver or make immediate arrangements to stop at a hotel so that the driver can rest.

*Examples of on-duty time are as follows:*

- All time required for equipment inspection
- All time loading and unloading
- All time waiting for repairs for a disable vehicle
- All time performing any service for the sponsor
- All time waiting to be dispatched unless the driver has been released from duty by the sponsor

As a general rule, the driver should not leave the trip destination area. The only exceptions to this rule are for the driver to eat or refuel the bus. For any absence, the driver must have permission from the trip sponsor to leave the area. They must establish a specific return time with the sponsor and provide a cell phone number when possible.

Drivers must do a pre-trip and post-trip inspection on every activity trip. Drivers are required to sweep the bus and remove any trash after each trip. Failure to perform this task will result in a $25.00 cleaning fee.

Family members or friends of BCSD drivers are not allowed on the activity trip unless they are BCSD employees, eligible students or members of the class, organization or team on the activity trip and have pre-approval from the school administrator.

Drivers are responsible for furnishing their own meal/meals on all trips except overnight trips. Drivers must provide meal receipts for reimbursement for overnight trips. Drivers require the same sleeping arrangements that are made for adult sponsors. If the driver desires a single room, he/she may pay the additional cost at the motel/hotel. Drivers will not share a room with a student.

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