



*Richmond County  
School System*



**TRANSPORTATION  
DEPARTMENT  
EMPLOYEE MANUAL**

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## **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Local Board of Education is a 10-member body elected for four year staggered terms. Members are residents of the district from which they are elected. They are voted on in district elections.

The primary duty of the Board is to develop policies and written statements with the intent of guiding the operation of the school program. The Board also approves the hiring of each employee and makes the final decision on the termination of all employees, unless otherwise delegated.

A Board Member has no individual power or authority to make decisions or take action except when acting as a member of the Board during a meeting of the Board.

Regular Board Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the Central Office. All employees are invited to attend board meetings.

While employees are expected to follow procedures, policies and the prescribed chain of command in pursuing grievances and complaints, they nevertheless are encouraged to speak to Board Members at any time on matters of public concern. A listing of the Board Members and their contact information may be found at [www.rcboe.org](http://www.rcboe.org) under "Board of Education."

## **SUPERINTENDENT**

The Superintendent of Schools is appointed by the Board of Education for up to a 3-year contractual term.

The Superintendent is the chief executive officer of the Board and acts as its secretary. The Superintendent also has authority for general supervision of the school system and its employees. The Superintendent recommends the hiring and the termination of employees to the Local Board.

## **BOARD ATTORNEY**

The Board Attorney is authorized by the Charter to represent the Board of Education and the school system, to provide general legal services and to perform such other duties as are from time to time approved or directed by the Board of Education.

## **MISSION**

The Mission of the Richmond County School System is to educate students to become lifelong learners and productive citizens.

## **SYSTEM GOALS**

- Guarantee high academic achievement for all.
- Ensure communication and collaboration within the community.
- Provide a safe, orderly, and healthy learning environment.

## INTRODUCTION

### DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION OVERVIEW

The Transportation Department is responsible for providing safe and efficient transportation for the students enrolled in Richmond County Schools. The department provides transportation for the following programs and activities:

1. Regular Education - Transports regular education students between home and assigned school.
2. Special Needs - Transports students enrolled in special service programs, Georgia pre-kindergarten, GNETS, Sand Hills Children's Center, Community Based Instruction and Community Based Vocational Instruction, and students that require specialized transportation or routes.
3. Georgia Pre-K Program- Transports participating Pre-Kindergarten students to their assigned school.
4. Magnet School Program -Transports students from throughout the county to four magnet schools.
5. International Baccalaureate- Transports students from across the county to the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program at the Academy of Richmond County High School.
6. Advanced Placement Program – Transport students from across the county to the Advanced Placement Program at Lucy C. Laney High School.
7. After-School Programs- Transports students participating in approved programs designed to provide reinforcement and enrichment educational experiences after the regular school day.
8. Saturday School Programs- Transports students to Saturday School Programs.
9. Competitive Sporting Events- Transports student athletes, supporting bands and cheerleaders to football, baseball, soccer, basketball, other designated sports.
10. Academic Competitions – Transports students to competitive events for bands, chorus, and academic teams at various levels.
11. Extracurricular Activity and Instructional Field Trips -transports students from their schools to extra-curricular activities and instructional field trips.

There are five functions within the Department of Transportation:

1. **Operations** - Overseeing the assignment and supervision of bus drivers, the performance of route service, investigating complaints on and by drivers, payroll, and activity trip scheduling.
2. **Routing** - Designing bus routes, developing schedules, assigning students to buses, establishing stops, monitoring bus locations and preparing service reports for the DOE.
3. **Training** – Providing initial and in-service driver training, accident prevention training, investigation, and department safety programs.
4. **Budgeting** - Planning the financial budget of the department, justifying departmental budget through the board's budgetary process and managing the budget.
5. **Life Cycle Management** - Purchasing, maintaining and disposing of school buses in accordance with the approved life cycle of each category of school bus

## THE RICHMOND COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM BUS DRIVER

It is the responsibility of RCSS bus drivers to provide students safe and efficient transportation to and from school and school events in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Richmond County School System.

### PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The Richmond County School System bus driver is expected to exhibit a positive attitude, and be cooperative and courteous with other school personnel, parents, students, and fellow drivers. The school bus driver is the first contact that many students have with the school system each day, and may be the only direct contact many parents have with the school system. Drivers should therefore continually seek to establish a good public image. Diligent performance of duties, regular attendance and punctuality, appearance, outstanding conduct and a pleasant disposition are other qualities that are expected in employees.

### SCHOOL BUS DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS

In addition to the previously mentioned personal characteristics, school bus drivers must also meet the qualifications set by the Georgia Department of Education and the Richmond County School System. These requirements include the following:

1. **Age** - The minimum age to qualify as a school bus driver for Richmond County is 21 years.
2. **License** - Prior to being hired as a school bus driver, drivers must possess a valid Georgia Class A or B Commercial Driver's License with Passenger (P), and School Bus (S) endorsements. Applicants with excellent potential who do not meet this qualification will be provided training and assistance to obtain their commercial driver's license through the third Third-Party training program conducted by the School System in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Drivers Services.
3. **Physical** - Not more than 60 days prior to initial assignment school bus driver and attendant candidates must pass the Georgia Department of Education approved physical examination provided by a medical doctor. To be considered for re-employment for any ensuing school year, it is mandatory that drivers and attendants pass the annual medical examination prescribed by the State Board of Education not more than 60 days prior to the beginning of school opening performed by a medical doctor approved by the school system.
4. **Training** - Drivers must successfully complete the School Bus Driver Training Program provided by Georgia DOE certified driver trainers before such drivers are allowed to transport students without supervision.
5. **Mandatory Annual Retraining** - To maintain their school bus driver qualifications subsequent to initial training and qualification, all drivers must attend each school year a safety training class provided by a Georgia Department of Education Pupil Transportation Consultant. The Director of Transportation will schedule this training for all RCSS drivers and provide a listing of makeup class dates and locations. Drivers who fail to attend the scheduled RCSS training are required to attend makeup training prior to October 1<sup>st</sup> during each school year (or by the last training date scheduled by the DOE Pupil Transportation Consultant). Drivers failing to meet this requirement will be deemed unqualified to operate a school bus. (Note: New drivers who become certified as bus drivers during the school year after the date of the annual training class are not required to attend this class until the following school year).
6. **Driving Record** – The official Motor Vehicle Report maintained on file by the Georgia Department of Driver Services must not contain any adverse information, records of “serious” offenses as defined by the Georgia DDS, citations for driving under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances, or an excessive number of minor traffic violations or accidents.

7. **Minimum of Two Years Driving Experience** - Candidates for employment as a bus driver with the Richmond County School System are required to have no less than two years of licensed driving experience prior to being hired.
8. **Alcohol and Controlled Substances**- No bus driver employed by the Richmond County School System shall use or be under the influence of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances while operating a school bus or performing duties for the Board of Education. All applicants must successfully pass a drug and alcohol screening prior to being released to drive a Richmond County school bus. All employees are subject to random screening for use of alcohol and controlled substances and are further subject to such screening where individualized reasonable suspicion exists.
8. **Clear Criminal Background** - A criminal background check will be required for each driver candidate to include both GCIS and NCIC Reports conducted through the Richmond County School System.

## SECTION I

### INFORMATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

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#### A. Emergency Numbers

In the event of an accident or mechanical failure, call the appropriate number below:

**Within Richmond County or within radio contact range:**

**From 5:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. on weekdays:**

- ◆ Immediately radio the Transportation Department Dispatcher or Bus Shop.
- ◆ Call 706-796-4720 or 706-796-4777 to notify the office of the situation
- ◆ Call 706-796-4784 to notify the Bus Shop of mechanical needs

**After 5:30 p.m., weekends and holidays:**

- ◆ 706-533-3109 (On call mechanic), 706-533-1562 (Dispatcher)

**Outside of Richmond County**

- ◆ Call the local police (**911**) then 706-796-4720 or 706-796-4777
- ◆ Call **911** for fire, police or ambulance.
- ◆ NOTE: Sponsors are required to have a cell phone for emergency use when on trips outside Richmond County, Georgia.

#### B. Transportation Department Organization and Chain of Supervision

##### 1. Organization

The Department of Transportation is a part of the Richmond County School System.

##### 2. Chain of Supervision

In the event an employee has a question or concern related to the performance of duties, the chain of supervision listed must be followed.

- a. Report concerns to your immediate Supervisor, then to the Assistant Director of Transportation.
- b. Concerns which are not adequately addressed will be referred to the Director of Transportation
- c. Concerns which remain unresolved may be addressed to the Deputy Superintendent of Schools.
- d. Employees who remain dissatisfied may request an appointment with the Superintendent.
- e. The Board of Education is the final authority for appealing decisions made by the Superintendent.
- f. Please note the Grievance Policy in the employee handbook.

#### C. Employment Provisions

##### 1. Employment of Personnel

All personnel shall be employed in accordance with the general administrative personnel policies of the Richmond County Board of Education. To be eligible for employment, prospective bus drivers must be certified by the DDS Certified Driver Trainer/DDS Third party tester and the Director of Transportation as having met the screening training required by RCSS policies and the Department of Education School Bus Driver Training program.

##### 2. Resignations

Bus drivers desiring to resign their employment with the Richmond County School System shall give their supervisor a written notice ten working days in advance of the effective date of the resignation and sign a personnel change form obtained from the Transportation Department Bookkeeper. (NOTE: When no written resignation is provided and an employee departs, a job abandonment action will be initiated to terminate the employee and clear the position before a replacement can be hired. This abandonment action results in an adverse record in the employee's file.)

### **3. Outside Employment**

The primary employment obligation of employees is to the school system. Outside employment that does not interfere with the job of a Transportation Department employee is permitted. The Director of Transportation or designee has direct responsibility for evaluating the effects of outside employment on personnel and making recommendations, as necessary, to the Deputy Superintendent.

### **D. Employee Benefits**

Information concerning employment rights and responsibilities are contained in the Teacher's Handbook, which provides valuable information in the areas of responsibilities, leave, benefits, and grievance procedures. The handbook pages may be accessed at the rear of this manual. Hard copies of this handbook will be distributed by the Transportation Department office as they are made available.

### **E. Address and Telephone Number Changes**

All employees are responsible for providing accurate and current personal information including their address and telephone number(s). Changes in employee telephone numbers and/or addresses shall be reported immediately to the Transportation Office (on the appropriate Personnel Change Form). Unlisted telephone numbers shall be reported. This requirement allows drivers to be reached for routine and emergency situations at all times.

### **F. Employee Evaluation Process**

#### **1. Performance Evaluation**

Each driver will have their performance of duties evaluated annually.

#### **2. Driver Proficiency Test**

From time to time, drivers may be required to perform a proficiency test on a schedule under the supervision of the RCSS Driver Trainer; to be determined by the Director of Transportation. In addition, if there is an accident or valid concerns are raised about a driver's performance, the Director of Transportation may require a proficiency test and require such additional training as may be appropriate.

### **G. Accident Review Procedures**

The Director, or his designee, will review each accident to determine if the accident was preventable or chargeable and you will be referred to training.

1. The analysis of the preventability of the accident is entirely separate from any finding related to the driver's legal liability for the accident. In the event mechanical failure is cited on the accident report or reported by the driver, fleet maintenance personnel will prepare a written report for the director. The Director of Transportation, or designee, upon completing such review, will meet with any driver involved in an accident and directly inform such driver of the findings and decision.
2. The Director of Transportation, or designee, may recommend additional training for any driver involved in an accident, without consideration to whether or not the driver was at fault. This requirement is not punitive, but is designed to continuously update safety precautions.
3. Accident history will be maintained for each driver and documented on appropriate evaluation forms. The Director of Transportation, or designee, will also recommend retraining as needed or other appropriate action when required.
4. The Director will maintain a record of accidents and conduct an analysis of training needs each year, or sooner if deemed appropriate. Such analysis will form the basis for revising initial driver training, additional reinforcement training, and professional learning administered to drivers during the school year.

### **H. Employee Pay:**

1. Bus Driver Regular Pay: All school bus drivers (including Part-time Drivers) will be paid in accordance with the fair labor standards:

Pay will be on the hourly pay scale as outlined in the Board of Education salary schedules and supplements.

Pay for time actually worked during the current work week will be paid at regular time for the first 40 hours. All hours worked past 40 hours per week will be at 1 1/2 times the regular pay schedule. (Hourly employees) (NOTE: "Although employees may have accrued sick leave to cover absences, the time that an employee is absent during a work week does not count as time "actually worked")

Approved departure and return times will be established for each morning and afternoon bus route. These times will be based on the needs of each specific route, and will consider school take-in and release times, lengths of routes, distances traveled, and traffic conditions. Driver input will be considered. The Director of Transportation, or designee, will make the final determination.

- a. The Edutracker bus tracking system will be the primary system for documenting the departure and return times for all school buses.
- b. Each driver is expected to conduct a pre-operational check of his/her bus prior to leaving the bus lot each morning and afternoon. Drivers are allotted ten minutes for this check.
- c. Drivers are required to perform cleaning and administrative duties to include cleaning the inside of bus windows, sweeping the bus floor, completing reports as required, and refueling their bus. Drivers are required to manage their time in such a way that maximizes the cleanliness of their bus. (NOTE: Ignoring these duties is not permitted).
- d. Drivers will be paid (their normal hourly rate of pay) for mandatory meetings. The attendance time for such meeting will be added to the weekly pay. Drivers will be paid at an overtime rate when the total number of work hours exceeds 40 during the current work week. Any extra times used to perform duties must be reported on the weekly report, turned in to the transportation office, and certified by the driver as being correct.
- e. Attendants assigned to special education buses will receive the same hours for the route as the bus driver with the exception of the time required for cleaning and fueling the bus and completing required reports.
- k. All buses will remain parked at the Transportation Department bus facility between regular route service or activities.

## 2. Bus Driver Activity Pay:

- a. Activity pay for all trips and extra assignments will be based on the rate of pay authorized for the participating driver as shown in the salary schedule. Drivers will be paid overtime at the rate of 1.5 times (time-and-a-half) for all hours they work in excess of 40 hours during the work week.
- b. The documented basis of the correct activity trip pay is the accurate completion of trip sheet provided by the automated activity trip program. The driver is expected to be there 15 minutes prior to the designated time on the activity sheets. Sponsors are required to sign the activity sheet for it is turned in to the Transportation Office. In cases where no sponsor is available to sign the release, the Student Activities & Workers Compensation Manager will sign it for the bookkeeper to compute the end time.

## 3. Bus Attendant Assignment Pay (Assigned as Special Needs Bus Attendants):

- a. Bus Attendants are assigned to a driver and bus to function as a team. The pay of each attendant will be based on the hours the bus driver spends performing the route only.
- b. Attendants will be paid overtime for time actually worked over 40 hours using the guidelines mentioned in 3(a).
- c. The school bus driver assigned to the special needs team is responsible for submitting required reports.

4. Part-time Drivers: Part-time drivers are permanent employees who will be paid for the time actually worked. Hourly rates of pay will be as listed in the approved salary schedule of the Board of Education. Overtime rates shall apply when the employee works more than forty hours in a work week.

## **I. RECORD KEEPING AND ACTIVITY TRIPS**

1. Transportation Department employees may sign up for extra-curricular activities by completing an activity trip application form and designate the type(s) of activity trips each driver wishes to drive. (See appendix 9) It will be the driver's responsibility to ensure the form is submitted. This application form will, as a minimum, indicate the drivers' desire to drive extra-curricular activities and to understand the service-oriented nature of activity trips.
2. The selection preferences chosen by each driver will be entered into the activity trip software. Subsequently, the assignment of drivers to individual trips will be performed by the activity trip software to the extent practical. For those employees who have signed up and who are eligible to be given extra assignments in accordance with the above procedures, the Transportation Department shall use the automated features of the activity trip program to maintain a log indicating which bus drivers were offered a particular trip and the response received from each such driver for each trip offered. This record will help determine whether or not a bus driver was given an opportunity to take activities and the response of the driver.
3. Drivers are to be offered activity trips in a rotating order. However, regular assigned route drivers must generally complete their assigned regular runs in the best interest of the School System and this circumstance will affect certain extra-curricular activities. Exceptions will be permitted to the extent practicable to allow for these drivers and for emergency situations such as driver unavailability, last minute refusals, driver unavailability and critical mission requirements. Any other exceptions to the policy must be for equally valid reasons. Additionally, once a driver turns down a trip, the driver must wait for the rotation to come around again.
4. The request of individual schools to have a certain bus driver assigned for their trips will not be allowed even though this may cause inconvenience to the individual school. However, the gender of the bus driver will be matched, when possible, by the sponsor of the group on overnight trips to make it easier for rooming assignments, etc. Otherwise, the driver will room alone.
5. Only school bus drivers and part-time drivers currently employed are eligible to be on the activity list for extracurricular activities. Conflicting activities may be offered to approved school staff.
6. It shall be the responsibility of each bus driver to have a current phone number listed. Otherwise, it will be impossible to ensure a driver will not miss a rotation cycle.
7. Assignment to activity trips is a privilege that will be extended to all drivers as defined herein so long as such drivers provide adequate and courteous service. Drivers who fail to report for activity trips on time, act rudely to their students or sponsors, make excessive or unusual demands, or otherwise fail to provide the level of service required will be removed from the activity list.

