

ROARING FORK SCHOOL DISTRICT
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
HANDBOOK

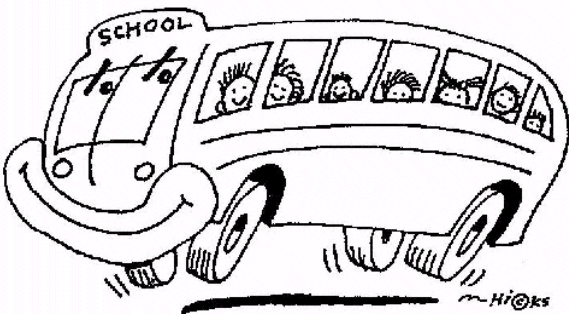




TABLE OF CONTENTS

Topic	Page
Importance of the Driver	1
Driver Qualifications and Responsibilities	1
Personnel Policies	2
Drug-free Workplace Policy	3
Tobacco-free Workplace Policy	3
School Cancellation	4
Procedure for Vehicles Involved in an Accident	4
Medical Emergencies	5
Driver Pre-Trip Check	6
Vehicle Pre and Post-Trip Inspections	6
Information and Checking In	7
Child Check	7
Activity Trips	7
General Rules	9
Route Procedures	9
Tips for Dealing with Angry Parents	10
Student Management	10
Reporting Child Abuse	11
Sexual Harassment of Students	11
Stop Arm Drive by Violations	13
Special Driving Circumstances	14
Safety Tips	15
Retarder Use	15
Driving Emergencies	16
Railroad Tracks	16
Automatic Chains	16
Fire Extinguishers	16
Evacuation Drills	17
Special Education Transportation	17
Loading and Unloading Procedures	18

Roaring Fork School District Transportation Department

The mission of the Roaring Fork School District Transportation Department is to serve the community while supporting the District's educational mission by transporting all students safely and efficiently.

IMPORTANCE OF THE DRIVER

Our community is entrusting us to transport its most precious cargo, its children. In order to meet these expectations, a successful bus driver must be observant of traffic, signs, rules and regulations, the environment of their bus, and safety. Roaring Fork School District hires only the best and expects top performance from members of the school bus driving force.

Four keys to being a successful school bus driver are:

- Positive attitude
- Communication
- Cooperation
- Attentiveness

Students respect and obey a person they can count on. Students relate to someone who is friendly, fair, and firm. Injustice, not discipline, incites students to become disruptive. The effective bus driver will be consistent and fair in the management of student behavior.

A successful driver understands and complies with the Rules Governing the Operation of School Transportation Vehicles and the Colorado Traffic Laws. Organizations whose members work as a team with mutual respect, friendliness, and interest will create an image that will be respected by team members, students and the public.

“I AM JUST A BUS DRIVER?”

Have you ever heard someone say, “You are just a bus driver”? Have you ever said to yourself, “I am just a bus driver”? Both are statements that should make every driver proud. Look up the meaning of “just” in the dictionary. The meanings of “just” include:

- Rational and informed
- In accordance with correct principles
- Exactly or precisely
- Really positively

It is not everyone that can be a school bus driver. It takes a very special person to perform this duty. So the next time you use the phrase, “I am just a bus driver”, remember the meaning of the word “just”.

“I AM JUST A BUS DRIVER, AND PROUD OF IT!”

DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Qualifications

Drivers must have a Class BP2 with an “S” endorsement CDL. All CDL drivers must have a current DOT physical. Drivers must attend a yearly in-service and must maintain current certifications.

Responsibilities

Drivers shall perform regular daily inspections of their bus and report any mechanical difficulties. Drivers are responsible for operating the bus in a safe manner at all times and enforcing the rules of conduct as outlined in this handbook and in state laws for school vehicles and drivers.

Substitute/Activity Driver Responsibilities

Substitute/activity drivers follow the same guidelines as route drivers. Substitute drivers must follow the route sheet detail and may not vary from the times and stop locations listed. If you arrive too early at a scheduled stop, pull over and wait until the time indicated on the route sheet.

Dress For Safety And Professionalism

- Shoes should fully enclose the entire foot. Soles and heels should allow stable and safe walking on uneven or slick surfaces. Do not wear pumps or other narrow, high-heeled shoes.
- Outer garments and accessories should be close fitting and of a type that prevents catching in moving machinery or other protrusions, such as door operating handles and shift levers.
- Clothing may not be provocative, antagonistic, or insulting to co-workers, passengers, or the public. Clothing may not display or advertise alcohol products, controlled substances/drugs, or obscene words and phrases.

PERSONNEL POLICIES

On-line Personnel Policies

District personnel policies can be found on the District's website at rfsd.k12.co.us. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Personal Leave
- Sick Leave
- Maternity Leave
- Workers' Compensation
- Equal Opportunity Employment
- FMLA - Federally-mandated Family and Medical Leave

Seniority

When a driver leaves an existing route or a new route is created, it will be open for bid. The route will be granted to the driver with the most seniority in the district. If no one in the district is interested in the route, a new driver will be hired to take the position.

Personal Leave Before and After Holidays

Personal leave will not be granted to bus drivers on days just preceding or just after school vacations, holidays or scheduled in-service. Drivers absent on these days will not be paid for the day missed. An exception to this policy may be made if the driver brings in a doctor's written excuse indicating that the day off was unavoidable. Routine doctor appointments will not be considered excused.

Jury Duty

When an employee is summoned for jury duty, it is expected that this responsibility will be assumed. The employee will receive their regular pay for the period of jury duty and the employee may retain any money received for travel allowance. Drivers will need to bring in proof of the jury notice and/or time served.

Medical Examination

If there is reason to believe that an employee's physical or mental health is detrimental to the welfare of students or other employees, the supervisor/director may require the employee to submit to a medical examination. The examination will include appropriate medical tests and additional documentation of the staff member's ability to carry out assigned duties that involve contact with students and other employees.

Workers' Compensation

All injuries on the job must be reported to the supervisor/director within 24 hours and appropriate paperwork must be completed immediately.

Chain Of Command

Each driver is responsible to the transportation supervisors, the chief operating officer, the superintendent, & the board of education.