## SECTION II

### RESPONSIBILITIES AND REGULATORY PROCEDURES

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**General:** Driving a school bus is a demanding occupation, which requires good judgment, the ability to make reasonable decisions, and commitment to duties. The bus driver is charged with the following responsibilities:

1. Know and follow all policies and procedures of the Richmond County School System and the Department of Transportation.
2. Ensure that every child assigned to a route is provided transportation daily.
3. Conduct a pre-operational check of the bus being used prior to leaving for each route or trip. Record the inspection on the preoperational check list and keep the record of the inspection on the bus during the trip. Inform the fleet maintenance personnel if a spare bus is needed.
4. Accept route changes, when deemed necessary by the Transportation Office, in a positive, teamwork-oriented manner.
5. Serve the school or schools assigned by the Transportation Office.
6. Drive the bus assigned by the Transportation Department and be willing to allow such assigned bus to be used as deemed necessary by the Transportation Office.
7. Report serious discipline problems to the principal or their designee of the school the child attends and inform the Transportation Lead Drivers or Supervisor's Office of any such reports, as necessary.
8. Attend all scheduled or called annual training classes, professional learning sessions, and staff meetings.
9. Maintain bus assigned/driven by you in a clean and presentable condition at all times.
10. Assist the Transportation Office in emergency situations.
11. Perform such additional tasks as are assigned from time to time by the Director of Transportation or Assistant Director or designee in accordance with Richmond County School System policies, procedures, or practices.

#### Appearance and Dress Code

**Drivers are expected to dress and present themselves in a professional manner. In keeping with this expectation, every employee is to maintain a level of personal hygiene necessary to ensure an appropriate educational service environment and to refrain from any mode of dress that is not exemplary for students. Additionally, for safety reasons, employees are expected to adhere to administrative regulations related to appropriate dress, personal hygiene, and equipment use.**

The following dress code is to be observed:

- a. Attire is to be neat and clean.
- b. Short-shorts, mini-skirts, and skirts with slits above mid-thigh are not permitted. All shorts and skirts must reach to the mid-thigh or approximately no more than 3 inches above the knee. The length requirement must also be met while seated in the driver's seat on the bus.
- c. Shirts and blouses must cover the waist. "Cut-off" garments and see-through garments are not permitted. Shirts advertising or referring to tobacco, alcohol products are prohibited. Shirts or garments referring to obscene language or graphics are prohibited; obscene tattoos must be covered.
- d. Footwear must have straps or attached heel-guards and a closed toe for your protection. High or wedge-heeled shoes and "flip-flops" are not permitted. Driving without shoes is not permitted.
- e. **Hair is to be neat and clean.** Men are to be clean-shaven unless they wear a beard. If they wear a beard, the beard is to be neatly trimmed.

## **MOST DIRECT ROUTE OF TRAVEL REQUIRED FOR SCHOOL BUSES**

School buses will remain parked at the Transportation Department bus lot whenever the bus is not being used for official route service or actively supporting extracurricular activities such as sports trips.

In all cases involving route service, drivers will drive the most direct route of travel from the Transportation department to the first pickup point along their routes, from their school drop-offs to subsequent route start points, and will return non-stop to the Transportation Department bus lot by the shortest, most direct route. Afternoon bus routes will be run in a similar, most direct route manner.

No driver will be permitted to drive their assigned bus to a midday place of employment.

**Students left on Buses:** Once a driver permits a student to board the school bus, the driver assumes responsibility for the care, safe transportation, and accurate delivery of such student to the appropriate destination. To achieve this important goal requires the driver to check the entire bus every morning prior to departing from each school, for lost items and misrouted, hiding or sleeping students. When delivering students home in the afternoon, the driver will stop at a safe place after delivering the last student of each run to check the entire bus to make sure there are no students left sleeping or otherwise remaining on the bus. A final entire bus check will be made upon parking the bus at the Transportation Department to ensure no students are left on the bus.

### **Bus and Route Assignments**

The Director of Transportation, or their designee, will make changes to bus route assignments, in whole or in part, in those cases where it is in the best interest of the School System, the safety of students and/or the assigned driver. Examples include changes required to eliminate scheduling difficulties, improve efficiency of bus route service, or where relationships between drivers and parents, drivers and students, or drivers and schools require intervention.

**Planning Bus Routes and Stops:** The following information is provided to help drivers be aware of and understand routing and bus stop considerations. Each driver is expected to follow the intent in this information:

- A. **Pupils Eligible to Ride School Buses:** Pupils attending Richmond County Schools who live beyond one mile (for grades Pre- K-5) and one and one-quarter miles (for grades 6-12) from the school to which they are assigned, according to the nearest practical route by walking, shall be eligible for school bus transportation. Any pupil who resides within the mileage limitation shall not be eligible for school transportation, except in hardship cases or extenuating circumstances, as determined by the Board as such hardships are brought to the attention of the Board. The Director of Transportation may review walking zones to determine whether there are hazards that preclude students from safely walking to their assigned school. When such conditions exist, the portion of the walking zone affected by the hazard shall be determined to be a "hazard zone", and the affected area will be included on appropriate bus routes to provide safe transportation to school.
- B. **Bus Stops:** School bus stops shall not generally be more frequent than one-tenth of a mile apart. A reasonable walking distance to a bus stop is generally interpreted as being one-half mile. No bus route shall be changed for any pupil or group of pupils who live one-half mile or less from a bus stop. Exceptions to this requirement will be made when there is a substantial danger posed to the student or a physical barrier exists which precludes consolidating bus stops. Input from bus drivers on safety issues is welcomed and expected.
- C. **Special Needs:** Students with special needs who must be provided curb to curb service or other services as required by their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. The above zoning and walking guidelines do not apply for these students.

**Exceptions:** The Director of Transportation, or designee, shall have final authority in locating bus stops where they will serve the most students in an efficient, economical and safe manner. However, input from bus drivers on this issue is welcomed and expected.

**Mandatory Review of Bus Routes:** The Director of Transportation and their designee is authorized to review routes each summer and to modify and reassign them, as necessary, to achieve the most efficient operation of the school bus fleet. All bus route assignments necessitated by these changes shall be fairly made, taking into consideration the other factors set forth herein. The Director of Transportation will make changes to bus route assignments, in whole or in part, in those cases where it is in the best interest of the School System and/or the assigned driver. Examples include changes required to eliminate scheduling difficulties, address safety concerns, improve efficiency of bus route service, or where relationships, without reference to blame, between drivers and parents, drivers and students, or drivers and schools require intervention

**Assignments of Open Routes, Replacement Drivers, and New Buses:** The following objective standards for the assignment/reassignment of employees and routes are designed to ensure all interested bus drivers have an opportunity to apply for open routes or determine how drivers are to be assigned new buses as they become available.

A. Assignment of Open General Education Routes:— The following shall be the general procedures and criteria to be followed when open routes become available:

1. A review will be conducted at any time a bus route becomes available to determine whether the route or any of the associated bus “runs” can be consolidated into existing bus routes. The route(s) will be consolidated when possible.
2. If a replacement driver is needed, a notice shall be posted on the System website, the two primary bulletin boards in the Transportation Department (one in main office and one in the shop entrance) and the availability of the open routes will be announced over the two-way radio.
3. Any driver who is interested in applying for the open route shall have five working days from the date the notice is posted to annotate the roster by writing or entering his / her name and bus number to indicate interest. Drivers who do not sign the roster are not eligible for consideration to be assigned to the route.
4. During the period that the route is open and applications from drivers are being considered, a substitute shall run the bus route.
5. The postings will be removed from the website and the bulletin board at the end of the three working day period. The following factors shall be considered in awarding the route:
  - a. The locations in the county of the route being assigned and cost efficiency. (Heavy and paramount consideration shall be given to these factors to insure the most efficient operations of the bus fleet).
  - b. Seniority, attendance, accident record and substantiated complaints shall all be considered as pertinent factors. If all other factors among the applicants are equal, then the person with the most seniority (based on date of continued employment) shall be awarded the route.
  - c. If no permanent bus driver applies for the open route, the most senior permanent standby driver in good standing will be promoted and assigned to the bus and the route. If no permanent standby drivers are available, a substitute driver will be permanently hired to take the bus and the route. The sign up guidelines in paragraph 2 above also apply to the selection of permanent stand-by and substitute drivers.
  - d. Buses are assigned to routes. Each route generally consists of three or more bus “runs”. In most cases, buses stay with the routes and are not reassigned when a driver transfers to a new route. Exceptions may occur to accommodate school rezoning or when a significant number of bus runs must be reassigned. Individual bus runs are frequently reassigned to improve efficiency of the bus routes or to meet operational or administrative requirements.
  - e. The Director of Transportation is authorized to study routes each summer, or other times as circumstances warrant, and to modify and reassign routes where necessary to achieve the most efficient operation of the school bus fleet. All bus route assignments necessitated by these changes shall be fairly

made, taking into consideration the other factors set forth herein. Computer software will be utilized, as appropriate, to assist in this assessment.

**B. Assignment of Drivers to Special Needs Buses:** The Board of Education recognizes the extraordinary requirements associated with serving special needs students. Accordingly, extra effort will be taken to select those drivers with a superb safety record, a history of timely and efficient service, demonstrated ability to cooperate with parents, a willingness to work closely with Transportation and school officials to best meet the needs of these students, and the ability to continually coordinate schedules to deliver students on a reasonable schedule. Selection of drivers need to selected and recommended by the director of Transportation and approved by the Superintendent:

1. Heavy and paramount consideration shall be given to those drivers with a demonstrated record of competent service, good attendance, driving record, compassion, demonstrated ability to work well with supervisors and the office staff, reliability, persistence, patience, and dependability.
2. Accident record and substantiated complaints shall be considered during the selection process.
3. Seniority will be considered as a "tie-breaker" between otherwise equally qualified candidates vying for a special education route assignment.
4. Assignment to all special needs buses will be on a 90 day probationary basis. Drivers may be returned, or may request to return, to general education bus routes at any time during the probationary period. (Note: If the driver's previous route has been posted and awarded to another driver in the meantime, the probationary special education driver will be returned to another available regular route, or to a route that becomes available due to the selection process for the next special needs driver.

**C. Administrative Reassignment of Drivers:** All Drivers are eligible for reassignment to different bus routes at such time that it is determined such reassignment is in the best interest of the School System or the students. Reassignments will be determined by the Director of Transportation or the Director's designee, who will provide justification for any reassignments through supervisory channels upon request.

**D. Assignment of New Buses:** The following procedures will be used to determine the assignment of new school buses to replace old buses that are removed from active route service:

1. Substantial and paramount consideration shall be given to assigning the new bus to the route which will best insure the most efficient operation possible of the bus fleet and cost of operating same. This requirement will normally be met by replacing similar older route buses determined to be in the worst mechanical condition. The determination of the buses to be replaced will be made by the Director of Transportation and Assistant Director and based on maintenance information provided by the Fleet Supervisor.
2. The age of the bus will be used as a "tie-breaker" in cases where two or more buses are of equally poor condition need replacing. When selecting which of two or more buses of the same model year to replace, the bus with the lowest sequence number will be replaced first.
3. Assignment of new buses will take place as soon as the buses can be processed into the bus fleet, tagged, inspected, and deemed suitable for route service.

**E. Assignment of Part-time Drivers:** When feasible, part-time drivers will be assigned by the Director of Transportation or their designee with cost efficiency in mind.

**F. Assignment of Spare Buses:**

1. When the regularly assigned bus of a bus driver is inoperable, not available, or being repaired, such driver shall drive the spare bus assigned by the Department of Transportation/Fleet Services.
2. The bus driver shall drive such spare bus on his or her regular route until the regular assigned bus is repaired.
3. If a driver contends he/she is physically unable to drive a particular bus because of a documented non-job related physical impairment, such driver may, subsequent to providing acceptable written

documentation of the impairment, utilize personal sick leave with pay under the terms of the sick leave policy. If the driver does not have sick leave, or insufficient sick leave, the bus driver shall be placed on leave without pay until the regular bus is repaired. If a suitable substitute or spare bus is available, the driver will be given an opportunity to operate such spare buses.

4. Any driver who does not have a job related documented injury, or current statement from a medical doctor on file in the local Transportation office, and refuses to drive a spare bus, will be placed on leave without pay and reported through supervisory channels. The employee will remain on leave without pay until a disposition is determined.

**Double Trips:** While double trips are avoided when possible, from time to time it may be appropriate to utilize a double trip for a morning pickup or afternoon delivery route rather than to utilize separate buses. No driver has the right to refuse making a double trip when these trips are assigned as a part of the regular route service; all precautionary steps will be taken to ensure the double trip can be accommodated in the time allotted. Temporary double trips may be necessary when a route must be covered and there is no part-time driver is available. In this case, a driver may be directed by the Director or Assistant Director of Transportation or their designee to drive his or her assigned route and then cover an additional route. In these cases, the affected school will be contacted, and any reasonable delay of a subsequent route will not be attributed to the driver. Failure to adhere to additional assignments may result in disciplinary action.

**Preoperational Safety Check Inspection Forms:** The driver will conduct a pre-operational safety inspection on a form provided by the Transportation Department as required by the Department of Driver Services. The form should be completed, be current and in the driver's possession while operating the school bus. This multiple use form will be used until the end of the week and turned in to the Transportation Department office by close of business on Friday. The driver must fill out an inspection form for each bus used during the work week. When a maintenance fault is discovered which renders the bus inoperable, the original of the copy will be turned in to the bus shop and the duplicate copy submitted to the Transportation Department office.

**Cleaning of Buses:** The driver has the responsibility to keep the bus in a clean and sanitary condition for the following reasons:

- To increase the safety and health of pupils.
- To reduce the possibility of accidents among the passengers that might be caused by falling, tripping over objects, or slipping on the floor.
- To foster the best possible attitude among the students.
- To prolong the life of the bus.
- To create a favorable impression of the school system to the parents and the public in general.

**Additionally, the driver shall keep all materials removed from the dash, pick up any loose items in or around the driver's compartment that may obstruct operation of the bus controls, obstruct view of the mirrors, or endanger students, or create a cluttered appearance.**

**Drugs or Alcohol - Omnibus Law:** The Federal Omnibus Law of 1994 requires all employers of employees who hold Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDL) to test those employees for alcohol and controlled substance abuse. The Richmond County School System adheres to this policy with appropriate testing requirements.

A. Screenings are performed for the following categories of alcohol/controlled substance screenings.

1. Pre-employment/Annual - Required for all new or returning employees that have been out 30 days or longer.
2. Reasonable Suspicion- Where individualized cause exists to reasonably suspect that a driver is under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance.
3. Post-accident- Conducted following any accident.
4. Random- Unannounced testing according to a pre-determined and scientific random screening computer formula chosen by the Central Office.
5. The above circumstances may lead to screening or the actions hereafter described:
  - a. The use of any alcohol or drug, whether prescription or illegal, which would impair safe driving ability will be investigated.

- b. A bus driver charged with operating any vehicle while under the influence of drugs or alcohol shall be immediately suspended without pay from duties as a school bus driver, pending the results of an alcohol/controlled substance screening.
- c. A bus driver who screens positive for driving under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances shall be immediately terminated (including while driving a privately owned vehicle while off duty).
- d. Any employee, who holds a safety sensitive position in the Department of Transportation and refuses to submit to an alcohol /controlled substance screening, in accordance with the above guidelines shall be immediately terminated.

**Insurance Cards:** A current fleet insurance card will be taped to the bulkhead of each bus in plain view for the convenience of law enforcement officers. Removal of this card is not recommended, as the card will be damaged.

**Meetings:** Punctual attendance is required at all scheduled Transportation Department professional learning sessions as specified for the category of employee. Employees are expected to arrive on time and remain until the meeting is dismissed. Employees will not be allowed to participate or receive credit for such training if they do not reasonably follow this attendance requirement. Employees who arrive substantially or habitually late will be asked to leave the meeting. Employees will not bring family members or invite non – Transportation Department personnel. Any absence must be excused by the transportation director or designee. It shall be the responsibility of each driver who is absent or excused from a meeting to attend a make-up session or to obtain any information presented at the meeting, as determined by the director or his/her designee. A driver who arrives late to or leaves early from a meeting may be required to attend a make-up session, as determined by the director or his/her designee.

**Annual Mandatory Training Meeting Presented by DOE:** As previously mentioned, the annual driver safety meeting provided by the Georgia Department of Transportation Pupil Transportation Consultant is an annual recertification event. All school bus drivers, part-time drivers, as well as staff and faculty drivers are required to attend the meeting scheduled for the Richmond County Transportation Department. This event is generally scheduled prior to the beginning of the school year in preparation for the next year’s certification. Alternate training opportunities for attending the mandatory Georgia Department of Education training will be posted during the summer and otherwise available in the Transportation Department office. It is the personal responsibility of each individual driver to attend the annual driver safety meeting not later than October 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year or the date of the last class provided by the DOE Pupil Transportation consultant. Drivers will sign the appropriate attendance sheet if attending the class scheduled for RCSS drivers. Drivers are responsible for providing written attendance verification from the Pupil Transportation Consultant when attending a class other than the one scheduled for Richmond County drivers.

**Notification of Illness or Other Absence from Work:**

- A. It is the responsibility of each Transportation Department employee, to include full-time drivers, part-time drivers, and school bus attendants to adhere to the following procedures when reporting an absence due to illness or emergency:
  - 1. The driver shall call and speak directly with their Lead Driver of Transportation.
  - 2. If their Lead Driver is not available, the driver will call and speak to the Operations Manager of Transportation.
  - 3. Leaving a voicemail, sending an email, fax message or text message is not permitted.
  - 4. For morning absences, the driver shall notify the Lead Driver/Operations Manager of Transportation as soon as possible but no earlier than 5:30 a.m., nor later than 6:00 a.m.
  - 5. For afternoon absences, the driver shall notify the Lead Driver/Operations Manager of Transportation as soon as possible but no later than 1:00 p.m.
- B. Non-emergency requests will be submitted to the Lead Driver/Operations Manager of Transportation using the RCSS Employee Absence Form. The driver shall make such requests as soon as practicable but at least five working days in advance of the absence.
- C. A driver who has been granted extended leave shall keep the Lead Driver/Operations Manager of Transportation and the Payroll Manager continuously informed of the status of his or her expected date of return. Conversely stated, it is not the responsibility of the Department of Transportation to contact a driver to determine when the driver will return to work.

- D. It is the personal responsibility of each employee to notify the Lead Driver/Operations Manager of Transportation of each absence or the status of each absence. Spouses, children, or other individuals should assume the responsibility of making such reports only under extreme circumstances.
- E. Failure to report absences or keep the Transportation Department administration current as to the status of absences, as required herein, may result in disciplinary action.

**School Closings Due to Inclement Weather or Emergencies:** Announcements regarding the opening or closing of schools due to inclement weather or other emergency situations will be made by the Superintendent of Schools. The information will be broadcast over local radio and television stations. While attempts to notify all employees by telephone/email will be made as soon as possible, it is the driver's responsibility to be aware of weather conditions and to contact the Transportation Department for instructions.

**Prohibition on the Use of School Buses for Personal Business:**

- A. While operating a school bus, no school bus driver, may stop at a commercial establishment, food store, or convenience store for the purpose of purchasing family consumable items.
- B. Drivers are expected to consume the breakfast meal, if such a meal is consumed, prior to arriving for duty at the Transportation Department. Departing early and/or consuming breakfast "on the clock" is not authorized.
- C. Drivers who have lay-over time between routes may stop to have a snack, coke or coffee, provided, they consume such before driving again; and further provided, no deviation from their prescribed route occurs and their pickup and delivery schedule is not affected.
- D. Drivers are expected to return directly to the Transportation Department subsequent to their last delivery at their last scheduled school each day unless they are scheduled for after school programs or activities.
- E. Drivers are expected to delay such stops until after their duty hours are completed.
- F. In all cases, such stops are considered as being for the personal use and convenience of the employee and no pay eligibility shall be incurred by the board.
- G. Drivers are not permitted to stop along the way to their designated school for purchases or other personal business.
- H. No driver is authorized to use a school bus as a means of transportation to a second job.

**Principal/Driver (and Attendant) Relationship:** The school bus is an extension of the classroom. Principals are responsible for enforcing discipline on school buses in the same manner as they are for the classroom. The relationship between a school principal and a bus driver (or other Transportation employee) is a similar supervisor/employee relationship as between a teacher and principal. In those instances where the principal believes disciplinary action should be taken against a driver, the Director of Transportation will be so notified in writing.

**Student Management / Discipline aboard School Buses:** The board has approved a Code of Student Conduct and Discipline that will be used to supplement these procedures and which should be followed in all discipline matters. In addition to the general provisions of the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline, the following general guidance is provided.

- A. Drivers are required to take appropriate actions to maintain reasonably good order and discipline on the school bus. Ignoring misconduct is not an acceptable option.
- B. Rule #19 of the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline contains rules which specifically apply to behavior and action for all bus passengers. These are the specific rules which are required to be enforced by each bus driver and monitor. A copy of these rules is to be posted on each school bus. Copies are available in the Transportation Department Office.
- C. Drivers are not allowed to change or selectively enforce these rules. Drivers will not post abbreviated or altered rules on their buses.
- D. Prior to filing a disciplinary referral each driver should attempt to resolve less serious disciplinary infractions by counseling or verbally redirecting students. Drivers shall treat all students with respect and shall under no circumstance strike, push, shove, yell at or curse students. (Refer to Student Management Procedures in the DOE Driver Training Manual)
- E. Each driver shall utilize a disciplinary referral form to report student disciplinary problems encountered and the actions taken by the driver. The form shall be completed in full, dated, signed, and turned in to the school administration in a timely manner. The driver will retain the pink copy of the misconduct report to document that the misconduct report was turned in to the principal.
- F. Drivers shall not put a student off the bus or refuse to transport a student.

- G. The school principal is responsible for discipline. This responsibility includes accepting the misconduct report from the driver and responding appropriately. The driver should expect the principal or his/her designee to respond to the misconduct report, but should not expect the principal to respond immediately or to discipline the student exactly as the driver expects. If repeated disciplinary referral forms are submitted to school administrators and there is no evidence of disciplinary action being taken, the driver should discuss the matter with the principal. If this does not produce results, the driver should provide the information to the transportation director or his/her designee.
- H. Drivers are not authorized to return students to school after departing the school to run their routes. Experience has shown this action generally aggravates a discipline issue unduly. In the event a driver encounters difficulty along the route, the driver shall first attempt to rectify the issue in a positive manner. Subsequently, the driver will attempt to deliver the students home and submit misconduct reports to the respective school on the next duty day.
- I. If student behavior on the bus is such that the driver concludes he or she cannot safely operate the bus, the driver shall stop the bus in a safe location, calmly tell the students what behavior is expected, and that the students will not be transported until each student is seated and following the instructions of the driver. The driver shall immediately notify the director of transportation or designee of the situation and receive instructions whether to proceed with the route or return to the school.
- J. Law Enforcement should be notified if safety is compromised due to disruptive behavior. The driver shall also notify the director of transportation or designee of this type situation.

**Tobacco Use on Bus and School Property:** Tobacco or tobacco products shall not be used on any school property, including, but not limited to, school buses and property occupied by the Department of Transportation. Additionally, tobacco or tobacco products shall not be used at any school function, including fieldtrips, while the employee is on duty and being paid.

**Traffic Citations, License Suspensions, Revocations and Cancellations:**

- A. All school bus drivers shall notify the Director of Transportation of Transportation of all motor vehicle traffic violations except parking violations, all suspensions, revocations, disqualifications of driving licenses and loss of the right to operate a school bus. Such notification will be made within two working days of the event or suspension.
- B. The following procedure will be used in reporting traffic citations or licensing actions:
  1. The driver shall provide the Director of Transportation or designee a copy of the traffic citation as soon as possible, but no later than three days from issuance.
  2. In the event a driver has his or her driver's license taken, suspended, or revoked, the driver shall immediately notify the director and shall not operate a school bus until receiving the permission of the director.
  3. A driver shall not operate a school bus without possessing a valid driving license on his or her person.
  4. The above reporting procedures apply to all driving infractions, regardless of whether the driver was operating a school bus or any other motor vehicle or was on personal time.

**Violations of Rules, Policies, and Laws:** The following minimum steps will be taken when a Transportation Department employee willfully or negligently disobeys rules or policies established by the Board of Education or laws as set forth by appropriate legislation.

- A. First Violation:
  1. A verbal warning by the Director of Transportation or the Assistant Director of Transportation.
  2. In matters of more magnitude, which matter may endanger others, a written warning will be issued to the offending employee. A copy will be placed in the Transportation Department file. The letter will be forwarded through supervisory channels if such action is deemed appropriate by the Director of Transportation, or designee.
  3. When the violation involves damage to property, a letter will be forwarded through supervisory channels detailing the event and requesting advice of whether the employee should reimburse for the damages.
  4. The employee will receive additional training, as necessary, to help avoid a recurrence.
- B. Second Violation of a similar nature:
  1. A written warning to the driver and notification through supervisory channels stating the date, violation, witnesses, and nature of the violation.

2. If this violation may endanger others, the Director of Transportation will immediately notify the Executive Director for Special Schools and Programs and request immediate consideration of disciplinary actions.
3. Third Violation: The Director of Transportation will forward the information through supervisory channels to the Superintendents Personnel Committee for appropriate disposition.

Drivers will be afforded an opportunity for input. Written or verbal statements from witnesses will be considered. Under no circumstances shall a driver post any letter of warning or reprimand in public view on their assigned bus; nor will any driver personally contact, complain to, or harass any employee, witness, any child of such witness, or any student who has provided statements or been a witness to any violation.

Notwithstanding the foregoing steps and guidelines, Transportation Department Supervisors, School officials, and the School Board reserve the right to take additional and more severe actions, including suspension or termination, where the conduct is chronic or an incident is of such a serious nature that the circumstances would warrant such action, even upon a first violation.

## SECTION III

### OPERATING PROCEDURES AND DIRECTIVES

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**BUS DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES:** Bus drivers are required to know and follow all traffic laws, applicable state laws, State Department of Education rules, as well as Board policies. The following requirements are important enough to be specifically enumerated:

- A. Drivers are expected to fully perform the required pre-operational checks, as explained in this Transportation Department Employee Manual, once before the morning run, and again before the afternoon run.
- B. Drivers are to check oil, transmission and coolant levels during each pre-operational check, fuel their buses, clean windshields, clean light lenses as required, and report all deficiencies on the required form.
- C. **Bus interiors are to be cleaned daily.** Residue will be collected and placed in a container for proper disposal. At no time will a driver sweep trash onto the bus parking lot, public property, or private property.
- D. Drivers are to submit all required reports neatly, accurately, and on time. Headcount reports are to be turned in not later than Monday of the week following the report period. Mileage reports, bus stop informational reports, student rosters, etc., will be submitted in accordance with the instructions provided.
- E. Drivers will follow commonly accepted safety practices when refueling their buses at the fuel point. As a minimum, drivers should:
  1. Turn off their vehicle engines.
  2. Remove all passengers from the buses.
  3. Insure no mobile phone is turned on or in use.
  4. Attend the fuel nozzle at all times
  5. Log the amount of fuel used on the log sheet provided.
  6. Clean up any spilled fuel.

NOTE: Special care shall be taken to replace the fuel cap securely. Drivers are responsible for cleaning up any fuel spilled during the refueling process, or fuel that spills from the tank as a result of improperly securing the fuel cap.

- F. Training Students: Drivers are required to train their students in safe bus stop procedures. This training will include:
  1. Explaining the need for students to stand at a safe distance from the roadway.
  2. Explaining the requirement for students to stand ten feet or more off the road from the location where the bus stops.
  3. An explanation of the danger zone and the need for students to stay clear of this area at all times.
  4. Explaining crossing procedures, to include:
    - a. No student crosses behind a bus.
    - b. Students cross in front of the crossing guard and stay ten feet in front of the bus.
    - c. Universal crossing signals (as shown in the diagram below).
      1. Hand held palm out “to wait.”
      2. Hand held steady in pointing position for the “direction of crossing.”
      3. Sound the horn for the student to “go back”
      4. **NO CHILD CROSSES UNTIL TOLD TO DO SO BY DRIVER.**

NOTE: The universal safe crossing procedures (below) are posted on the bulkhead of each bus for the convenience of each driver. Use this aid as a personal reminder, and to train student passengers.

G. Safe Crossing Procedures Poster (located on bus bulkhead):



- H. No Right Turn on Red: The large size of school buses makes them difficult to negotiate in tight turns without posing a significant risk to vehicles in adjoining lanes. The Richmond County School System school buses are not permitted to make right turns on red lights.
- I. Service doors on Richmond County school buses will be closed while the bus is in operation. This requirement applies whether students are present on the bus or not.
- J. Activity sheets ("Trip Tickets") contain essential instructions and emergency information. These sheets are to be completed along with the required information necessary to compute driver pay. Turn them in to the Transportation Payroll Department within three working days of completing the activity. Drivers may experience a delay in receiving activity trip pay if these sheets are not submitted promptly.
- K. No private vehicles are permitted in the bus parking area. No employee will drive a private car into the bus parking area or any other area marked to exclude private automobiles. Further, no employee will permit an automobile in which he/she is riding to travel into a restricted area. Employees found in violation of this policy will be (1) verbally warned on the first offense, (2) provided written warning on the second offense, and (3) forwarded for administrative action on the third offense. The offenses are based on the employee, not the car (Note: Transportation employees who are delivered to work are responsible to ensure the vehicle operator follows this requirement.)
- L. The "day time running lights" concept will be followed as a matter of policy. While outside the gate of the Transportation bus facility all school buses will operate with headlights on at all times.
- M. Rail Crossing Procedures: At all railroad crossings drivers will follow procedures contained in the Department of Education School Bus Driver Training Manual.
1. Drivers will stop within 50 feet, but not closer than 15 feet from each railway crossing. Drivers will open the passenger door and driver's window, turn off all radio equipment, and silence the passengers. The drivers will then look and listen for oncoming trains. The bus will not continue across the track until the driver has verified the track is clear and no train is approaching.
- N. Only students, school officials, approved school employees, and approved chaperones may ride Richmond County school buses. Unauthorized persons are not permitted to ride on a school bus.

- O. Unless permission is obtained from the Superintendent of Schools, the Director of Transportation, or their designee, pre-school age children not enrolled in Richmond County Schools shall not ride a Richmond County school bus to school or school-related activities.
- P. **Bus drivers shall not permit any other individual to drive the bus assigned to or being driven.**
- Q. Any coaches, teachers, or other school personnel who operate a school bus shall be properly licensed, otherwise qualified and have prior permission to operate such bus.
- R. Buses are to be secured and windows closed at the end of each day.
- S. Buses may not be parked on neighborhood streets or on private property other than Richmond County owned property.
- T. When the bus is being fueled, no one is permitted inside the bus. Drivers are not to leave the fuel nozzle in the fuel tank unattended. When in line to fuel, the driver will remain with the bus until fueling is complete and the bus is parked.
- U. Drivers shall not eat or drink beverages while operating the bus or while students are on board.
- V. **Bus Stop (Pickup) Procedures:** Procedures for collecting students at bus stops: Drivers will follow safety procedures outlined in the DOE Driver Training Manual at all bus stops where students are being collected. These procedures include, but are not limited to:

- 1. Drivers will engage the 8-way warning system approximately 300 feet in advance of each stop location. No action will be taken to switch from the yellow flashing lights to the red until the bus has come to a complete stop (i.e., drivers will not move the door handle to trip the circuit and force the red lights to blink).
- 2. Drivers will approach each bus stop cautiously to insure all students are standing a minimum of 10 feet off the road and away from the location the bus will stop. If students are too close, the driver will stop before the bus stop and motion the students to back away from the stop.
- 3. Once the bus is stopped, the driver will activate the parking brake, shift to neutral, and open the service door.
- 4. The driver will check for students crossing the road. The driver will use the designated sign for the students to wait until the driver checks for all oncoming cars. When all traffic has stopped and the road is clear and it is safe to do so, the driver will give the designated motion for the students to cross the road. (NOTE: No students are permitted to cross a street at a location having more than two lanes – including the bus lane and one oncoming lane of traffic)
- 5. The driver will keep his/her hand on the horn button to sound the horn (designated “go back” signal if needed).
- 6. The red lights/stop sign will remain activated until the students are boarded and have had an opportunity to get to their seats.
- 7. Check the area for any students in the danger zone. Do not move the bus until you are sure there are no students in close proximity to, or running towards the bus.
- 8. Once all students are safely on the bus, the driver will make a final check for straggling students. Once assured all students are safely on the bus, the driver will release the parking brake, shift the bus into gear, shut the service door and pull away from the stop.

W. **Bus Stop (Delivery) Procedures:**

- 1. Drivers will engage the 8-way warning system approximately 300 feet in advance of each stop location. No action will be taken to switch from the yellow flashing lights to the red until the bus has come to a complete stop (i.e., drivers will not move the door handle to trip the circuit and force the red lights to blink).
- 2. Once the bus is stopped, the driver will activate the parking brake, shift to neutral, and open the service door.
- 3. The driver will retain all students on the bus until traffic safety checks are made.
- 4. The driver will check traffic to the front and rear of the bus to make sure all traffic has stopped.
- 5. Once all traffic has stopped and it is safe to do so, the driver will count the students getting off the bus.
- 6. The driver will then permit his/her students to disembark.