Resignation/Dismissals

Resignation: In the case of voluntary resignation, non-certified employees must give a minimum of two weeks written notice. Bus drivers resigning prior to completing one-year of service from their date of hire will be required to refund the cost of the driver physical, driver training, and licensure fees.

Dismissals: When an employee demonstrates an inability to successfully perform the duties of his/her job or work assigned, the employee may be terminated.

Disciplinary action:

- An employee shall be advised of concerns/infractions verbally or in writing. Typically, the notice will include plans for correction or improvement.
- An employee may be suspended from their assignment for good cause as a disciplinary measure or pending the investigation of an incident/accident or other concern at the discretion of the district.
- An employee may be placed on probation with specific consequences should the infraction be repeated.

If it becomes evident that the employee cannot satisfactorily fill the position, the employee may be dismissed without further notice. An employee is subject to immediate termination without further notice if they put students' or community members' welfare in jeopardy. Terminated employees will be asked to sign a separation agreement.

Drug-free Workplace

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use/misuse of alcohol or a controlled substance, as well as the prescribed use of medical marijuana, is prohibited by the Roaring Fork School District on district property at any time, at any school-sponsored or sanctioned activity or event off school property or en route thereto, or on the way to work.

Observance of this policy is a condition of employment. A violation shall subject the employee to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include termination and referral for prosecution. In appropriate circumstances, and at the district's discretion, disciplinary sanctions may include completion of an approved drug or alcohol abuse assistance or rehabilitation program. Any such program shall be at the employee's expense. However, the district is not required to offer rehabilitation in lieu of termination or other discipline to any employee who has violated this policy.

An employee who violates this policy shall be suspended immediately by the principal or supervisor pending termination of employment.

If an employee is arrested or convicted at any time for possession of drugs or for being under the influence of a controlled substance, the employee shall be suspended immediately pending an investigation. After the investigation, the superintendent may reinstate the employee, continue the suspension, or discipline the employee up to and including recommending termination of employment to the Board of Education. In any case, the issue will be reported in full to the Board of Education.

Pursuant to law, any employee who is convicted or pleads nolo contendere under any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring on or outside of the workplace during or outside of the school year shall notify the superintendent no later than the first week day after the conviction. Conviction under the criminal drug statute will result in termination.

The district has an obligation under federal law to notify the appropriate federal agency within ten days after receiving notice of an employee's conviction under a criminal drug statute if there is a relationship between federal funds received by the district and the convicted employee's work site.

Information about the standards of conduct required by this policy, including the consequences for violating the policy, shall be communicated to district employees in an appropriate manner on an annual basis. All employees shall acknowledge receipt of this policy in writing upon adoption and written acknowledgement shall be required of any new employees to the district.

Tobacco-free Workplace

Employees may not use tobacco products including vapor (vape) pens in any district facilities or schools, on the grounds of any district facilities or schools, nor in any district vehicles. Employees who are on duty may not use tobacco products at any district-sponsored activity, on or off school grounds, where students are present. This prohibition does not apply to designated outside areas at public functions when employees are not on duty. Failure to comply with Board of Education policy and this regulation shall be grounds for a charge of insubordination.

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

1. "School property" shall mean all property owned, leased, rented or otherwise used by a school including but not limited to the following:

a. All interior portions of any building or other structure used for instruction, administration, support services, maintenance or storage. The term shall not apply to buildings used primarily as residences, i.e., teacherages.

b. All school grounds over which the school exercises control including areas surrounding any building, playgrounds, athletic fields, recreation areas and parking areas.

c. All vehicles used by the district for transporting students, staff, visitors or other persons.

2. "Tobacco" shall include cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco and all other kinds and forms of tobacco prepared in such a manner as to be suitable for chewing, smoking or both. "Tobacco" shall include cloves or any other product packaged for smoking or ingested via vapor (vape) pen.

3. "Use" shall mean lighting, chewing, inhaling or smoking any tobacco product.

This policy shall be published in employee handbooks, posted on bulletin boards and announced in staff meetings.

Employees who violate the district's smoking policy shall be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

- First Offense: Written reprimand by supervisor
- Second Offense: Three-day suspension without pay
- Third Offense: Dismissal

Violations shall be cumulative over the employees' term of employment with the District.

SCHOOL CANCELLATION

Closing of school may occur for the following reasons:

- Adverse weather conditions
- Lack of adequate heat
- Other conditions that could affect the safety of the students

When adverse weather conditions exist, the Superintendent of Schools makes the official decision concerning the closing of the district's facilities. The transportation office will utilize a phone tree to notify drivers and other transportation department employees.

PROCEDURE FOR VEHICLES INVOLVED IN AN ACCIDENT

The driver of any school vehicle that is involved in an accident resulting in student injuries shall follow the procedures outlined under the Medical Emergencies section of this handbook on page 5 below.

Accident/Incident/Breakdown Procedures

- Stop the vehicle immediately.
- Notify transportation supervisor if during office hours. If outside of office hours, notify law enforcement first, then notify transportation supervisor. Provide the exact location of the vehicle, indicate if students are on board, and indicate whether the vehicle is drivable. The transportation supervisor will notify the home school if necessary.
- Remain calm and stay at the scene.
- If possible, move the vehicle out of traffic to a safe nearby location (mark the area of the accident).
- If the vehicle cannot be moved and it is determined that it is unsafe to keep students inside the vehicle, evacuate students to a safe place, away from traffic.
- Render any person injured reasonable assistance (see Medical Emergencies section below).
- Request emergency medical assistance as necessary.
- Place the three emergency reflectors within ten minutes.
- In case of breakdown, call the transportation department with as much information as possible about the nature of the breakdown.
- Obtain and write down information such as name(s) of parties involved, license numbers, registration numbers, location, time, and road and weather conditions. If you have access to a camera, use it to document the accident scene and license plates of other involved vehicles.
- If students are on board, create a roster of all passengers.
- Work with the transportation department supervisors to make provisions for transporting students to their homes or school.
- Upon returning to the bus barn, the driver must complete the Driver Report of Accident/Incident Form.
- For accidents resulting in injury requiring treatment away from the scene, death, or the total property damage for the accident equals or exceeds \$2,500, the STU-5 form must be completed and sent to CDE within 20 business days. The STU-5 will be completed by the transportation supervisor(s).