7. The driver will monitor the students and traffic as they exit the bus and leave the bus stop for their respective residences.
8. Students are not permitted to cross behind the school bus.
9. Students are to move out of the service door directly away from the bus for a distance of ten feet before turning in the direction of their residences.
10. The driver will signal all students crossing the road to wait ten feet ahead of the bus on the side of the road until the traffic check is conducted.
11. Once the traffic is confirmed to be stopped, students will be motioned to cross the street.
12. The students will move to the center line of the roadway and check both ways before completing the crossing. During this time, the driver will keep his/her hand on the horn button and ready to sound the “go back” signal.
13. The driver will remain in place with all signals on until all students crossing the road have done so and are off the street and safely away from the traffic.
14. The driver will survey the students and compare the number of students that got off the bus with their locations. The driver will account for each student before moving the bus.
15. The driver will not move the bus until he/she is certain that all students have safely crossed the road and are out of harm’s way. The bus driver will lock down the bus, remove the key, and exit the bus to survey the danger zone if necessary to insure that no students are near the bus.
16. Once all students are safely delivered, the driver will release the parking brake, put the bus in gear, shut the service door, and proceed.

X. Other General Bus Stop Guidance:

1. The location of bus stops is determined by the Transportation Director or designee with assistance from the bus driver. Any changes to bus stop locations shall be approved by the director or designee. Drivers shall report all hazards relating to bus stops to the Transportation Department immediately.
2. Bus drivers driving regular routes are not authorized to pick up or drop off students at any place of business.
3. Drivers will never permit students to cross more than two lanes of traffic at a bus stop. This includes the travel lane and one adjacent lane of travel. Students who live on multi lane roads will be delivered on the appropriate side of the road to preclude the student from crossing more than two lanes of traffic.
4. When there is an access lane at a bus stop location, the driver will pull the bus into the access lane when making the stop. This action is necessary to preclude passengers passing the bus on the right side while students are being loaded or unloaded.
5. Drivers will train their students to stand back from the highway a minimum of ten feet when the bus is arriving at the bus stop. If the students fail to adhere to this requirement, the driver will stop the bus a minimum of ten feet from the bus stop and motion the students to step back. The driver will not serve the stop until the students are standing in a safe location.

Y. Backing the Bus:

1. **Buses will not be backed up unless backing the bus out of the maintenance bay**, or at an approved turn-around location along the bus route where this maneuver is required to serve students. **Buses are not to be backed on school grounds or in traffic.** Should an unusual condition require backing a school bus on school grounds, an adult must be at the outside rear of the bus to provide direction and insure clear right-of-way. **A bus shall never be backed on school grounds without an adult in the rear to assist** (monitor, another driver, or school administrator).
2. When an approved backing maneuver is performed in conjunction with a bus stop, the driver will insure that students are picked up before the backing maneuver is performed. If the backing maneuver is required during delivery home, the backing maneuver will be performed before the students are permitted to exit the bus. In both situations, students are safely on the bus during the backing maneuver.

3. **Buses shall never be backed into a major road or heavy traffic area.** If a driver is ever in such a situation, the driver shall call for assistance and wait until help arrives.
4. **Students will not be utilized to assist a driver to back a bus.**
5. **Drivers are never to back up a bus at a missed stop.** The driver will retain the student on the bus until the student can be delivered safely to the missed stop. This may require circling the block, or returning to the bus stop later to deliver the student safely at the proper location.

**Bus Evacuation Procedures:** designated by the school principal in accordance with procedures included. The Georgia State Department of Education requires all students to be trained on school bus emergency procedures. Bus evacuation drills shall be conducted each year at the beginning of each school year. Students shall be required to evacuate the bus while on school grounds under direct supervision of an individual in the school site safety manual. The purpose of this procedure is to familiarize students with proper emergency evacuation. The Georgia State Department of Education requires all students to be trained on school bus emergency procedures. Students are required to be instructed in safe riding procedures each year. In addition, safe riding guidance will be provided to all students during the emergency evacuation training. Each bus driver will designate assigned helpers to assist in the event of an emergency. These students should be responsible and shall receive training by the bus driver relative to their responsibilities and duties. A signed permission slip from parents is required for students to be assigned as an emergency helper. The permission slip is available through the department's office. **Student volunteers will never be used as an assistant for disciplinary actions or duties for which the driver has personal responsibility.** This includes counting students, correcting and counseling students, writing misconduct reports, etc.

**Bus Driver Requirement to Retain Students On Board Buses:** School Bus Drivers shall be responsible for retaining all students on the bus in the event that a bus/vehicle becomes inoperable. It is also policy of the Board of Education that the bus driver supervise the transfer of students from one bus/vehicle to another if the bus/vehicle remains inoperable or is deemed unsafe.

In the event of a fire or when the vehicle is stopped in a location that poses a safety threat to the occupants, the driver will take immediate action to evacuate the students from the bus. When such evacuation takes place, the driver will identify a safe location and supervise the relocation of the occupants to the safe position.

#### **When to Evacuate a Bus**

The following situations ALWAYS require a bus to be evacuated:

- When fire or the danger of fire is present
- When hazardous materials, chemicals, vapors or other toxic substances are present
- When gasoline or other combustible materials are present
- When the bus is in an unsafe position
- When the bus is in the path of any train or adjacent to railroad tracks
- When the position of the bus may change and increase danger (i.e. roll into water, over a cliff, or bus turned over)
- When a parked bus is in danger of collision, defined as a bus not clearly visible from a distance of 300 feet or more

#### **Mechanical Failure or Breakdown Procedures**

In the event of a mechanical failure, the following procedure is to be followed:

1. Stop the bus in a safe location, if possible.
2. Keep students on the bus, if possible.
3. In unsafe conditions (as identified in the previous paragraph), including location of the bus, fire, or other hazards that exist, the students will be evacuated and given proper instructions to remain together.
4. Activate hazard lights and place warning devices.
5. Contact Transportation Department personnel and provide the following information:
  - ♦ Bus number
  - ♦ Location (be specific)

- ◆ Problem (be specific)
  - ◆ If students are on board the number of students.
  - ◆ Next assigned route, location and time of first stop/pick-up
6. The driver should never leave a bus with students on board.
  7. If maintenance personnel are dispatched, the driver must wait at the designated location until the repair personnel arrive.
  8. Follow instructions provided by the director of transportation or designee. Fleet maintenance personnel will send a service truck for roadside repairs if possible. Otherwise, the Transportation Department personnel will provide instructions.
  9. If students must load another bus, both drivers will assist with the safe transfer of the students.

### **Route Service Procedures**

- a. Routes are determined by the director of transportation or designee. Driver input is valuable and will be considered. However, any necessary route changes must be authorized by the director of transportation or designee.
- b. Drivers shall adhere to the established schedule. Routes are not to be run early and every effort should be made to follow the same schedule every day. If a driver finds that he or she is ahead of schedule, he or she should find a safe place to pull over and wait until the correct schedule can be resumed.
- c. Drivers are to report any safety hazards encountered on the route to the director of transportation or designee immediately.
- d. Students not assigned to ride a particular route shall not be allowed to ride any bus without written permission from the student's parents and prior approval of the local school principal or designee.
- e. Students are to be dropped-off only at the bus stop serving their legal residence. If a student wishes to get off at a bus stop other than his regular stop, the student must have a permission slip from a parent and prior approval of the local school principal or designee.
- f. If a child becomes ill on the bus in the morning, upon arrival the driver should take the student to the principal's office or deliver the student to school personnel assisting at the school loading zone.
- g. If a child becomes ill on the bus in the afternoon, the driver may adjust the route to get the child home sooner, if necessary. The driver should contact the director of transportation or designee prior to adjusting the route.
- h. When servicing a subdivision or neighborhood in which the driver uses the same street to both enter and exit the subdivision, the driver is to go to the deepest part of the subdivision, turn the bus around and begin picking up students on the way out of the subdivision or neighborhood.
- i. Drivers shall use extreme caution loading and unloading students when visibility is such that approaching motorists in either direction have limited sight capability.
- j. Drivers shall develop and keep a current roster of students who ride their bus. At the start of each school year, drivers shall acquire information for the student roster. **Rosters must be completed no later than the end of the second full week of school.** Upon completion of the first roster, a copy will be submitted to the Transportation Office. An updated copy of this roster shall be turned in to the department on the last working day of each month.

### **Bus Stop Delivery Guidance**

Transportation shall be provided for those students, who are otherwise eligible, from the bus stop serving their legal residence to the school serving that residence and from that school back to the bus stop serving their legal residence. If requested in writing by the parent and approved by the principal, a student may be let out at another bus stop on his or her route, but students may not ride any bus, without a note from the parents approved by the principal, other than the bus serving their legal residence. Extreme hardship cases will be considered by the Transportation Director. Further, special education transportation shall include IEP recommendations or 504 plans and coordination with the Director of Special Education or their designee.

**Delivery Limited to School Zones:** In those cases in which a student has been granted a zoning exception to attend a school other than the designated school zone of the student's legal residence, the parents or legal guardians of the affected student will assume responsibility for providing transportation to and from the school. School bus transportation is not provided outside the designated school zone. Special needs students assigned to the various centers are considered to be within the assigned school zone for purposes of this policy. These students must be provided “curb-to-curb” transportation support between the legal residence and the assigned school.

**School Bus “NO IDLING” Requirement:** Unnecessary idling of school buses wastes fuel and permits the accumulation of fumes in and around the school bus. It is the policy of the Richmond County Board of Education that unnecessary idling by district school buses is not allowed. The following guidance is provided:

- a. Drivers will be responsible for starting their assigned buses. No driver will start a bus engine or attempt to pre-warm a bus that has not been assigned to that driver. Monitors and attendants are not licensed to operate, or even start, a school bus. Similarly, mechanics will not start buses for any employee’s convenience.
- b. In all but the coldest weather warm-up idling during early mornings will be limited generally to 3-5 minutes. Drivers will check the engine fluid levels, and then start the bus engine as they complete their pre-operational checks. Once operational checks are completed, the drivers will promptly depart from parking areas and proceed with daily runs
- c. Drivers who have business to conduct in the office or maintenance shop will turn off the bus engine when parking at these areas.
- d. Drivers will turn off the bus engine as soon as possible upon arriving at schools for loading or unloading. The bus will not be restarted until it is loaded and ready to depart and there is a clear path to exit the pick-up area. Exceptions will only be made for passenger safety, such as extreme weather conditions. Bus engines will idle in traffic when the bus is stopped at railway crossings, traffic signals, and in similar situations.
- e. Drivers will not allow buses to idle while waiting for students during field trips, extracurricular trips, or other events where students are transported off school grounds.
- f. During cold weather, schools will provide a space inside the school where bus drivers, monitors, and attendants who arrive early can wait.
- g. During hot weather, drivers will not be allowed to idle with the air conditioner running to pre-cool the school bus.
- h. The transportation operations staff will revise bus routes, as necessary, to limit travel and the use of fuel and related diesel fumes. (Drivers will be reminded of this requirement during the annual training meeting).

**STAFF AND FACULTY MEMBERS QUALIFIED TO OPERATE SCHOOL BUSES:** In those cases where Department or school employees are needed to occasionally operate a school bus, the respective department director or school principal will take action to ensure the employee becomes or remains qualified to operate the vehicle as follows:

- a. Provide written notification to the Transportation Department identifying the individual(s) selected for training.
- b. Monitor the progress of the employee(s) progress during the initial processing, training program and licensing process offered by the Transportation Department.
- c. Establish a procedure to ensure the safekeeping of the board vehicle assigned or issued to the school. The principals of high schools assigned a bus will require that the vehicle be parked in a secure location and safeguard the keys when the vehicle is at the school. Alternatively, the principal can elect to leave the bus overnight at the Transportation Department.
- d. Coordinate with the Transportation Department as necessary to ensure the operator employee remains qualified. Specific requirements include:
  1. Keeping a valid and current CDL license.
  2. Passing a physical exam annually within 60 days of school opening.
  3. Attending the mandatory annual safety training class.
  4. Random drug and alcohol screening.

- e. Notify the Transportation Department if the designated, qualified employee from the school becomes unqualified to operate the vehicle due to license expiration, physical impairment, medical condition, or for any other reason.
- f. The Transportation Department will:
  - 1. Set up the appropriate screenings.
  - 2. Provide the required training for the designated employees to take the Commercial Drivers' License test.
  - 3. Provide the required school-bus-specific training.
  - 4. Notify the respective principal when the employee successfully completes the qualification requirements.
  - 5. Notify the respective schools of the dates and times for the recurring physical exams and annual training.
  - 6. Notify the school immediately if any employee is disqualified.

**Cellular/Mobile Phones:** Drivers shall not use mobile phones while operating a school bus, as this is distracting, dangerous and contrary to State law. All cellular/mobile telephones and accouterments (ear phones, blue tooth, etc.) are to be stored out of sight from the time the bus departs the parking area in the morning until parked again in the parking lot at the end of the run. If the cell/mobile phone is needed for valid emergencies during the route, the driver will first pull the bus over in a safe location, turn off the engine, and set the parking brake before using the cell/mobile phone.

**Incident Report Procedure:** To insure that the School System has accurate information to properly respond to incidents and to protect drivers from liability, drivers should report certain incidents that occur in and around the bus. Incidents include but are not limited to the following:

- A. A student bumping their head, falling or otherwise injuring him or herself while loading, unloading, or in the bus, regardless of how minor the injury may appear.
- B. Suspicious persons or vehicles at or around bus stops or schools.
- C. Property damage involving the school bus.
- D. Any other incidents that the driver determines based upon his or her observations and/or training should be reported and reviewed by the director of transportation or designee.

**Student Safety Procedures:** The following basic safety procedures are selected for inclusion into this manual. However, the more comprehensive requirements are contained in the training administered to drivers on a monthly and annual basis. Drivers should comply with the procedures listed herein and the more detailed requirements covered in training sessions.

- A. Students should be seated when the bus is in motion. From time to time, it may be necessary for a student to stand due to a lack of seating. Under such circumstances, these students should be instructed to give books and other objects to a seated student and to hold firmly to the seat frame as may be directed by the driver.
- B. Students who are required to stand should be in the rear section of the bus.
- C. The legal passenger capacity for each bus is defined as the number stated by the manufacturer, plus no more than 20% above that stated number. Each driver is expected to know both the stated capacity and the legal capacity of the bus he or she drives. The driver shall be aware of the number of students on the bus and shall not transport students in excess of the established legal capacity. Should students be loaded above the legal capacity, the driver shall contact the director of transportation or designee for direction. Trips sponsors and other school officials do not have authority to attempt to load the bus above the legal capacity.
- D. When it is necessary for students to cross a road, the driver shall follow safe crossing procedures as previously described.
- E. The bus engine is to be turned off and the parking brake set when loading or unloading students on school grounds.

## SECTION IV

### ACTIVITY TRIP PROCEDURES

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The following guidelines shall apply to assigning drivers for activity trips and in defining driver trip responsibilities and special regulations governing such trips. Activity trips are those trips which occur outside the regular routes and programs serviced by drivers.

#### Driver Assignments

- a. Drivers desiring to drive activity trips shall complete the required Transportation Department forms (See appendices 9 and 10)
- b. All activity trips will be assigned by the Department of Transportation T.O.M. Program software/Student Activities Manager.
- c. If a driver is unable to accept an assigned activity trip, the driver shall promptly notify the Student Activities Manager or designee so that alternative arrangements may be completed in a timely manner.
- d. Timely notification in non-emergency situations shall be defined as no less than two days prior to the date set for the activity trip.
- e. Drivers that accept activity trips and fail to complete the trip assignment may be removed from the activity driver list for 30 days.
- f. Non-emergency cancellations of three or more trips by a driver in any 90-day period may result in removal from the activity trip list.
- g. Drivers are not permitted to swap activity trips among themselves without approval.
- h. Trips will be rotated to the extent feasible to insure that drivers are given an opportunity to drive activity trips.
- i. The Richmond County School System Transportation Office reserves the right from time to time to assign drivers outside the regular rotation due to any unusual demands on the fleet, upon short notice, in an emergency or under irregular conditions.

#### Activity Trip Responsibilities:

- a. Clean inside of bus before each trip.
- b. Upon arrival at school have sufficient fuel to complete the trip.
- c. Be at the designated school 15 minutes before the departure time indicated on the request form.
- d. Remind chaperones and teacher of the need to stay within time limits. Buses must return to the school by 2:30 p.m. to pick up their afternoon routes.
- e. Safely and expeditiously transport students, school personnel and others. This responsibility extends to being available at the trip destination to provide transportation support to the group. Drivers will remain with their groups at all times unless released by the sponsor, teacher or coach. When released, it will be for a specified time and for travel no farther than a 5-mile radius for the purpose of obtaining meals. In the event of an emergency, the driver is an important communication source as well as transportation link.
- f. Enforce the bus regulations and policies governing operations and equipment.
- g. Report any problems encountered to the Transportation Department.
- h. Complete FIELD TRIP REPORT FORM. The form must be returned within three working days of completing the trip. Failure to return the form may result in a delay in receiving payment for the trip. **Repeated delays by a driver in submitting forms may result in the driver being removed from the Field Trip Driver List.** REMEMBER: mileage is recorded from school and back to school.

#### Overnight Field Trips

- a. Driver's meals and lodging should be paid by the local school chaperone. The driver is on duty and available at all times during the overnight trip, except for the normal 8-hour sleep period, i.e. 10:00-6:00 (adjustable for late evening performances, etc.)

#### Special Requirements for Field Trips

- a. Bus drivers will not make any unscheduled stops. Drivers are to transport students only to and from the destination indicated on the approved request form. Teachers cannot change this requirement

- unless prior approval is given by the Department of Transportation. If deemed necessary to deviate the plan while en route the driver must contact the Director of Transportation, Assistant Director or designee.
- b. Drivers will not stop the bus at restaurants unless prior approval has been made with the Department of Transportation.
  - c. Drivers will not make any unauthorized trips and all buses must remain together when traveling.
  - d. It is the responsibility of the teacher to maintain discipline on the bus. Bus drivers are not responsible for supervising and holding disciplined students on the bus for teachers.
  - e. It is the teacher's responsibility to assure that only authorized students and chaperones are allowed on the bus.
  - f. It is the teacher's responsibility to have the students clean up any trash on the bus at the conclusion of the activity trip.
  - g. Keep a copy of telephone numbers for emergency calls on your person or bus. Be sure to look on the activity form for the on call mechanics that are available and their phone number for after hours trips or weekend trips.

## SECTION V

### STATE LAWS AND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RULES

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#### TITLE 20 (EDUCATION LAWS)

##### 20-2-751.4.

(a) As used in this Code section, the term 'bullying' means:

- (1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or
  - (2) Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm.
- (b) Each local board of education shall adopt policies, applicable to students in grades six through 12, that prohibit bullying of a student by another student and shall require such prohibition to be included in the student code of conduct for middle and high schools in that school system. Local board policies shall require that, upon a finding that a student has committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year, such student shall be assigned to an alternative school. Each local board of education shall ensure that students and parents of students are notified of the prohibition against bullying, and the penalties for violating the prohibition, by posting such information at each middle and high school and by including such information in student and parent handbooks.
- (c) Any school system which is not in compliance with the requirements of this Code section shall be ineligible to receive state funding pursuant to Code Sections 20-2-161 and 20-2-260.

##### 20-2-751.5.

(a) Each student code of conduct shall contain provisions that address the following conduct of students during school hours, at school related functions, and on the school bus, in a manner that is appropriate to the age of the student:

- (1) Verbal assault, including threatened violence, of teachers, administrators, and other school personnel;
- (2) Physical assault or battery of teachers, administrators, and other school personnel;
- (3) Disrespectful conduct toward teachers, administrators, and other school personnel, including use of vulgar or profane language;
- (4) Verbal assault of other students, including threatened violence or sexual harassment as defined pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972;
- (5) Physical assault or battery of other students, including sexual harassment as defined pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972;
- (6) Disrespectful conduct toward other students, including use of vulgar or profane language;
- (7) Verbal assault of, physical assault or battery of, and disrespectful conduct, including use of vulgar or profane language, toward persons attending school related functions;
- (8) Failure to comply with compulsory attendance as required under Code Section 20-2-690.1;
- (9) Willful or malicious damage to real or personal property of the school or to personal property of any person legitimately at the school;
- (10) Inciting, advising, or counseling of others to engage in prohibited acts;
- (11) Marking, defacing, or destroying school property;
- (12) Possession of a weapon, as provided for in Code Section 16-11-127.1;
- (13) Unlawful use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol;
- (14) Willful and persistent violation of the student code of conduct;
- (15) Bullying as defined by Code Section 20-2-751.4; and
- (16) Marking, defacing, or destroying the property of another student.

With regard to paragraphs (9) and (11) of this subsection, each student code of conduct shall also contain provisions that address conduct of students during off-school hours.

(b)(1) In addition to the requirements contained in subsection (a) of this Code section, each student code of conduct shall include comprehensive and specific provisions prescribing and governing student conduct and safety rules on all public school buses. The specific provisions shall include but not be limited to:

- (A) Students shall be prohibited from acts of physical violence as defined by Code Section 20-2-751.6, bullying as defined by subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-751.4, physical assault or battery of other persons on the school bus, verbal assault of other persons on the school bus, disrespectful conduct toward the school bus driver or other persons on the school bus, and other unruly behavior;

(B) Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus, including but not limited to cell phones; pagers; audible radios, tape or compact disc players without headphones; or any other electronic device in a manner that might interfere with the school bus communications equipment or the school bus driver's operation of the school bus; and

(C) Students shall be prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices in a manner that might interfere with the school bus driver's operation of the school bus.

(2) If a student is found to have engaged in physical acts of violence as defined by Code Section 20-2-751.6, the student shall be subject to the penalties set forth in such Code section. If a student is found to have engaged in bullying as defined by subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-751.4 or in physical assault or battery of another person on the school bus, the local school board policy shall require a meeting of the parent or guardian of the student and appropriate school district officials to form a school bus behavior contract for the student. Such contract shall provide for progressive age-appropriate discipline, penalties, and restrictions for student misconduct on the bus. Contract provisions may include but shall not be limited to assigned seating, ongoing parental involvement, and suspension from riding the bus. This subsection is not to be construed to limit the instances when a school code of conduct or local board of education may require use of a student bus behavior contract.

(c) Each student code of conduct shall also contain provisions that address any off-campus behavior of a student which could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process.

(d) Local board policies relating to student codes of conduct shall provide that each local school superintendent shall fully support the authority of principals and teachers in the school system to remove a student from the classroom pursuant to Code Section 20-2-738, including establishing and disseminating procedures. It is the policy of this state that it is preferable to reassign disruptive students to alternative educational settings rather than to suspend or expel such students from school.

(e) Any student handbook which is prepared by a local board or school shall include a copy or summary of the student code of conduct for that school or be accompanied by a copy of the student code of conduct for that school. If a student handbook contains a summary of the student code of conduct, then a full copy of the student code of conduct shall be made available for review at the school. When distributing a student code of conduct, a local school shall include a form on which the student's parent or guardian may acknowledge his or her receipt of the code, and the local school shall request that the form be signed and returned to the school.

20-2-1071.

Whenever the county board of education deems it for the best interest of the schools of the county, it shall also have the right and power to contract with individuals or corporations for the transportation of pupils and school employees to and from school.

20-2-1073.

It shall be unlawful to transport any student to or from any public school in this state if a physician, licensed to practice medicine in this state, shall have certified to the superintendent of the county or independent school system, in writing, that the transportation of such student would be detrimental to the health of the student. It shall be unlawful to expend or use public funds for the transportation of students for whom a certificate has been filed by a physician. Any person, school superintendent, or member of a county or independent board of education violating this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

20-2-1074.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of law to the contrary, including Code Section 20-2-411, county and independent school systems may use school buses to provide transportation for the elderly, persons with disabilities, and 4-H activities if the cost of such transportation is reimbursed in full from federal, state, local, or funds other than school funds.

20-2-1075.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of law to the contrary, including Code Sections 20-2-188 and 20-2-411, county and independent school systems may use school buses to provide transportation to students and others to attend summer camps or to participate in other recreational or educational activities if the cost of such transportation and of any additional insurance costs deemed reasonably necessary by the school system are reimbursed in full from public or private funds other than public school funds.

20-2-1110.

(a) Each person employed as a school bus driver in any public school of this state shall be entitled to sick leave with full pay computed on the basis of one and one-fourth working days for each completed school month of service, such leave to be cumulative over each school year; and all unused sick leave shall be accumulated from one school year to the next up to the maximum of 45 days. A school bus driver may utilize sick leave, upon the approval of the school superintendent of the county in which such school bus driver is employed, for absence due to illness or injury or necessitated by exposure to contagious disease in which the health of others would be endangered by his attendance on duty or due to illness or death in the school bus driver's immediate family. School bus drivers shall be charged with sick leave for absence only on days upon which they would otherwise work, and no charge against sick leave shall be made for absence on Sundays, holidays, or other non workdays.

(b) Any unused sick leave accumulated by a school bus driver pursuant to the provisions of subsection (a) of this Code section shall be credited to such driver and shall be transferred when there is a change in the employment of the school bus driver from one local board of education to another, but no local board of education shall be required to transfer funds to another, nor shall the State Board of Education provide funds to a local unit of administration beyond those authorized by subsection (j) of Code Section 20-2-188 to finance the potential or actual cost incurred by a local unit of administration through the employment of school bus drivers transferring accumulated unused sick leave. Any unused sick leave credited to a school bus driver shall be forfeited if the driver withdraws from service for more than 24 consecutive months.

20-2-1111.

During any school year, a school bus driver may utilize up to a maximum of three days of any accumulated sick leave for the purpose of absenting himself from his duties for any personal reason if prior approval of his absence is given by the local school superintendent or his authorized representative.

20-2-1112.

No school bus driver utilizing sick leave under this part shall be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute school bus driver to serve in his absence on such sick leave.

20-2-1113.

The scale of pay for substitute drivers shall be determined by the board of education of each system in which a school bus driver utilizing sick leave under this part is employed.

20-2-1122.

(a) A school bus driver found to have used an illegal drug shall be terminated from his or her employment.

(b) A school bus driver found to have any measurable alcohol in his or her system during the school day shall be subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the local board of education.

(c) A school bus driver who refuses to provide body fluid, when requested to do so in accordance with random drug testing or random alcohol testing conducted pursuant to this part and rules and regulations promulgated under this part, shall be terminated from employment.

20-2-1125.

All persons employed as school bus drivers by any public school system in this state shall receive annual mandatory training on traffic laws pertaining to the operation of school buses and on school bus operations and safety. The State Board of Education shall establish the content and length of initial driver training and shall determine the qualifications of and certify the instructors who conduct such training. No person employed as a school bus driver by any public school system in this state shall operate a school bus unless such person has completed such training within the preceding 12 month period.

20-2-1127.

Each public school system in this state shall make accessible a schedule of school bus routes that indicate the morning pickup route beginning time and the afternoon school bell time as well as the total number of stops on each school bus route. The time for the bus arrival at each stop will be commensurate with the route beginning time and prescribed stop sequence, except in unforeseen circumstances. This provision shall not apply to portal-to-portal special needs student transportation or special alternative instructional transportation programs.

20-2-1130.

The local law enforcement agency charged with the responsibility for law enforcement within the school district attendance area and the board of education of each county and independent school system of this state shall study and evaluate the traffic safety requirements of the school system and the various individual schools therein. The responsible law enforcement agency shall take appropriate action to identify school safety crossings and motor vehicle traffic patterns on and around school grounds. The traffic safety officer of the local law enforcement agency shall advise the school board and the school superintendent relative to compliance by the school system with state laws and policies and regulations of the state agencies requiring safety standards and practices.

20-2-1181.

It shall be unlawful for any person to disrupt or interfere with the operation of any public school, public school bus, or public school bus stop as designated by local school boards of education. Any person violating this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature.

20-2-1182.

Any parent, guardian, or person other than a student at the public school in question who has been advised that minor children are present and who continues to upbraid, insult, or abuse any public school teacher, public school administrator, or public school bus driver in the presence and hearing of a pupil while on the premises of any public school or public school bus may be ordered by any of the above-designated school personnel to leave the school premises or school bus, and upon failure to do so such person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$500.00.

20-2-1183.

The possession of an electronic communication device by a student in school shall be permitted or prohibited as specifically prescribed by rule or policy set by the local board of education. If prohibited, the local board of education may provide for exceptions to such prohibition and for disciplinary actions for possession in violation of the prohibition. If possession of an electronic communication device by a student in school is permitted, the local board policy shall not permit the use by a student of any personal electronic communication device during classroom instructional time.

## **TITLE 40 (MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC)**

40-5-147.

(a)(1) Except as provided in Code Section 40-5-148, no person may be issued a commercial driver's license unless that person is a resident of this state, is at least 18 years of age, has passed a knowledge and skills test for driving a commercial motor vehicle which complies with minimum federal standards established by federal regulations enumerated in 49 C.F.R. Part 383, subparts G and H, and has satisfied all other requirements of the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986, Title XII of Public Law 99-570, in addition to any other requirements imposed by state law or federal regulation. The tests shall be prescribed and conducted by the department in English only.

(2) The department may authorize a person, including an agency of this or another state, an employer, a private driver training facility, or other private institution or a department, agency, or instrumentality of a local government, to administer the skills test specified by this Code section, provided that:

(A) The test is the same which would otherwise be administered by the state;

(B) The third party has entered into an agreement with the state which complies with the requirements set forth in 49 C.F.R. Part 383.75; and

(C) The third party complies with all other requirements set by the department by regulations.

(b) The department may waive the skills test specified in this Code section for a commercial driver's license applicant who meets the requirements of 49 C.F.R. Part 383.77.

(c)(1) A commercial driver's instruction permit may be issued to any individual who holds a valid noncommercial Class C license or has passed all required tests for the operation of a noncommercial Class C vehicle and is 18 years of age.

(2) An applicant for the commercial driver's instruction permit must pass the vision test and all knowledge tests for the type of vehicle he intends to operate along with any knowledge test required for any desired endorsements.

(3) The commercial driver's instruction permit may not be issued for a period to exceed one year. The holder of a commercial driver's instruction permit may drive a commercial motor vehicle on a highway only when accompanied by the holder of a commercial driver's license valid for the type of vehicle driven who occupies a seat beside the individual for the purpose of giving instruction in driving the commercial motor vehicle.

(d) A commercial driver's license or commercial driver's instruction permit may not be issued to a person while the person is subject to a disqualification from driving a commercial motor vehicle or while the person's driver's license or driving privilege is suspended, revoked, or canceled in this or any other licensing jurisdiction; nor may a driver's license be issued to a person who has a commercial driver's license issued by any other state unless the person first surrenders all driver's licenses issued by any other state, which license or licenses shall be returned to the issuing state or states for cancellation.

40-5-150.

(a) The commercial driver's license shall be marked 'Commercial Driver's License' or 'CDL' and shall be, to the maximum extent practicable, tamperproof, and shall include, but not be limited to, the following information:

- (1) The name and residential address of the person;
- (2) The person's color photograph;
- (3) A physical description of the person, including sex, height, weight, and eye color;
- (4) Full date of birth;
- (5) The person's social security number if such person has requested the use of such social security number on such license or another number or identifier deemed appropriate by the department;
- (6) The person's signature;
- (7) The class or type of commercial motor vehicle or vehicles which the person is authorized to drive, together with any endorsements or restrictions;
- (8) The name of this state;
- (9) The dates between which the license is valid; and
- (10) The license fee and fees for any endorsements.

(b) Commercial driver's licenses may be issued with the following classifications:

- (1) Class A — Any combination of vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 pounds or more, provided the gross vehicle weight rating of the vehicle or vehicles being towed is in excess of 10,000 pounds;
- (2) Class B — Any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 pounds or more, or any such vehicle towing a vehicle not in excess of 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating;
- (3) Class C — Any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of less than 26,001 pounds, any such vehicle towing a vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating not in excess of 10,000 pounds, or any such vehicle towing a vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating in excess of 10,000 pounds, provided that the combination of vehicles has a gross combined vehicle weight rating less than 26,001 pounds. This classification shall apply to vehicles designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver, and vehicles used in the transportation of hazardous materials which require the vehicles to be placarded under 49 C.F.R. Part 172, subpart F;
- (4) Class M — A motorcycle as defined in Code Section 40-1-1; and
- (5) Class P — A commercial driver's instruction permit used in conjunction with the commercial driver's instruction permit vehicle classification.

(c) Commercial driver's licenses may be issued with the following endorsements and restrictions:

- (1) 'H' — Authorizes the driver to drive a vehicle transporting hazardous materials;
- (2) 'L' — Restricts the driver to vehicles not equipped with air brakes;
- (3) 'T' — Authorizes driving double and triple trailers;
- (4) 'P' — Authorizes driving vehicles carrying 16 or more passengers, including the driver, but does not authorize the driver to drive a school bus;
- (5) 'N' — Authorizes driving tank vehicles;
- (5.1) 'S' — Authorizes the driver to drive a school bus; and
- (6) 'X' — Represents a combination of hazardous materials and tank vehicle endorsements.

The fee for Classes A, B, C, M, and P licenses and for the endorsements and restrictions shall be as provided in Code Section 40-5-25.

(d) The holder of a valid commercial driver's license may drive all vehicles in the class for which that license is issued and all lesser classes of vehicles except motorcycles. No person shall drive a vehicle which requires an endorsement unless the proper endorsement appears on the driver's license.

(e) Before issuing a commercial driver's license, the department shall obtain driving record information through the Commercial Driver License Information System, through the National Driver Register (NDR), and from each state in which the applicant has been licensed.

(f) Within ten days after issuing a commercial driver's license, the department shall notify the Commercial Driver License Information System of that fact and provide all information required to ensure identification of the licensee.

(g) The commercial driver's license shall expire on the licensee's birth date in the fourth year following the issuance of such license.

(h) When applying for renewal of a commercial driver's license, the applicant shall complete the application form required by subsection (a) of Code Section 40-5-149, providing updated information and required medical certifications. If the applicant wishes to retain a hazardous materials endorsement, the written test for a hazardous materials endorsement must be taken and passed.