- ALL accidents are to be immediately reported to the transportation department and/or police department, no matter how minor. Unreported accidents will subject the driver to disciplinary action.
- If you approach the scene of an accident in which you were not involved and no one else is available, provide reasonable assistance. Thereafter immediately continue on the routine schedule.

Accidents Involving Unattended Vehicles/Property

The driver of any school vehicle that is involved in an accident with another vehicle or property that is unattended resulting in any damage to such vehicle or other property shall immediately stop. The driver shall locate and notify the operator or owner of such vehicle or property. If the driver cannot locate anyone, the driver shall leave their name, address, registration number of the vehicle, and phone number of the transportation department attached securely in a conspicuous place on the unattended vehicle. Call local authorities and report to the transportation department immediately. Complete the Driver Report of Accident/Incident Form and submit it to the transportation supervisor.

On- And Off- Duty Accidents And Tickets

Drivers are required to immediately report to the supervisor/director any violations that could result in an accumulation of points or affect the status or validity of your driver's license. The transportation department shall be notified of the infraction in writing by the end of the next working day following the infraction. This applies both to violations when you are driving a school vehicle or your personal vehicle. All accidents in school vehicles regardless of how minimal must be reported to the transportation department, and a Driver Report of Accident/Incident Form must be completed.

Post Accident Drug/Alcohol Testing

At the District's discretion, any driver may be drug or alcohol tested after any accident/incident.

Drivers must be drug and alcohol tested if:

- There was a fatality, OR
- The driver was both cited with a moving violation and there was an injury that required the injured person to leave the scene of the accident for immediate medical treatment, OR
- One of the vehicles received enough damage causing it to be towed away from the scene by a tow truck or another type of vehicle.

Post-accident drug and alcohol screens must be performed as soon as practicable. Non-compliance will be treated as a positive drug test.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

If A Child Is Injured On The School Bus

- Stop the bus as soon as possible in a safe location.
- If needed, administer first aid. Call 911 if necessary. In cases of possible head, neck or back injuries, DO NOT move the student.
- Notify the transportation director/supervisor to inform them of the situation.
- A supervisor or 911 will advise the driver of the next step.
- The supervisor will contact the parents. All reasonable attempts will be made to reach the parents. A message will be left on voice mail with contact number and a description of what has taken place if the supervisor is unable to contact parents directly.
- If no contact is made with parents, the student will be taken back to the school (unless an ambulance has been called).
- A supervisor will contact the principal to inform them of the situation and that the student is being brought back to the school.
- Once the student has been brought back to the school, the principal will determine the course of action to be taken.
- The transportation department will attempt to contact parents of other students on the bus if the bus will be significantly delayed from the scheduled drop-off times.
- If an ambulance is called, the supervisor will contact the chief operating officer or superintendent.
- The superintendent and transportation supervisor or chief operating officer will determine whether parents of all other students on the bus should be notified with details of the accident.
- The driver will complete a Driver Report of Accident/Incident form and submit it to the transportation supervisor/office the same day. The form is available in the bus clipboard or can be obtained from the transportation office. The bus driver must sign the form and fax it to 970-384-5985 or deliver it to the transportation office.
- All incidents resulting in injury to one or more students will be investigated by the transportation supervisor(s). The investigation will include verification of the facts reported on the Driver Report of Accident/Incident form. Any time a student is injured on the bus, the driver will be suspended with pay pending completion of the investigation. The supervisor will develop recommendations based on the outcome of the investigation which may include, but not be

limited to, driver retraining, route reassignment, disciplinary action, etc. When the investigation determines that the driver was at no fault and could have done nothing to alter the course of events, the driver shall be immediately reinstated to their regular route assignment. The investigation will be documented by the supervisor on the Post Accident/Incident Investigation form.

- The transportation supervisor will forward a copy of the insurance company's Incident Report Form to the insurance company (if necessary) and to the chief operating officer. The Driver Report of Accident/Incident form and the Post Accident/Incident Investigation form will also be forwarded to the chief operating officer.
- If a bus accident results in a student injury requiring treatment away from the scene; death; or the total property damage for the accident equals or exceeds \$2,500, the transportation supervisor(s) will complete CDE Form STU-5 and submit to CDE within 20 business days of the accident. This form must be signed by the transportation supervisor and chief operating officer. The form shall be completed whenever a student is injured on the bus and requires treatment away from the scene regardless of whether the bus was physically in an accident.

Handling Body Fluids In School Buses

All body fluids of all persons should be considered to contain infectious germs. The term "body fluids" includes blood, semen, drainage from scrapes and cuts, feces, urine, vomit, respiratory secretions (nasal discharge) and saliva. Contact with body fluids presents a risk of infection with a variety of germs. However, in general, the risk is very low and dependent on a variety of factors including the type of fluid with which contact is made. Body fluids must be contained or removed immediately using the established procedures. The body fluid kit is mounted in every bus. The kit contains gloves, dry absorbent, alcohol, & clean up equipment. The driver must report that the kit has been used so that the vehicle can be equipped with a replacement kit.

How To Use The Clean-Up Kit:

1. Put on gloves
2. Remove all contents of the bag
3. Sprinkle absorbent over the liquid spills
4. Scrape up the absorbent with cardboard pieces and place in large bag
5. Wipe up remaining spill with paper towels and place in trash bag
6. Pour alcohol over soiled area
7. Dry with paper towels
8. Dispose of all used items in trash bag
9. Remove gloves
10. Close bag and dispose of in proper container
11. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water

DRIVER PRE-TRIP INSPECTION

School bus drivers are required by Colorado regulations to perform a daily school bus pre-trip inspection before placing the vehicle in service. It is just as important, or perhaps more important, for a "driver pre-trip inspection". Physical and emotional stress can affect driving performance. A well-rested driver is more alert to emergency situations and is less likely to misjudge speed and distance. A driver who gets adequate rest is less likely to overreact to stress created by traffic and passengers.

Illnesses and the medicines used to combat them can interfere with concentration, coordination and decision-making abilities. Concerns about medications with the potential to affect driver performance should be reported by the driver to his/her supervisor.

A positive attitude will go a long way in influencing the driver's ability to perform his/her duties safely. Always remember that the safe transport of students is of primary importance.