#### 40-6-142.

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this Code section, the driver of any motor vehicle carrying passengers for hire, any bus, whether or not operated for hire, or of any school bus, whether carrying any school children or empty, or of any vehicle carrying any hazardous material listed in Section 392.10 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations as those regulations currently exist or as they may in the future be amended or in regulations adopted by the commissioner of public safety, before crossing at grade any track or tracks of a railroad, shall stop such vehicle within 50 feet but not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail of such railroad and while so stopped shall listen and look in both directions along such track for any approaching train and for signals indicating the approach of a train and shall not proceed until he or she can do so safely. After stopping as required in this Code section and upon proceeding when it is safe to do so, the driver of any such vehicle shall cross only in such gear of the vehicle that there will be no necessity for changing gears while traversing such crossing, and the driver shall not shift gears while crossing the track or tracks.

(b) No stop need be made at any such crossing where:

(1) Traffic is directed to proceed by a police officer, a firefighter, or a railroad flagman;

(2) A traffic-control signal directs traffic to proceed;

(3) The highway crosses an abandoned railroad track which is marked with a sign indicating its abandoned status, where such signs are erected by or under the direction of the local or state authority having jurisdiction over the highway; or

(4) The highway crosses an industrial siding or spur track marked 'exempt,' where such signs are erected by or under the direction of the local or state authority having jurisdiction over the highway.

#### 40-6-160.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this Code section, it shall be unlawful to operate:

(1) A school bus transporting school children to and from school or to and from school activities at a speed greater than 40 miles per hour on a public road other than one which is a part of The Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways; or

(2) A school bus transporting school children to and from school or to and from school activities on a public road which is a part of The Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways at a speed greater than 55 miles per hour.

(b) When a school bus is transporting school children to or from an event or school activity or an express bus transporting students from one school to another school and is not loading or unloading children during such transportation, the speed limit shall be 55 miles per hour on other public roads as well as on those public roads which are a part of The Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways.

#### 40-6-161.

(a) It shall be unlawful to operate any school bus which is transporting children unless the headlights on such school bus are illuminated.

(b) It shall be unlawful to operate any school bus which is transporting children unless the driver of the bus is equipped with one or more devices to allow live communication between the driver and school officials or public safety officials or both. Such communication may be provided by two-way radio, cellular telephone, or any other device which provides similar communications capability.

40-6-162.

A school bus driver shall actuate the visual signals required by Code Sections 40-8-111 and 40-8-115 whenever, but only whenever, the school bus is stopped on the highway for the purpose of receiving or discharging school children. A school bus driver shall not actuate the visual signals:

- (1) At intersections or other places where traffic is controlled by traffic-control signals or police officers; or
- (2) In designated school bus loading areas where the bus is entirely off the roadway.

40-6-163.

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this Code section, the driver of a vehicle meeting or overtaking from either direction any school bus stopped on the highway shall stop before reaching such school bus when there are in operation on the school bus the visual signals as specified in Code Sections 40-8-111 and 40-8-115, and such driver shall not proceed until the school bus resumes motion or the visual signals are no longer actuated.

(b) The driver of a vehicle upon a highway with separate roadways need not stop upon meeting or passing a school bus which is on a different roadway, or upon a controlled-access highway when the school bus is stopped in a loading zone which is a part of or adjacent to such highway and where pedestrians are not permitted to cross the roadway.

(c) Every school bus driver who observes a violation of subsection (a) of this Code section is authorized and directed to record specifically the vehicle description, license number of the offending vehicle, and time and place of occurrence on forms furnished by the Department of Public Safety. Such report shall be submitted within 15 days of the occurrence of the violation to the local law enforcement agency which has law enforcement jurisdiction where the alleged offense occurred.

40-6-164.

After stopping to allow children to disembark from the bus, it shall be unlawful for the driver of the school bus to proceed until all children who need to cross the roadway have done so safely. Any driver willfully violating this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

40-6-165.

(a) Prior to moving a school bus from a stop at which passengers have been loaded or unloaded, the driver of the bus shall check all mirrors to ensure that it is safe to place the bus in motion.

(b) Prior to loading or unloading passengers from a school bus, the driver shall engage the parking brakes of the bus and shall not release such brakes until each passenger boarding the bus is on board and until each passenger disembarking from the bus is off the roadway and safely on the pedestrian areas of the roadway.

(c) Prior to loading or unloading passengers from a school bus, the driver shall display the stop arm on the bus and shall not retract the stop arm until each passenger boarding the bus is on board and until each passenger disembarking from the bus is off the roadway and safely on the pedestrian areas of the roadway.

(d) The driver of a school bus shall not use or operate a cellular telephone or two-way radio while loading or unloading passengers.

(e) The driver of a school bus shall not use or operate a cellular telephone while the bus is in motion.

(f) The driver of a school bus shall instruct all passengers exiting the bus of the proper procedures of crossing the roadway in front of the bus only.

(g) The driver of a school bus shall ensure that the red flasher lights on the bus remain illuminated and flashing until all passengers have boarded or have exited the bus and have safely crossed the roadway and are safely on the pedestrian areas of the roadway.

(h) The driver of a school bus shall extend the extension arm or gate on the front of the bus until all passengers have boarded or have exited the bus and have safely crossed the roadway and are safely on the pedestrian areas of the roadway.

40-8-110.

(a) Every bus used for the transportation of school children shall bear upon the front and rear thereof a plainly visible sign containing the words 'SCHOOL BUS' in letters not less than eight inches in height.

(b) On and after January 1, 1971, every new school bus purchased for the transportation of school children shall be painted National School Bus Chrome Yellow.

40-8-111.

(a) Each school bus used for the transportation of school children in the State of Georgia shall be in compliance with the State Board of Education bus specifications for the model year of such school bus.

(b) Each public school system shall be required to maintain each of its school buses in good working condition, including all safety equipment required in accordance with the specifications established pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section.

(c) Nothing in subsection (a) of this Code section shall apply to motor vehicles operated by a local transit system which transport school children to and from school on regular or scheduled routes of a transit vehicle with regular fare-paying passengers.

40-8-112.

Every school bus used to transport children to and from school shall comply with the State Board Bus Specifications prescribed by the State Board of Education.

40-8-113.

The identification and equipment standards provided in this part shall apply to all school buses as defined in paragraph (55) of Code Section 40-1-1 regardless of size or capacity.

40-8-116.

It shall be unlawful to operate:

(1) Any vehicle displaying the words 'SCHOOL BUS' unless it meets the color, identification, and equipment requirements set forth in Code Section 40-8-113 or 40-8-115;

(2) A vehicle without the words 'SCHOOL BUS' but which is of a color and exhibits some equipment or identification which reasonably could cause a motorist to confuse it with a properly colored, identified, and equipped school bus;

(3) Any school bus for any purpose other than the transportation of school children to or from school or school activities without concealing or covering all markings thereon indicating 'SCHOOL BUS'; or

(4) A vehicle which has been permanently converted from the purpose of transporting students to or from school or school activities without first having painted such vehicle some color other than the yellow required in subsection (b) of Code Section 40-8-110 and without having removed the stop arms, if any, and any other equipment required by Code Section 40-8-111.

40-8-220.

(a) Every school bus which is defined by paragraph (55) of Code Section 40-1-1 which is owned or operated by a state, county, or municipal government or under contract by any independent school system shall be inspected annually, or more frequently at the discretion of the commissioner of public safety, under the supervision of an employee of the Department of Public Safety.

(b) The employee of the department shall supervise the inspection of such vehicle to determine if such vehicle possesses in safe operating condition the equipment which is applicable to school buses required by Parts 1 through 4 of Article 1 of this chapter and the equipment required by Part 6 of Article 1 of this chapter.

(c) If such vehicle is found to meet the equipment and safety requirements specified in subsection (b) of this Code section, then the employee of the department making the inspection shall issue a school bus certificate of safety inspection to the vehicle.

(d) If such vehicle does not meet the equipment and safety requirements specified in subsection (b) of this Code section, then that vehicle shall not be operated on the streets and highways of this state, and no school bus certificate of safety inspection shall be issued to such vehicle.

(e) All public school buses shall be made available for the inspection required under this Code section, and no person shall conceal any bus required to be inspected under this Code section.

(f) The commissioner of public safety is authorized to implement any and all provisions of this Code section by the promulgation of necessary rules and regulations. When duly promulgated and adopted, all rules and regulations issued pursuant to this Code section shall have the force of law.

40-8-221.

Any person who violates any provision of this article shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

## STATE BOARD RULES

### **160-5-3-.13 STUDENT SAFETY.**

#### **(1) REQUIREMENTS.**

- (a) Local units of administration shall ensure that students receive instruction annually in safe riding practices and emergency evacuation.
- (b) The loading limit for any school bus shall not exceed 120 percent of the manufacturer's rated seating capacity of the bus.
- (c) Local units of administration shall ensure that audio speakers used for music or entertainment are not located in the driver's compartment of the school bus. All above-mentioned speakers on existing buses shall be disconnected or removed.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-188.

### **160-5-3-.03 SCHOOL BUS INSPECTIONS.**

#### **(1) REQUIREMENTS.**

- (a) Local units of administration shall ensure that all school buses are inspected annually by the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety.
- (b) Local units of administration maintenance or service personnel shall inspect all school buses monthly and record the results on forms provided by the Department of Education. A local form may be used in lieu of the department's form upon approval from the department.
- (c) The local system superintendent shall notify the Department of Education in writing of any material or construction defect found in new school buses.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-188; 40-8-220.

### **160-5-3-.08 SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS.**

#### **(1) DEFINITIONS.**

- (a) **Non-resident** - a person who has his or her place of residence in a state other than Georgia.
- (b) **Regular school bus driver (operator)** - a person who is a regularly employed driver (operator) and who is not on the substitute list.
- (c) **Resident** - a person who has his or her place of residence in the state of Georgia.
- (d) **School bus driver (operator)** - a person, appropriately licensed, who controls the operation of a school bus.
- (e) **Substitute school bus driver (operator)** - a person who is not a regularly employed driver (operator).
- (f) **School bus driver trainer** – a person who is responsible for the required initial training of school bus drivers.

#### **(2) REQUIREMENTS.**

- (a) The local board of education shall employ both regular and substitute drivers of school buses upon the recommendation of the system superintendent of schools.
- (b) Local school systems shall select school bus drivers using the following minimum criteria:
  - 1. The minimum age to qualify as a bus driver is 18 years.
  - 2. Evidence of a physical examination by a licensed doctor of medicine or doctor of osteopathy within 60 days prior to the date of employment.
- (c) To be considered for reemployment for any ensuing school year, the driver shall pass the annual medical examination prescribed by the Department, not more than 60 days before the beginning of the school year and as often thereafter as the local system's board of education deems necessary.
- (d) Licensing.
  - 1. Local school systems shall ensure that resident school bus drivers have a Georgia Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Class A, B or C.
  - 2. School bus drivers shall obtain a CDL Class A, B or C license with an "S" endorsement, which authorizes the driver to drive a school bus. (The driver of an airbrake-equipped bus shall not have an "L" restriction which restricts him or her to vehicles not equipped with air brakes.)
  - 3. Local school systems shall ensure that non-resident school bus drivers have an appropriate license, issued by their home state, to operate a school bus.
- (e) Salary.

1. School systems shall not pay to any regular driver in their employment, regardless of the type of ownership, a salary less than that prescribed by the state uniform minimum salary schedule. The driver shall receive the state minimum monthly salary for 12 months provided the driver works the entire 180-day school year. The 180 days include the authorized sick and personal leave.

2. Substitute drivers shall be paid by the local board of education and not by the regular school bus driver. The pay scale for substitute school bus drivers shall be determined by the local board of education.

(f) School Bus Driver Education.

1. Local school systems shall ensure that every new school bus driver satisfactorily completes a training program approved by the Department prior to driving a school bus used to transport students. The initial training program for school bus drivers shall consist of at least 24 hours of training. A description of the required training program is found in the *Georgia School Bus Driver Training Manual*, available from the Department.

2. Local school systems shall require all school bus driver trainers be trained and certified through a training program offered by the Department.

3. Local school systems shall require all school bus drivers to attend the annual in-service training and safety programs provided by the Department.

4. Local school systems shall report all accidents in which school buses are involved to the Department on forms provided by the Department.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-188; 20-2-1110; 20-2-1111; 20-2-1112; 20-2-1113; 20-2-1125; 40-5-23; 40-5-140; 40-5-150.

### **160-5-3-.13 STUDENT SAFETY.**

#### **(1) REQUIREMENTS.**

(a) Local units of administration shall ensure that students receive instruction annually in safe riding practices and emergency evacuation.

(b) The loading limit for any school bus shall not exceed 120 percent of the manufacturer's rated seating capacity of the bus.

(c) Local units of administration shall ensure that audio speakers used for music or entertainment are not located in the driver's compartment of the school bus. All above-mentioned speakers on existing buses shall be disconnected or removed.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-188.

## SECTION VI

### FLEET MAINTENANCE OPERATION PROCEDURES

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There are two fundamental types of school bus maintenance- “preventive” and “corrective.” Preventive maintenance is carried out at predetermined intervals and generally consists of both “inspect and repair as needed” as well as scheduled services. Inspection intervals are based on scheduled intervals, accumulated mileage, or other prescribed criteria. The purpose of preventive maintenance is to reduce the likelihood of in-service component failure. During preventive maintenance inspections, fluids and filters are changed, safety components are checked, and adjustments are made. Corrective maintenance is carried out to repair or replace a part or component after it has failed.

#### **Preventive Maintenance Inspections:**

- Operator Maintenance: Drivers are required to complete a pre-trip inspection of the school bus and record the information on the Transportation Department Daily Inspection Log (Transportation form #13).
- Organizational Maintenance: The assigned mechanic will conduct an inspection of each bus once each month and record the results of the inspection on Georgia Department of Education School Bus Inspection (DE Form 0534). This inspection is mandated by the Georgia DOE and state law and must be completed in a timely manner.
- Annual Safety Inspections by the Georgia State Patrol (GSP): Specially trained members of the Georgia State Patrol conduct a comprehensive annual inspection of each school bus in the fleet.

#### **Preventive Maintenance Requirements:**

- Operator Maintenance: Drivers are required to perform the following maintenance services on their assigned buses. “Assigned” in this context means the regular or spare bus to which they are assigned to operate at any specific time.
  1. Check all fluid levels as required by item #1 of the Transportation Department Daily Inspection Log.
  2. Immediately correct any deficiency listed on the Transportation Department Daily Inspection Log that is within the capability of a driver to correct.
  3. Immediately report any deficiency that cannot be corrected by a driver.
  4. Sweep and clean assigned buses daily.
  5. Keep all lights and lenses clean.
  6. Replace fuel as needed to maintain the tank at or above ½ full at all times.
- Organizational Maintenance Requirements: Mechanics will perform all preventive maintenance in accordance with the service schedule for the make and model of the bus or other vehicle being serviced.

#### **Corrective Maintenance Procedures:**

- Drivers are required to follow these procedures when reporting deficiencies and shortcoming they find during their inspections:
  1. Take the bus to the transportation facility for repairs.
  2. Park the bus in the designated parking area for repairs.
  3. Annotate the bus mileage (hubometer) reading on the Transportation Department Daily Inspection Log. Take the annotated form to the Transportation Bus Maintenance Shop Office.
  4. Explain the malfunction and/or repairs required on the bus to a Repair Parts Technician on duty.
  5. Fleet maintenance personnel will determine when a spare bus must be assigned to replace regular route buses requiring prolonged maintenance or repairs.
  6. Corrective maintenance will be performed on all buses needing such maintenance prior to any scheduled preventative maintenance being performed.
  7. Drivers are expected to cooperate fully to have the bus available for inspection and to make required maintenance adjustments.
- Mechanics and shop personnel will make every reasonable effort to identify the deficiencies and shortcomings that need to be repaired, order the required parts, and make the necessary repairs as promptly as possible.

**School Bus Life Cycle Management:**

The Richmond County Board of Education acknowledges the generally accepted life cycle management model used by the school bus industry and considered by the Georgia Department of Education when administering replacement funding. The specific life cycle of the type buses purchased for use by the Richmond County School System is as follows:

Class	Type	Engine	Life (Replacement) Cycle
A	Activity	Gasoline	8 Years
C	Conventional	Diesel	10 Years
D	Transit	Diesel	14 Years

To the extent funding is available The Richmond County School System will retire all buses from route service when the bus has achieved life cycle replacement age. The replacement age for each class of school bus will be computed by adding the respective life cycle years to the bus model year.

**Spare Bus Policy:**

As new buses are placed into route service, the displaced route buses will be considered for retention as spare buses. A goal of 10 % of the bus fleet is established as the maximum limit for spare buses. Exceptions will be made only for exceptional operational requirements.

**Disposing of Excess Spare Buses:**

Once the old route buses become spares, the Fleet Supervisor will evaluate the spare bus fleet and compute the maximum number of spare buses needed. The Fleet Supervisor will then make a recommendation to the Director of Transportation as to the disposition of unneeded spare buses by bus number.

**Cannibalization and Disposal:**

The Fleet Supervisor will remove engines, transmissions, and other usable spare parts when practical as a means of cost savings. Once this is completed, the Director will coordinate with the Director of Purchasing to have the buses sold. The Director of Purchasing will take action to have the buses sold and out of the inventory within sixty days of notification.

**Use of Operational Spare Fleet:**

The spare bus fleet has been established to support the maintenance effort within the department and extra-curricular activities not supported by buses assigned to routes. The spare bus fleet is supervised by the Fleet Maintenance Personnel. The Transportation Department personnel will make assignments as necessary. When it is determined that a bus will require extended repairs, a spare bus shall be assigned in its place until repairs can be properly completed.

1. Transportation Department personnel will assign the spare bus to be used.
2. Transportation Department personnel will provide the keys and walk-around sheet.
3. The driver will insure that the spare bus is cleaned, fueled, the oil checked and all safety features functional.
4. The Transportation Department personnel will notify the driver when repairs to the assigned bus of the driver are completed and when the driver should pick up the bus.
5. The driver shall return spare buses clean and full of fuel.
6. The driver shall return keys to the office.
7. The driver shall notify the Transportation Department personnel if the spare bus being turned in has malfunctions, complete work order and sign it to assure that repairs are completed.

**Fueling Station:**

All buses will be refueled at the Transportation Department Fuel Point at the Transportation Department facility off Lumpkin Road.

**SCHOOL BUS SHOP EMPLOYEES:** While working as a shop employee the listed guidelines shall be followed:

1. All cars and private vehicles are to be parked in the parking area provided for shop employees. This area is located between the Transportation Office and the fuel pumps.
2. At no time will Board of Education property or materials be placed in or transported by private vehicles. Employees will use only Board Vehicles for this purpose.
3. All mechanics will report to work on time for their shift and have only 30 minutes for lunch. Mechanics going off the facility will not utilize Board vehicles for lunch purposes. (A time clock is provided to record these times.)
4. Each mechanic will be responsible for their tools and tools used or assigned out of the parts room. All tools are to be kept at the school bus shop unless permission is given from the Shop Supervisor or Transportation Office to do otherwise.
5. Each mechanic will be responsible for cleaning their work areas before leaving for the day.
6. Shop employees will work for and report to a designated shift foreman for work assignments. These assignments will be handled from the parts room mechanic and the Manager of Fleet Maintenance.
7. All accidents or mechanical problems must be reported directly to the responsible shift foreman. From this report the shift foreman will notify the Transportation Office or Manager of Fleet Maintenance.
8. Mechanics are not authorized to work on private vehicles. If approached by another employee with a request for assistance with a private vehicle, the mechanic will refer the employee to a supervisor (shift foreman or fleet supervisor). The supervisor may allow an exception to jump start a vehicle with a dead battery, put water (no anti-freeze) in a radiator, put air in a deflated tire, or loan an empty fuel container to an employee whose vehicle is out of fuel. A receipt will be completed for the fuel container to insure its return. No fuel will be dispensed for other than a board vehicle. A mechanic is not authorized to make this exception. Any assistance provided will be limited to five (5) minutes.
9. Use of the shop phones by mechanics will be for Board business only. The use of shop phones for personal calls will be discouraged and shall be limited in duration and number.

#### **Shop Area (General Rules and Procedural Guidelines)**

1. Taking the assigned bus to the shop for scheduled maintenance or for repairs is part of the job of a bus driver when instructed by the shop. However if the shop calls & inform you that the bus is scheduled for repairs make sure it is in the designated space. It is not the responsibility of shop personnel to pick up or deliver buses unless a bus will not run. When a bus will not run the driver shall bring the bus to the shop for repair.
2. **Drivers, guests, or other board employees are prohibited from loitering in the shop area. Once business is conducted, all non-mechanic staff are to leave the shop area.**
3. When a mechanic has finished work on a regular route bus, the mechanic will park the bus in the regular space assigned to the bus. The bus driver will park the spare bus in the proper assigned spare area, bring the keys to the shop and then receive the key to the regular route bus.
4. **All spare buses will either be parked in the spare area or in the assigned numbered parking space. (Check with parts room if you are unsure of the correct parking space.) (Please adhere to the parking chart in bus terminal).**
5. All spare buses shall be cleaned and fueled by the driver who has been operating the spare bus, before return to spare status. All keys **must** be returned to the shop.
6. If a spare bus is being used on an activity trip or by a part-time driver - the driver will check the keys to the bus in and out of the shop. These buses **must** be returned clean and fueled.
7. If there is a problem with a spare bus, please fill out a defect report and turn the report into the shop.

8. **Bus drivers, attendants, part-time, secretaries and other employees family members shall not be in the shop area except as specified. This is a safety requirement as well as a security procedure to keep unauthorized employees away from parts, supplies and equipment.**
9. The valid reasons for a school bus driver, attendant, part-time, secretary or other similar employee to be in the shop area are:
  - a. To turn in a repair request for a bus or vehicle.
  - b. If invited by a foreman or a supervisor, in connection with Official Board of Education business.
  - c. If in the shop area for one of these valid reasons, the employee shall quickly handle such business and promptly leave the shop area.
10. All employees' cars shall be parked solely in authorized areas. **Utilize only one designated parking slot per vehicle.** Reserved parking spaces for visitors to come to the office are available.
11. The following areas in the shop allow access to Authorized Personnel Only:
  - a. Parts room.
  - b. Tire room.
  - c. Shop floor where repairs are done.
  - d. Storage areas.
  - e. Offices (unless invited to enter.)  
(Authorized personnel include only those persons regularly assigned to these work areas as their stations of duty unless an employee is delivering a vehicle for maintenance or repair in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 above.)
12. For safety purposes, employees are not allowed to enter the work bays, except, as cleared by the shift foreman, to discuss maintenance issues with the assigned mechanic.
13. All Board of Education road call repair vehicles are equipped with two-way radios or hand held radios, which are to be on during all road calls. When a road call is finished the mechanic will radio in the completion time of the job.
14. All purchase of parts or materials for Board vehicles will be handled through the shop staff on duty and the overseer of parts area working in conjunction with the Fleet Supervisor.
15. All mechanics will use safety devices such as glasses, guards, etc., when operating machines or working around equipment. As a minimum, mechanics will use safety glasses while working under a school bus, when working on grinding equipment or hammering, or when working with solvents and sprays.
16. Shop employees will be courteous to bus drivers, maintenance workers and other personnel or visitors. If interpersonal problems arise, report them to your supervisors immediately don't take matters in your own hands.
17. Any shop employee who is required to work past a 40 hour week will be paid at 1 1/2 times the rate of regular pay, or given compensatory time at the same 1 1/2 times rate at the discretion of the Director and as allowed by law.
18. Shop employees are to call the Shop Supervisor or designee before their clock in time if they are going to be absent that day due to illness. Personal Leave days can be taken only if a 24 hour notice is given. (When an employee is to be out due to a doctor's appointment, doctor appointments should likewise be reported in advance.) However the director or designee can request a doctor's note if he/she merits.
19. Mechanics and shop employees are required to keep the break room clean. Food items should not be left in the refrigerator over 3 days. Mechanics and shop employees will clean up after themselves.
20. Each mechanic will be responsible for their individual time clock. Immediately report any problems concerning the time clock to the supervisors.

21. Mechanics will follow the recommended procedures for jacking up a school bus chassis. When lifting a bus with an air hydraulic jack, mechanics will also support the bus on a jack stand before working under the school bus. No mechanic is authorized to go under a bus supported only by the air-hydraulic jacks. To use the jack stand, be sure the jack is placed where it lifts, the end of the chassis frame; and, then suspend the chassis with jack stands under the chassis frame.
22. When a spare bus is taken to assist transporting students assigned to a disabled bus, the mechanic is to notify the shop/shop foreman where the bus is being taken so accurate records will record the location of the spare bus.
23. All parts "cores" are to be returned from the shop area to the parts room for proper credit.
24. Cleaning Requirements:
  - a. Daily Requirements: Sweep floors and pick up trash. Empty trash containers. Clean up spills, body fluids, or residue on the floors, walls, or seats. Remove stickers or posters from windows or elsewhere on the bus interior. Clean obscene graffiti.
  - b. Weekly Requirements: Clean and mop floors as necessary. Clean inside of windows and window sills. Clean the seats. Clean interior lights. Wipe off surfaces that have not been cleaned.
  - c. No handwritten signs and no stickers permitted on the windows of the bus.
25. These guidelines are for the safety of our patrons and employees. Adherence to these guidelines is important. Therefore, failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in appropriate disciplinary action.

## Appendix 1 to Transportation Department Employee Manual

### TORNADO ALERT

The Transportation Department has a Weather Monitor to continually monitor weather reports. If a tornado watch or warning is announced, the information will be communicated to all drivers over the two-way radio. The radio transmission will be repeated until the information is adequately disseminated.

If a **tornado watch** is announced, drivers should continue their route cautiously and continually monitor their two-way radios for reports of changing conditions.

If a **tornado warning** is announced, the school and driver should hold children at school until the warning is lifted. Parents and drivers who have arrived at the school should be brought into the school and directed to a severe weather safe area.

If drivers are driving their routes when it is learned that a **tornado warning** has been issued, such drivers should proceed to the nearest school and escort their students inside the building. Drivers should be aware of school locations and alternate sites, such as fire stations, public buildings and emergency shelters that may be located on their route.

If an immediate threat exists, the driver should pull the bus off the road, stop the vehicle and turn on the bus flashers and strobe lights. Students will be kept on the bus and sit below the window level in order to be afforded protection from small objects being blown by the wind. Students should use a jacket or other clothing to protect their heads and faces.

Consider evacuating the bus only when a situation occurs that makes remaining on the bus more dangerous to students than exiting the bus. Examples: If the bus is stalled on a railroad track, in danger of sliding over a ledge, or other similar situation which poses an immediate danger (See Assessing the Need to Evacuate below).

If the bus is evacuated, students should be evacuated 100 feet from the bus and instructed to lie in a ditch or ravine with their face down.

When the storm has passed, notify the Transportation Department via the two-way radio, if possible. Use cell phones, if available, to provide telephonic notification and request medical aid and other assistance as required.

Never allow students off the bus to move storm debris such as downed limbs. Never allow students off the bus if there are dangerous items in the area such as downed power lines.

**Assessing the Need to Evacuate:** Ask yourself the following question: “Considering the medical, physical and emotional condition of the students, does staying in the bus or evacuating the bus pose the greater danger to the student’s safety?”

Generally, student safety and control are best maintained by keeping students in the bus during an emergency and/or impending crisis situation if doing so does not expose them to unnecessary risk of injury. A decision to evacuate should include consideration of the following conditions:

- A. Is there a fire involved?
- B. Is fuel leaking?
- C. Might the bus roll or tip, thereby causing a further threat to safety?
- D. Is the bus likely to be hit by other vehicles?
- E. Is the bus in the direct path of a sighted tornado or other natural disaster, such as rising water?
- F. Would evacuating students expose them to speeding traffic, severe weather or other dangerous environment?

## Appendix 2 to Transportation Department Employee Manual

### ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

- A. Remain Calm.
- B. Stop immediately.
- C. Activate four-way flashers.
- D. Set the parking brake.
- E. Turn off the ignition switch (and the manual shut-down) and remove the key.
- F. Determine whether the bus must be evacuated: Check for smoke, ruptured fuel tank, leaking fuel lines, electrical fire. Keep students on the bus unless there is a possibility of fire, another collision, or danger of drowning. (Refer to Evacuation Section for procedures.)
- G. Check for injured students.
- H. Notify the appropriate persons and agencies. The nature of the accident and/or local policy might determine the priority.
  - 1. Call the Transportation Department via the two-way radio to notify them of the accident and request assistance as needed. (Preface your radio call with “this is an emergency” to clear the net.
  - 2. If you cannot reach the office over the two way radio, call the office on 706-796-4777 or 706-796-4779 or the driver hotline.
  - 3. If the above efforts are unsuccessful, use channel 3 or 4 on your two-way radio to contact a local law enforcement station, or use a cell phone to call the local Sheriff’s office (911)
- I. Give comfort and attention to the most seriously injured. Do not move injured persons unless absolutely necessary.
- J. Under normal circumstances, the vehicles involved should not be moved until directed by law enforcement personnel. (obey the instructions of a police officer in all situations)
- K. Place emergency reflectors in front of and behind the bus at proper distances.
- L. Protect the scene from traffic and people, if possible, so that evidence is not destroyed.
- M. Account for and control all students. Make a roster.
- N. Check for injuries in the other vehicle(s). OCGA 40-6-271(3)
- O. Do not discuss the facts of the accident with the general public.
- P. Cooperate with the Police and emergency personnel. Provide information as required by OCGA 40-6-271 which states:

“The driver of any vehicle involved in an accident shall give their name, address, and registration number of the vehicle and exhibit his/her operator’s license to the person struck or the driver or occupant of, or person attending any vehicle collided with.”
- Q. Do not place blame for the accident or make an admission of liability.
- R. Provide information on the accident only to the investigating officers and school officials. This information should include: a list of all students’ names, ages, and addresses, if available, information about the school bus, such as insurance, make, model number, and owner.
- S. If witnesses are present other than your students, get names, addresses, and license numbers.
- T. Continue the transportation of students when authorized to do so. They should be transported by the present bus, if released, or by another bus.
- U. Drivers are required to report all accidents to their supervisor who will contact the proper authorities.

## **Appendix 3 to Transportation Department Employee Manual**

### **STUDENT MANAGEMENT CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

In having a sympathetic understanding of students' problems, moods, and individual differences, drivers should remember:

- A. The average student wants to be older than he is and is seeking independence. Socially, they are in the process of developing adult socialization skills. At times young people can be painfully truthful.
- B. The average student likes to be treated as an equal by an adult.
- C. Students are impulsive. They react more frequently without thinking.
- D. Most students want adults to recognize their good traits and/or abilities.
- E. Students are physical. They are physically active and have to move. They show feelings through physical communication; touching, hitting, or holding.
- F. Sarcastic humor or subtle put-downs may not be understood by students; but they can and will intuitively understand them as put-downs and act on them.

Drivers should strive to build the morale and cooperation of the students on the bus. This can be accomplished by being friendly, courteous, and helpful. In the course of time, the student morale will be a great source of help in controlling students who are the worst behavior offenders. In some instances students discover that improper conduct is not acceptable to the group, and offenders will hesitate to do things which may cause them to lose face with their peers.

**STUDENT MANAGEMENT  
ROADBLOCKS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

When drivers confront students, they give off verbal and non-verbal messages in the way they communicate. What is said and how it was said are both interpreted by the students. Many times, how it was said or the hidden meanings are much more important than the actual words themselves.

There are three basic types of messages everyone has used from time to time that can be negative roadblocks to effectively communicating with students.

- A. Solution Messages -- Solution messages order people. They tell people what to do. The hidden message actually tells students, "you are too dumb to figure it out yourself."
- B. Put-down Messages -- People can be put-down or belittled in a number of ways. Criticizing, blaming, or name-calling are obvious ways. Less obvious is to compliment, reassure, or agree with somebody in a very negative or sarcastic way. Also through questioning, probing, analyzing, and diagnosing in a negative or disregarding manner one can create blocks in communication with students. The hidden message in the put-down is that "there is something wrong with you; you cause me a problem."
- C. Indirect Messages -- Ignoring someone or kidding them or being sarcastic with them are indirect messages. The hidden message is "if I confront you directly, you may not like me."

**STUDENT MANAGEMENT'**

**TIPS ON MAINTAINING DISCIPLINE**

- A. Never give an order you do not mean or do not have the authority to enforce.
- B. Drivers should demonstrate they are in control and are confident in their role as a bus driver. Students are more likely to have confidence if their driver has confidence.
- C. Have a reason for what you ask a student to do, and, if appropriate, take time to give the reason. The students can see the point if you do. There are times when a reason should not be given.
- D. Be honest in what you say and do. Remember, a student's faith in you is a great help.
- E. Be fair; it is not discipline but injustice that makes a student rebel against you.
- F. Be friendly. Show an interest in what students are doing.
- G. Commend good qualities and action.
- H. Strive to be constructive, not repressive.
- I. Remember that a sense of humor is extremely valuable.
- J. Do not judge misconduct on how it annoys you.
- K. Never take your personal feelings or prejudices out on students.
- L. Maintain poise at all times. Never lose your temper.
- M. Look for good qualities – all students have them.
- N. Sometimes it is wiser to overlook some things. Learn to pick your battles.
- O. Listen for suggestions and complaints from the students. You might learn a great deal about yourself.
- P. Never hold a student up to public ridicule.
- Q. Try to always smile and be friendly. No one likes a grump. There is nothing like a smile and a friendly "hello".
- R. Try to present students with an option. You have to display authority, but do not be a dictator.
- S. Be sure your students know the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behavior.
- T. Make every effort to learn your passengers' names as soon as possible. Learning their names shows an immediate interest in them.
- U. Keep a driver attitude – not a peer attitude.