VEHICLE PRE-TRIP INSPECTION

Each school transportation vehicle shall have a daily pre-trip inspection performed and documented by the school transportation vehicle operator **prior** to the vehicle being placed in service. A complete list of pre-trip inspection requirements is provided in each bus clipboard. Extra forms are available in the transportation office.

VEHICLE POST-TRIP INSPECTION

Each school transportation vehicle shall have a post-trip inspection performed and documented by the school transportation vehicle operator at the completion of their route. A complete list of post-trip inspection requirements is provided in each bus clipboard. Extra forms are available in the transportation office.

INFORMATION AND CHECKING IN

Before and after routes, drivers should check the bulletin boards and mailboxes for vital information. This information may be personal or job-related and ensures timely communication. Drivers must also do a radio check to the transportation office before beginning their pre-trip inspection and prior to all routes. This confirms that the radio is working and ensures the transportation office that the driver has reported and is prepared to perform the functions of his/her job. This will also give the office a chance to relay messages to the driver regarding their students and/or route.

CHILD CHECK

At the conclusion of each run, a child check is to be conducted. Students may fall asleep or be hiding so they do not get off the bus at their school/program or stop. Upon completion of the child check, the "Bus Empty" placard must be displayed and visible from the bus exterior. Leaving a child unattended and on the bus will not be tolerated and may result in driver termination.

ACTIVITY TRIPS

Trip Assignment Process

Activity trips will be offered monthly. Once the trip bid sheet is published, driver trip choices will be due to the transportation department by the date specified on each bid sheet. Trip awards will be delivered and posted as soon as possible at each respective bus barn.

All activity trips will be scheduled based on the seniority rotation and priority of choice. If no one bids for the trip the first time, it will be offered to anyone who will take it, first-come-first-serve, with no rotation. Each month the driver next in line (by seniority) will move to the top of the list and that driver will get their first choice for that month. The next driver in line gets second choice for that month, etc.

Sub drivers are eligible to pick up any trips that were not bid on by route drivers. A driver may move to the head of the seniority list and choose any trip they want if they are donating their time for that trip. Due to rules prescribed by the Fair Labor Standards Act, hourly route and sub drivers are not permitted to donate their trips. Salaried teachers and coaches are permitted to donate their trips if the trips are part of their teaching or coaching assignments.

If the school cancels a trip, the driver will be offered the next trip prior to the next driver in rotations. Trips will be replaced with as close to the same number of hours as possible. If a trip is offered for replacement, the driver's #1 priority choice will be the replacement trip. If the driver does not choose the next trip offered for replacement, the driver forfeits their priority and the rotation list will resume.

If an activity trip is voluntarily forfeited, the next driver in rotation will be offered and awarded the trip. If a trip is voluntarily surrendered, the driver is not eligible for a make-up trip.

Every effort will be made to provide advance notice of trips. However, extenuating circumstances may prevent advance notice.

All trips will be a minimum of 1 hour. If a trip is canceled and the driver is not notified, the driver will be paid for the estimated total trip time. The exception to this is if the trip was called as a result of weather or extenuating circumstances.

It is the driver's responsibility to know where they are going prior to the trip. Drivers may access directions on-line or may ask a supervisor prior to departure.

In the event passengers have special needs or require adaptive equipment, the driver must have completed the annual refresher training specific to the equipment being utilized. If the driver is unsure of the proper use of any adaptive equipment, he/she must contact a supervisor immediately. Under no circumstances should the driver proceed with the trip until further instruction is received from the supervisor.

If a driver chooses to give up a trip previously assigned to them, the driver must find a replacement driver.

Activity Trip Procedures

Pre-trip Inspections: Drivers must allow 15 minutes or more to perform pre-trip inspections. The bus must be at the loading area 15 minutes prior to departure time.

Weather Conditions: Drivers should check weather conditions prior to departure by calling 303-639-1111 or accessing on-line weather and road report information. When inclement weather is a concern, the bus driver and trip sponsor will contact the transportation director/supervisor for a final determination as to whether the trip will proceed.

Vehicle Capacity: Posted vehicle capacities are never to be exceeded under any circumstances. Two per seat for high school students is the recommended maximum capacity as follows:

65 passenger bus – high school capacity is 43 passengers

71 passenger bus – high school capacity is 47 passengers

There may be some exceptions to recommended high school capacities depending on trip distance and number of students. The supervisors will approve such exceptions.

Fueling and Cleaning: It is the responsibility of the activity trip driver to fuel and clean the bus before and after the trip. If fuel is required while on a trip, it is up to the sponsor to furnish the money for this. It is NOT the driver's responsibility to pay for the fuel.

Sponsors/Supervision: Sufficient sponsors should accompany the trip and be distributed throughout the bus to be responsible for discipline on the bus. The driver should be free from such tasks to concentrate on driving.

Student Rosters: Sponsors are to give drivers a roster sheet listing all the students on the bus. Student rosters are critical in the event of an accident.

Emergency Evacuation Instructions: As per state regulations, passengers on activity or field trips shall receive emergency evacuation instructions prior to departure. Drivers must give the verbal evacuation instructions found on the bus clipboard. At this time the driver should tell the students what they expect of their behavior while on the trip.

Driver Fatigue: If you become tired on the trip, pull the bus over, get out and walk around. You may tell the sponsor you need to get out and check the vehicle, take your tire thumper and check the tires. SAFETY COMES FIRST!

Change in Route: If the driver thinks a change in travel route must be made because of safety, the driver, coach or sponsor must contact a transportation supervisor to get approval for the change.

At the destination:

Park in an area where the bus will not be blocked from departure. When backing up, get out of the bus and walk to the rear to ensure that it is safe. Drivers can also use a responsible adult as a spotter.

- Perform the post-trip vehicle inspection.
- Drivers are to remain available at the destination unless other arrangements are made with the sponsor.
- Drivers must take the time to rest up for the return trip. Most schools will provide a quiet place for the driver to rest. Drivers should contact a coach or administrator to locate a quiet place for rest.

Upon your return to the District:

Clean and fuel: It is very important that the bus be cleaned and fueled after the trip. If it is late and you would like to come back the following day to finish cleaning the bus, it must be completed prior to the bus being needed for service.

Paperwork: Make sure all paperwork is filled out correctly and completely. The hard copy needs to be filled out for fueling. The activity trip sheet needs to be filled out with correct figures for mileage and time. Failure to fill this report out correctly could delay your pay for this trip! Drivers should keep the back copy of the activity trip sheet for their records. Trip sheets should be submitted to the transportation office as soon as possible. They can be left at your bus barn and turned in via district mail.

Summer Activity Trips:

Names of drivers are faxed to outside organizations. Drivers interested in summer trips should let the transportation office know. The transportation department does not assign outside trip drivers. The transportation office will give organizations a list of contact names and numbers. Organizations are billed for the bus usage separate from driver pay. When doing activity trips in the summer, drivers will complete the same activity reports as for district trips. Forms should be submitted to the

transportation office so that the organization can be billed for driver time and trip mileage.

GENERAL RULES

Two-Way Radios

Leave the radio on at all times during your trip or route. You must turn it down at railroad crossings, but be sure to turn it up again after crossing. The office may need to get in touch with you while you are on a route or trip. Radios are to be used for school business only.

Authorized Passengers

Students wishing to ride a bus they are not regularly assigned to must bring a note from their parents stating the request. The note must be approved by the transportation office and must be provided to the driver with the school office signature indicating transportation approval. Students are not allowed to ride a different bus without this note. They are also not allowed to get off at a stop other than their own without approval. Due to overcrowding issues, some requests may not be approved. As drivers greet students getting on the bus, they are to take notice if there is anyone boarding that does not normally ride the bus. Students not assigned to the bus should be pulled aside in order to verify ridership. In the event this occurs at a bus stop in the morning, record the student's name and information, transport to school, and provide student information to the transportation department to verify ridership. Do not leave a student at a stop!

Bus Capacity

At no time shall a driver permit the number of passengers to exceed the posted maximum capacity of the vehicle. Drivers who experience an overload situation must contact the transportation department and request assistance. If the overload occurs at a scheduled stop, once the transportation department has been contacted, the driver should direct students to remain at the stop and assure them another bus is on the way to take them to their school. Remind them to stay at the stop until the other bus arrives. If the overload occurs at a school, the driver should remain at the school until a backup bus arrives. In the event of adverse weather, drivers shall remain at the stop location with all students on board until another bus arrives.

Traveling With Lights On

Headlights and clips must be on while the bus is in motion.

ROUTE PROCEDURES

Route Times

Be consistent in arrival times at morning pick-up points, unless delayed by weather or abnormal traffic conditions. Students are advised to be at their stops at least five (5) minutes prior to the established stop time. The departure times should be reviewed and updated with students periodically. Any corrected times or hazards which develop must be submitted to the transportation department so that a current route sheet will be on file at all times. Current route sheets are critical for sub drivers, and to answer questions of staff and parents.

Route Changes

Drivers are not allowed to make changes in routes or receiving and discharging points except in cases where road conditions require an immediate decision. When such conditions prevail, safety of the student is to be the governing factor. Drivers are to report such conditions to the transportation supervisor as soon as possible.

Route Description and Roster (Passenger List)

Drivers are to maintain an updated route description and roster (passenger list). Changes must be coordinated with the transportation office and a current copy should be maintained on the driver clipboard.

Stay On Schedule

Drivers will leave the terminal or schools at scheduled departure times, unless the director/supervisor authorizes delays. During winter driving, it may be necessary to leave on your route at an earlier time.

Unattended Buses

When leaving a school bus unattended when there are students in the vicinity, take the keys with you. Keep the door closed so as not allow students to board when the driver is not present.

Unauthorized Bus Stops

Unscheduled stops are student stops not documented in a route description. For safety and security reasons, unscheduled stops must be approved by a transportation supervisor. **Drivers may not deviate from the route sheet.** Choosing to do so may result in disciplinary actions and personal liability for operating outside the purview of the district.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH ANGRY PARENTS AND OTHERS

NEVER argue, defend, become defensive, or counter attack. When possible, direct the individual to the driver's side window to minimize students being subjected to the situation. Never allow the individual to board the vehicle.

ALWAYS remain calm. Acknowledge the individual's complaints. You do not have to agree with the individual. Instead, say, "I understand your anger." Agree when the individual says something that is obviously true.

BE SAFE! Contact the transportation department if the anger being displayed is concerning.

STUDENT MANAGEMENT

Discipline Log Book & Discipline Forms

Each vehicle has a discipline log book. Record student behavior problems on a daily basis for both AM and PM routes. Substitute drivers should also record student behavior problems and print their name with the entry so the department can distinguish substitute comments from those of the regular route driver. In the event further action is necessary, complete a Bus Driver's Report of Unsatisfactory Student Behavior or Student Recognition form (in the event of positive behavior). These forms can be found in the driver clipboard on the bus or can be obtained from the transportation office. Recipients of the form are listed at the bottom of each form (ie. principal, transportation supervisor, etc.).

Bus Seat Assignments

Bus seat assignments may be made at the driver's discretion or upon request of the school principal or transportation supervisor. The following guidelines should be considered when making seating assignments:

- Seating assignments should not segregate male and female students.
- The transportation office should be notified of seat assignments and they should be reflected in the discipline log.
- When students are assigned a seat, make sure this information is noted on the route sheet. Do not deviate from the assignment without permission.
- Drivers are to check the bus for vandalism after each run.

Tips for Successful Student Management

1. Be friendly.
2. Have a sense of humor.
3. Know when "you" are having a bad day.
4. Be sincere in your work.
5. Get to know your students' names.
6. Set firm, achievable, clear rules.
7. Never give a directive you do not intend to enforce.
8. Commend good behavior.
9. Set a good example.
10. Look for good qualities.
11. Be firm, fair, and consistent.
12. Say, "do this" rather than "don't do that". Use the phrase, "I need you to...". Be positive.
13. Keep your "cool".
14. Have a positive attitude.
15. Know district policies for reporting problems.
16. Never tell a student they are being denied bus privileges. That is the responsibility of the school administrator or transportation supervisor.
17. Be assertive but not aggressive. The driver is in charge.
18. Do not strike or touch a student.
19. Don't become a constant mirror watcher. Safe driving requires your attention on the road.

To have control of discipline on the school bus, a driver should be **firm, fair, and friendly!**

Student Conduct

Your first day with students is the most important. On your first day, children learn what you expect of them and you establish expectations for the year.