**STUDENT MANAGEMENT**

**DO(s) and DON'T(s) of DISCIPLINE**

**A. DO(s) for Discipline**

1. Always be courteous to your students.
2. Always control your temper.
3. Act the part of a person in a responsible position, conscious of your important job.
4. Do everything possible to inform students that they themselves have important responsibilities in assuring group safety.
5. Maintain close contact with principals and parents. Secure their cooperation.
6. Spot the few troublemakers and ask the principal what methods to employ if you are uncertain.
7. Seat any troublemakers near you, within your vision.
8. Be firm, but fair and consistent, in handling discipline problems.

**B. DON'T(s) for Discipline**

1. Don't try to be "best buddies" with students.
2. Don't be too lenient. Be fair.
3. Don't make "wise cracks."
4. Don't threaten.
5. Don't shout.
6. Don't argue.
7. Don't use physical force; observe the policy of "hands off."
8. Don't create issues that have to be settled later.
9. Don't discipline students while the bus is in motion.
10. Don't assume everything is alright.
11. Don't make general statements to the entire bus load of students when restoring order.
12. Don't question publicly the decisions of the school board; however, feel free to make suggestions for improvement to the proper authority.

## **LOADING AND UNLOADING UNIT**

(From DOE School Bus Drivers Manual)

Passenger loading and unloading are the most dangerous maneuvers made by a school bus driver. Close attention must be given by local systems and school bus drivers to the safety of school bus stop locations, as well as loading and unloading procedures.

### **2. REQUIREMENTS FOR STOP LOCATIONS**

- A. It is recommended that a school bus stop not be established unless a stopped school bus can be seen for at least 300 feet by vehicles approaching or overtaking the school bus. Extra attention should be given to relocating stops near hills and curves.
- B. The roadside at the point of a school bus stop must have sufficient room so that the students have room to wait safely off the roadway.
- C. A bus stop should not be located within an intersection or within 30 feet of any flashing beacon, stop sign, or traffic control signal.
- D. Stops should not be located so as to force students to cross multi-lanes of traffic (more than two lanes).
- E. It is recommended that stops be located no closer together than one-tenth of a mile.

Drivers should report unsafe stops to their supervisor and offer suggestions to help correct the situation.

### **3. PROPER USE OF THE EIGHT-LIGHT SYSTEM**

#### **A. Loading**

1. When approaching a designated stop, start slowing down in preparation for the stop.
2. Apply brakes hard enough to light up the brake lights so that the vehicles following will have an indication you are about to stop.
3. Activate the amber warning lights approximately 200 feet from the stop.
4. Check all mirrors for traffic.
5. Approach students with extreme care giving due consideration to the surface of the roadway.
6. If possible, do not pull up any closer than three (3) feet from waiting students.
7. Stop the bus smoothly.
8. Place the transmission in neutral and apply the parking brake. This process is critical with students that cross in front of the bus and with large numbers of students.
9. Only after you have come to a complete stop, open your service door. Opening the service door will deactivate the amber flashing light and activate the red flashing lights, stop arm, and crossing gate.
10. All students at a designated stop should be on the bus before canceling the stop arm, flashing red lights, or crossing gate.
11. After all students have boarded the bus, you should close the door which will deactivate all safety devices. School buses should not be in motion with the service door open. Check your mirrors for traffic, release parking brake, engage transmission and proceed when it is clear to do so. If possible, allow students time to be seated before proceeding.

## **B. Unloading**

1. When approaching the designated stop, start slowing down in preparation for the stop.
2. Apply brakes hard enough to light up the brake lights so that vehicles following will have an indication you are about to stop.
3. Activate the amber warning lights approximately 200 feet before the stop.
4. Check all mirrors for traffic.
5. Stop the bus smoothly.
6. Place transmission in neutral and apply parking brake.
7. Only after you have come to a complete stop, open your service door. Opening the service door will deactivate the amber warning lights and activate the red flashing lights, stop arm and crossing gate.
8. Students should not be allowed off the bus until all traffic has stopped. Teach the students that your signal for danger after they are off the bus is blowing the horn.
9. Flashing red lights, stop arm, and crossing gate must remain activated until all students who have to cross the road have crossed and reached a safe place.
10. Check all mirrors for traffic and students.
11. Close your door, which will deactivate all safety devices, and proceed when it is safe.

## **C. When Not To Use The Eight-Light System**

1. They are not to be used on school property or while loading and unloading off the roadway.
2. They are not to be used in driveways.
3. They are not to be used while backing.
4. They are not to be used while making turns or turnarounds.
5. They are not to be used while stopping at railroad crossings.
6. They are not to be used for fog or inclement weather when not loading or unloading students.
7. They are not to be used to assist another bus driver who is loading or unloading passengers.
8. They are not to be used to assist another bus driver to enter traffic.

The only time a driver should use the eight-light system is to pick up or discharge students on the bus route. (Never in a bus lot, at school, or at a railroad crossing)

It is imperative that a driver account for every student who got off the bus before proceeding to the next stop. Drivers must train students to cross the road in a straight line, 10 feet in front of the bus, while observing the driver's use of standard hand signals.

## **4. LOADING AND UNLOADING STUDENTS ON HIGHWAYS, STREETS, SCHOOL GROUNDS, AND TURNAROUND STOPS**

A stopped bus on a highway is a hazard. The bus, students and other vehicles on the route are all exposed to increased risk during the stop.

Use safe procedures and practice them over and over in the same order until they become habit.

- A. Loading passengers on the street: (After engaging the amber lights)
1. Do not pull up any closer than three (3) feet from waiting students.
  2. Shift your bus to neutral and apply parking brake.
  3. Open service door to cancel amber lights and activate the red flashing lights, stop arm, and crossing gate.
  4. The open door should be the signal for students to load (students who must cross the road may require an additional signal).
  5. Load students in an orderly manner. Be sure all students have boarded, check mirrors.
  6. Loading in an orderly manner means that drivers should have their passengers:
    - \* Arrive on time;
    - \* Wait in “single file” or in an orderly group;
    - \* Do not approach bus until the bus is stopped;
    - \* Use hand rails when entering bus; and move directly to their seats.
  7. Close door, which will deactivate the stop arm, flashing red lights, and crossing gate.
- B. Unloading the passengers on the street:
1. Follow loading procedure for bringing bus to a safe stop.
  2. Check mirrors to make sure traffic has stopped before opening door.
  3. Passengers are to remain seated until door is opened.
  4. Count passengers as they leave and count them again as they move away from the bus, especially those who must cross the road or street.
  5. Passengers crossing the street, upon being discharged from the bus, shall cross approximately 10 feet in front of the stopped bus. Go in a straight line. Students should be instructed NEVER to cross behind the bus.
  6. Check right side mirrors for students who do not cross the street.
  7. Students should be instructed to move well away from the side of the bus after leaving. One method commonly used is to be 10 feet away from the bus.
  8. The students should not get mail from a roadside mailbox until after the bus leaves.
  9. Those students that cross the street should wait for a signal from the bus driver. They should also stop at the traffic side of the bus and look left, right, and left again for themselves.
  10. Students should walk straight across the street. They should not return if any item is dropped.

## RAILROAD CROSSING PROCEDURES

(From DOE School Bus Drivers Manual)

### **General Procedures**

- When the railroad pre-warning sign appears, slow down, shift to a lower gear, and test the brakes.
- Activate the four-way yellow hazard flasher lights approximately 200 feet before the railroad crossing
- Tap brake to illuminate the brake lights.
- Choose an escape route in the event of brake failure.
- Stop smoothly at a distance of at least 15 feet, but not more than 50 feet from the nearest rail.
- Place transmission in neutral and hold the service brake.
- Absolute silence must be maintained.
- Open the service door.
- Open the driver's window.
- Turn off all noisy equipment.
- Look and listen for an approaching train.
- If a clear view cannot be obtained, pull up nearer to the tracks and repeat the procedure.

### **If you have determined that the tracks are clear:**

- Close the service door.
- Place the transmission in such a gear selection that will permit you to cross the tracks without shifting gears or stalling.
- School buses should not be in motion with the service door open.
- Cross the tracks. (Do not shift gears while crossing).
- Deactivate the four-way yellow hazard flasher lights.
- Continue on the route.

### **If the tracks are NOT clear:**

- Set the parking brake.
- Close the service door.
- Shut off the engine (if you suspect a very long wait).
- Once the train has cleared the crossing, start the bus, open the service door, look and listen.
- Follow the procedures that were previously outlined for a clear track.

### **Crossing a multi-track railroad crossing**

- \* Determine if you must stop for the second set of tracks. A driver must stop if there is room for a bus plus 15 feet in front and behind the bus to the nearest track.
- \* Make sure no train is approaching on any of the tracks.
- \* If a train is approaching, wait until clear to cross.
- \* After train passes, wait until other tracks become fully visible.
- \* Perform the same procedures as outlined for single-track crossing.

**Crossing with crossing gates:** No person shall drive any vehicle through, around, or under any crossing gate or barrier at a railroad crossing while the gate or barrier is closed or is being opened or closed (except when a uniformed officer or railroad representative signals you to cross). Drivers should take the time to report problems at railroad crossings that cause hazardous situations.

### **Potential problems to look for at railroad crossings:**

- Visual obstructions such as weeds, brush, or trees.
- Signal malfunctions or when signals are not working at all.
- Condition of roadway at the crossing.
- Condition of the tracks at the crossing.
- When crossings are blocked by trains for long periods of time.
- Box car(s) parked on spur track near crossing, limiting visibility.
- Failure of train to give warning with whistle/horn.
- Traffic lights or stop signs immediately after the grade crossing.

**Appendix 9 to Transportation Department Employee Manual**

**EXTRACURRICULAR TRIP SCHEDULE SELECTION**

We categorize our extracurricular trip support into general type trips, based on the mission and the time of day the trip is performed. These separate categories are called “schedules” in the Transportation Operation Management System software. These schedules are then programmed into the automated trip assignment feature of T.O.M. We then categorize each trip as we enter it in our schedule. We can use the automated assignment feature and let the automated program assign drivers to trips.

Please select the scheduled (type of trips) you would like to support by **circling** “YES” or “NO”:

SCHEDULES	DESCRIPTION OF THIS TYPE OF EXTRACURRICULAR TRIP		
WKEND	Weekend/Holiday Trips	YES	NO
MIDDAY	Weekday, Mid-Day Trips from (9:30 a.m. to 1:45p.m.) Monday through Friday	YES	NO
NITE	Evening Activities after 4:30 p.m. (Non-Program Assignments)	YES	NO
CBI	Community Based Instruction (Special Needs Students <b>with</b> Wheelchairs). <b>Must have a SPED bus.</b>	YES	NO
CBI-RG	Community Based Instruction (Special Needs Students <b>without</b> Wheelchairs). <b>Can use a regular bus.</b>	YES	NO
SPECED	Activities involving Special Needs Students <b>with</b> Wheelchairs other than CBI program. <b>Must have a SPED bus.</b>	YES	NO
SPEDRG	Activities involving Special Needs Students <b>without</b> Wheelchairs other than CBI program. <b>Can use a regular bus.</b>	YES	NO
PROG	Recurring Non-Activity type trips assigned to the same driver(s) over a period of time, such as After School Programs or Saturday School.	YES	NO
SUMMER	Activities or Programs taking place during Summer Break	YES	NO
EMERG	Emergency last minute assignment or replacement. Driver must agree to be readily available and provide a current phone number will result in being removed from this schedule.	YES	NO

I understand that my name will be placed on the appropriate schedules consistent with my assigned bus and type of activities I want to support. All driver names will be sorted on the respective schedule listing in seniority order. Drivers will be assigned to the activity trips in this order unless there is a conflict with routes or other activities.

I understand that each schedule is a separate list and the number of trips available on a schedule and the number of drivers signed up for that schedule will affect how often my name comes up on that schedule. If my name comes up on a schedule and I have a conflicting route or activity, my name will be skipped but remain available for the next trip that does not conflict.

I understand that it is my responsibility to keep this form updated. The above selections will remain in effect until I submit an updated form.

I understand that I am expected to provide transportation support for any trip once I accept the trip ticket. I understand that I can refuse an activity at least 24 hours prior to the time of the trip by signing the refusal statement on the trip by signing the refusal statement on the trip ticket. I also understand that I must immediately notify someone in the office in person when I wish to refuse a trip. Refused trips must NOT be replaced in the drop box! I understand that there may be consequences if I refuse a trip within 24 hours in advance, there are no consequences if you immediately refuse.)

I understand that I cannot transfer an activity trip to another driver or pay a driver to support any trip that is assigned to me. If you must refuse a trip at the last minute and have a driver willing to cover it for you, you MUST notify the office first.

I have received and read the Acknowledgement of Activity/Special Trip Guidelines on the reverse side of this form and agree to abide by these guidelines.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ BUS #: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 10 to Transportation Department Employee Manual**

**Acknowledgement of Activity / Special Trip Guidelines**

I hereby acknowledge my understanding of the following guidelines, policies, and directives concerning extra-curricular trips on a school bus in support of the Board of Education:

1. I understand I must dress appropriately and in good taste.
2. I understand I may NOT take family members or guests along with me on the trip. Exceptions will be made only when the sponsor invites the guests. These special invitations must be approved in advance with the Director or Assistant Director of Transportation.
3. I agree to follow all traffic laws, state laws, board policy, and Transportation Department guidance.
4. I understand I fall under the temporary supervision of the trip sponsor for the duration of the trip, and am expected to accommodate all reasonable requests that do not violate laws, policy, and existing guidance. I will follow the instructions or directions of the sponsor.
5. I understand I am to remain with the team, group, or class at all times. In those cases when the group leaves the bus, I understand I am to remain with the bus.
6. I understand I am to report to the pickup location with sufficient fuel for the trip. On long trips when refueling is necessary, I will accomplish the refueling when the group is occupied on the activity so as not to delay or inconvenience the group. If refueling is required enroute to, or returning from a destination, I will ensure no students remain on the bus during the refueling process.
7. I will take action as necessary to report to the trip pickup location with a reasonably clean bus. I will clean my bus upon return to the Transportation Department in order to return the bus in the same, or better, condition than when I departed on the trip.
8. I will be a team player for the duration of the activity trip. I will avoid taking any action contrary to the plans of the group. This includes consuming meals at the locations specified by the group sponsor on the team’s schedule.
9. I will submit a completed and signed activity trip sheet the next business day after returning from the activity. I understand that holding activity trip sheets places an unnecessary burden on the activity trip pay computation process and may result in my pay for the activity being delayed (and possibly miscalculated).
10. I will maintain the proper speed limit as established and posted, or limited by state law. I understand the maximum authorized speed for a Georgia school bus is 55 miles-per-hour on activity trips (including Interstate highways). I will never exceed this maximum speed limit.
11. I understand that the sponsor must indicate a true and accurate release time on the trip ticket. Any attempts made to convince the sponsor to enter a false report will be considered fraud and dealt with as deceit and insubordination.
12. I understand that, from time to time, I will receive a revised trip ticket. I understand it is my responsibility to destroy the incorrect copy. I will never submit a duplicate copy of a trip report requesting duplicate pay for services.
13. I understand activities are not to be listed on the driver mileage sheets. This is an unauthorized entry and will be ignored.
14. I understand I am required to report any misconduct, damage to the bus, or any instances in which I was mistreated to the Director of Transportation or Assistant Director of Transportation. Such information must be in writing (legible handwritten reports are sufficient) to facilitate forwarding the report through proper channels for resolution.
15. Should disagreements arise during the activity, I will refer the issue to the staff member in charge for resolution. Should I disagree with the resolution, I will remain polite and pursue any residual complaints through proper channels upon completion of the trip.
16. I understand the provisions of room and board apply only to those conditions meeting the requirements for travel pay. When these conditions are met, the sponsoring agency will provide meals and lodging in lieu of travel pay. I understand these conditions are NOT met during local trips, and I will never make any special demands on the trip sponsor during these short trips. (NOTE: Sponsors are asked to be considerate of bus drivers in their trip planning. This may include taking extra drinks on a hot day, or an extra box lunch if the group is on a picnic. If such considerations are not taken, drivers are asked to resolve the issue respectfully)

I have read and understand the above rules. I understand the above listing is not all-inclusive. Any situation not listed above will be evaluated by the highest standards of courteous and respectful behavior. I understand I must continually meet these high standards in order to remain on the approved activity trip driver listing. I understand that I may be removed from the activity list at any time by the Director of Transportation if I take actions contrary to board policies and/or policies and instructions in effect at the time support is provided to a particular trip.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Driver’s Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

Bus No: \_\_\_\_\_

## **NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

### **Notice of Non-Discrimination**

The Richmond County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities for students. The following person has been designated to investigate any complaint communicated to the Board of Education alleging non-compliance of non-discrimination policies regarding student activities.

Director of Student Services (Dr. Maria Brown)  
864 Broad Street  
Augusta, GA 30901  
(706) 826-1000  
[brownma@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us](mailto:brownma@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us)

### **Notice of Non-Discrimination**

The Richmond County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability in its program and activities and provide equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

George Bailey (Title IX Coordinator)  
864 Broad Street  
Augusta, Ga 30901  
706) 826-1126  
[bailege@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us](mailto:bailege@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us)