Don't worry about whether the children like you. New drivers often fail because they are afraid they will not be liked if they are too strict. The truth is exactly the opposite.

Be balanced in your approach to discipline. Do not "over-react" to small rule infractions.

Students will typically live up to your expectations. Be consistent.

Think before issuing ultimatums. Never issue a threat you can't enforce.

When establishing rules or correcting behavior, take the time to explain. Children may not realize that their actions could result in injury to themselves or others unless it is explained to them (for example, a child getting out of their seat once the bus is in motion).

Allow for "off days" - yours as well as the kids!

You are the first school person to see the child in the morning and the last one to see them at the end of the day. Make their impression a pleasant one.

When A Student Challenges Or Breaks A Rule

Five steps to issuing directives:

1. Give a polite directive "(Student's Name), please..."
2. Use the phrase "I need you to..."
3. Set the expectation: "You are expected to..."
4. State the consequence: "If you fail to...then..."
5. Present the choice: "It looks like you have a decision to make. You're right, you can choose to (negative behavior) (PAUSE) and what will happen is (negative consequence), or you can (desired behavior) and (positive outcome)".

Stopping Disruptive Behavior

1. Calmly ask. "What are (were) you doing?"
2. Ask, "Are you supposed to (identify behavior) on this bus?"
3. Ask, "What happens when you (behavior) on this bus?"
4. When addressing the students in the back of the bus, get up and address them in the back. Otherwise, the students in the front may perceive you are addressing them as they receive the loudest part of your statement.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Transporters are mandatory reporters. In accordance with the Child Protection Act of 1987, any employee who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, as defined by statute, shall immediately report such information to the transportation supervisor/director. The transportation supervisor/director will report the information to the child's principal. The principal will report the information to the Department of Social Services or local law enforcement agency. The employee will be contacted to provide the nature and extent of the child's injury or condition.

Follow up and investigation of suspected child abuse will be completed by the appropriate agency. As such, employees should:

- Never make home visits for investigative purposes.
- Never take the child for medical treatment (this does not preclude taking action in an emergency situation).
- Never convey messages between the agency and the parents/guardian.

More information on reporting suspected child abuse can be found in Board of Education Policy JLF and JLF-R on the District's website.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS

Prevention of sexual harassment is critical. Once sexual harassment occurs, a prompt and adequate response is not only required by law, but the only practical way to contain the problem.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 states that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under an education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

The bus ride is an important extension of school, and the driver plays an important role in each rider's day. You want to set the stage for treating sexual harassment as a serious matter – a major infraction of bus rules, and a significant situation that must not be ignored. For many students, getting on the bus begins the first school-related experience each day, and is the last link between school and home at the end of the day.

When the situation on the bus or at the bus stop becomes so uncomfortable as a result of sexual harassment that a student is no longer comfortable riding the bus, the learning environment has been affected in its broadest sense. A student can feel excluded from the bus and its destination, the school, if that bus is a negative experience for him or her.

If a student's experiences at a bus stop or during the bus ride prevent that student from riding the bus, that student has, in the eyes of the law, been "denied the benefits of" school transportation. No transportation professional should ever recommend to a student victim of sexual harassment on the school bus that he or she find another way to get to and from school to avoid the harassment.

If the student is the direct or indirect target of sexually oriented ridicule or insult or inappropriate physical behaviors and nothing is done about it to make that treatment stop, he or she is being "subjected to discrimination." If someone else is near the person being targeted and they feel uncomfortable as if they were the objects of the remarks or actions, he/she is an indirect target of sexual harassment.

A common working definition of sexual harassment in the educational setting is:

Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, or other sex-based verbal or physical conduct where (1) submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of the individual(s) education: or (2) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's education by creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Steps in reporting student harassment:

1. In all cases, document the fact that a complaint has been made or harassing behavior has been observed. The first place to document is in your discipline logbook. Do not rely on your memory!
2. After documenting the facts in your logbook, you will need to go to the transportation office and report the incident to the supervisor or director. You will also need to fill out a form at this time. Do not discuss the incident with anyone else.
3. Discuss the details of the incident with your supervisor. You will need to know as much of the following as possible:
 - The identities of all students involved as possible victims
 - The identities of all possible perpetrators
 - The identities of anyone who may have observed sexually harassing conduct
 - Everyone whose name comes up in another interview
 - Everyone mentioned by either the victim or alleged harasser
 - Be able to tell what you saw or heard on the day in question
 - The date and time of the incident
 - The seating arrangement of those involved
 - The relationship among the students
 - The previous conduct of the student(s) on the school bus

If you question students, do so in environments that supply the privacy necessary to enable them to talk freely without worrying about being accused of "tattling." Do not question students on the bus while others are present. Once you have reported the information to the transportation office, the building administrator will interview students in question in the privacy of an office. The building administrator will then report the incident to the proper authorities.

Follow up by making sure that the harassment has stopped.

If students are playing music that offends other students or you, you have the right to tell them to stop playing the music. You must be in control of your bus. If the whole bus of students is singing offensive songs, you must intervene. If you do not, you are giving the clear impression that it's okay.

It may become necessary to move a student to an assigned seat as a result of sexual harassment complaints. This is fine as long as you can show that you are not singling this student out for some negative treatment because of the complaint. You will want to be able to demonstrate other situations in which you have done this before and why this action matches your usual procedures. Take care to not penalize “the victim” by making him/her move while “the perpetrator” is allowed to stay where they want.

If elementary students are calling each other names, address the behavior immediately. If the behavior continues, report it to the transportation supervisor so he/she can follow up with the school principal.

Your responsibility is to stop the harassment. In the early stages this can be done with measures that stress education and warnings about future consequences.

When students are exposed to inappropriate sexual behavior, you should assume that it’s unwelcome, even though the student may not act as it is.

Student-to student sexual harassment can create a hostile environment: one that is “characterized by an atmosphere that is unreasonably intimidating, hostile, or offensive, which results in inability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school district.”

There are, of course, forms of harassment regarded just as serious as sexual harassment. The office for Civil Rights has often stressed the obligation of the school district to address the discriminatory nature of sexual harassment. Other forms of verbal abuse, which must be seen as major violations of school bus conduct include:

- Ethnic background;
- Religion;
- National origin;
- Race;
- Disability

Since federal law protects students on the basis of each of these individual characteristics, each of these other types of verbal harassment is also considered a form of discrimination and must be dealt with very seriously.

The driver must concentrate primarily on safe driving. The driver may not be aware of the conduct while it’s occurring, and/or may be in no position to do anything about it right away. This should not stop the driver from taking action when it is feasibly possible.

The driver is often the first one to know about harassment. In order for the school district to meet its obligation to respond promptly and adequately, each driver must carry out his or her role as a key link in the chain of communication. Drivers will often be able to intervene effectively at an early stage of student harassment of another student at the bus stop or on the school bus. A driver’s report to the transportation office can be essential in keeping the school district knowledgeable about incidences of sexual harassment.

STOP ARM ‘DRIVE-BY’ VIOLATION PROCEDURES COLORADO MOTOR VEHICLE LAWS

All vehicles are required to stop for School Buses when the red 8-ways and stop sign are activated. The penalty for violation is usually 6 points and approximately \$135 fine.

DISTRICT PROCESS

1. Radio in all violations at the soonest, safest time. Record all pertinent data, such as license plate number and physical description of vehicle and driver. Visually check the working condition of 8-ways/stop arm and note. Should radio communication be unsuccessful, continue to #4.
2. The transportation office may request additional information by radio in order to report to authorities. This may include, for example, the time of the incident and direction of the vehicle.
3. Please note that without the physical description of the driver and the vehicle, the report may not be processed. Authorities are often unable to prosecute without complete information. Do not discuss information with others prior to recording information at the office.
4. Upon immediate arrival at the bus barn, the driver must complete a report form. The authorities may wish to meet with the driver after the route.

SPECIAL DRIVING CIRCUMSTANCES

Night Driving

When following another vehicle at night within 500 feet, you must have headlights on dim. If you are within 200 feet of an approaching car, you must dim your lights.

Keep in mind that at night your visibility is limited. Slow down to provide more time to react.

Adverse Weather Driving

In adverse weather, you must drive with extra caution because of reduced visibility and slippery roads. Remember that the first road surfaces to freeze are bridges and overpasses. Black ice often forms when vehicle exhaust freezes on dry pavement and falling temperatures freeze moisture on the road.

When adverse weather is forecast, be sure you have winter clothing, gloves, boots, an ice scraper, broom or brush. Pay close attention to your tire condition, lights, wipers, and windshield washer fluid.

Be aware that on clear sunny days, the glare off of the snow can be dangerous. Reduce the glare by wearing sunglasses, using your sun visor, and not looking directly into the sun.

Start gradually, accelerate gently and steer without sudden moves.

Give yourself enough time to stop so that you do not have to make sudden moves. The two methods of stopping on icy conditions are controlled braking and stab braking. Applying your brakes just until they begin to grab, then release so that the wheels roll, then reapplying the brakes. Alternate until the vehicle has stopped.

If you do skid, ease up on the accelerator and steer the front wheels in the direction of the skid. Remember that roads are most slippery when the ice or snow begins to melt. The water or slush acts as a lubricant between your tires and the road thereby reducing traction. On steep down grades, start and stay in low gear.

If there is a lot of water on the road, you can hydroplane at speeds as low as 30 mph. To regain control, gradually release the accelerator.

Different types of snow do not provide the same amount of traction. Leftover sand or gravel on dry roads can affect the vehicle's ability to turn and to stop. Mud can be just as treacherous as ice and snow.

Put extra driving space between you and the car ahead of you. In normal conditions, use the three-second rule for following vehicles. Increase the distance to 10 seconds or more in adverse weather. Increased speed requires a longer stopping distance. If the speed of the bus doubles, the stopping distance increases four times.

Be aware of shady spots that might be icy.

If there is fast flowing water over the road ahead of you, do not cross. The road may have eroded.

Be aware of gusting or cross winds that can affect your driving.

GO SLOW!

Mountain Driving

When preparing to drive in the mountains, a professional driver will perform a pre-trip inspection, inquire about the weather and road conditions, and complete a personal "pre-trip" check.

In mountainous terrain, be aware of steep grades, winding roads, wildlife, and unpredictable weather conditions.

Unless otherwise posted, the Colorado speed limit on narrow, winding mountain highways and blind curves is 20 mph.

Pay special attention to speed limit signs and warning signs, such as those warning of curves, steep hills, or other hazards.

Stay close to the right edge of the road to be away from on coming traffic, but watch for bicyclists on the right.

Use a lower gear to control speed while going down long, steep hills.

If two vehicles meet on a steep, narrow mountain road that is not wide enough for two vehicles, the vehicle going downhill should yield to the vehicle going up hill.

Any runaway vehicle can use an escape ramp.

The proper way to drive through a curve is to accelerate slightly through the curve.

All the buses are equipped with retarders. Use the retarder to slow the bus (see below).

SAFETY TIPS

Get the big picture. Observe the movement and position of all traffic ahead of you, around you, and behind you. Be particularly aware of any vehicles traveling in your blind spots slightly behind and to your sides. Avoid cruising in driver's blind spots. Frequently check your gauges and mirrors for warning when something is wrong or about to go wrong.

Be prepared to compensate for other drivers and pedestrian's carelessness. Try to anticipate mistakes other drivers may make. Be alert to possible accident situations and take preventative action.

Know the traffic laws. Know the vehicle and its capabilities. Have knowledge of your own ability and reaction.

Do not make sudden changes in movement.

Make sure that you signal 200 feet in advance to change lanes or when turning into intersections so that other motorists know your intentions. Check mirrors and look over your shoulder toward the rear before changing lanes or turning. Avoid frequent lane changes.

Never back up on a freeway, even if you are on the side or shoulder. Never back up on school grounds unless you have a spotter. If you do not have a spotter, get out of the vehicle and check the rear to see that it is safe. Plan ahead! Try to park the bus so that you will not have to back up to get out of an area.

Approach all intersections with caution. Anticipate drivers pulling out in front of you. Leave space to turn in an emergency. Check your mirrors every few seconds. Know where the traffic is around you. Check mirrors carefully before changing lanes, at intersections, while slowing down, and making turns.

OPERATION OF THE RETARDER

The electric retarder may be used for descending grades in city traffic, approaching stoplights or stop signs, and generally whenever reducing vehicle speed is required. The retarder allows the service brakes to stay cooler for more effective braking. The more you use the retarder, the less you use your service brakes. The multi-position control lets the operator use four different positions for various road and traffic conditions. When the retarder is used for extended periods of time, heat build-up will occur, resulting in decreased retarder performance. It is not recommended when long descents are encountered (5 minutes or more) the vehicle speed is obtained by using the retarder in the number 3 or 4 position. During long descents the 3rd & 4th positions must only be used for short periods of time to minimize heat build up.

When And How To Use The Retarder

First, before using your retarder, select the proper gear to be in for the type of driving you are doing. If you're in town, you should be in 3rd gear. This will allow you to use the retarder and still maintain cool brakes and not overheat the retarder. When using the retarder for mountain driving, first select the proper gear for descending the grade, then use your retarder to hold the vehicle at proper rpms for the gear you are in. If you have to use positions 3 & 4 excessively or using your service brakes, you are in too high a gear. You will need to shift into the next lower gear. When using the retarder on snow packed, icy roads or wet roads, you need to only use #1 position. If you use the other positions, this may result in rear wheel lock-up. If you do lock-up, place the retarder off and accelerate slightly to get the wheels to turn again; then slow down again by applying the service brake lightly.

Things To Remember About The Retarder

1. Always know the position of the retarder.
2. Always use the service brakes to bring the vehicle to a complete stop.
3. Always operate retarder carefully under slippery road conditions.
4. Always let retarder cool after long periods of time.
5. Always use your retarder and transmission gears together.

6. Remember to shut the retarder off before accelerating.

The bus driver shall maintain control of the bus speed by use of the transmission, retarder, and braking system. The first braking source is the engine compression.

Brake fade can occur when heat build up causes the brake lining to glaze or deteriorate at high temperatures.

A safe driver is prepared for the unexpected. Always stay alert and be ready to react to situations.

DRIVING EMERGENCIES

There may be times when animals suddenly run in front of you. If you suddenly swerve or slam on your brakes, you may collide with another vehicle. Regretfully, the safest alternative may be hitting the animal. Be alert. If there are animals near the roadway, slow down and proceed with caution. Sometimes damage to the vehicle involved in a collision with a large animal can be severe and costly. However, it is better to cause damage to the vehicle than to risk injury to passengers. Concentrate on retaining control of the vehicle before, during, and after the collision.

It is important that you have complete control of the vehicle, regardless of the situation you face.

If a tire blows out, do not slam on the brakes. Hold the steering wheel tight, steer straight ahead and slow gradually to a stop just off the highway.

If the right wheels run off the pavement edges, steer straight ahead straddling the pavement edge until you have almost stopped. Then guide your vehicle back on to the road.

RAILROAD TRACKS

Activate hazards 200 feet from nearest rail. The bus shall stop within 50 feet but not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail. When stopped, the bus shall not form two lanes of traffic unless highway is marked for four lanes or more. A prearranged signal shall be used to alert students to the need to be quiet while approaching tracks. After the bus is stopped, radio is turned down and students are quiet, the service door and driver's window must be opened. Listen and look in both directions for trains and signals. If the tracks are clear, close the door prior to putting bus in motion. The bus should then proceed in a gear low enough to cross tracks without having to manually change gears. Hazards should be canceled only after the rear of the bus has cleared the tracks. Be sure to turn the radio back up after clearing the tracks.

AUTOMATIC CHAINS

As part of your pre-trip inspection, ensure automatic chains operate correctly and that the chain links are not caught up on the arms.

How To Operate

1. Engage and disengage the chains while the bus is moving.
2. Chains need to be engaged and disengaged at or below 25 mph.
3. Engage chains in sufficient time before reaching slippery conditions. Chains will assist traction in forward, reverse, and braking.
4. Do not exceed 35 mph when chains are engaged.
5. Avoid locking the wheels.
6. Use the chains before you are in trouble. They will not work if you are already stuck.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER

Each school bus is equipped with at least one 5-pound dry-chemical fire extinguisher a type approved by UL, with a total rating of not less than 2A10BC. The extinguisher is sealed with a type of seal that will not interfere with use.

The extinguisher is mounted in the extinguisher manufacture's bracket and located in the driver's compartment in full view of and readily accessible to the driver. The extinguisher contains a dry powder that may become compacted. Remove the extinguisher occasionally and shake several times to loosen the compacted powder.

A pressure gauge is mounted on the extinguisher to be easily read without removing the extinguisher from its mounted position. Make sure the gauge is properly charged. The needle should be in the green area.

Operation of the Fire Extinguisher

Hold the extinguisher upright. Do not hold on its side when operating. Pull the safety pin, breaking the seal. Squeeze the handle to discharge powder. Aim first at the bottom edge of the fire and progress forward, moving the discharge cone from side to side in a sweeping motion. Turn the extinguisher on and off as desired to control the fire. With engine fires, never open the hood due to the risk of a flashback. Do your best to aim the fire extinguisher through the grill or under the fenders. If possible, stand upwind from burning material to prevent standing in smoke and heat. Avoid standing near areas of flammable unburned materials that could catch fire in a flashback. After use, report the extinguisher for replacement or recharge.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILLS

Emergency evacuation drills shall be conducted on every route at least twice during each school year. It is required that one drill be through the front door and one drill through the rear emergency door(s). Emergency drill procedures and related documentation requirements will be provided to each route driver twice annually by the transportation supervisors. Drivers must be physically capable of conducting both evacuations. Note that buses transporting non-ambulatory and semi-ambulatory special needs students will require additional procedures to ensure that plans are in place for proper assistance during evacuation.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION

Federal regulations govern the transportation of students with disabilities; transportation is a “related service”. These regulations may result in modifications to traditional practices. The transportation needs of special education students require a common understanding between the student, the parent/guardian, the school, the transportation department, and the driver. The need for specialized equipment, if any, must be identified and documented. The mechanism for reaching this common understanding is typically the meeting of involved parties to discuss the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). If it is anticipated that specialized transportation may be required, the director of special education or school special ed representative will request that a representative of the transportation department be in attendance at the IEP meeting. Transportation representatives to the IEP meeting are responsible for communicating special needs of the student to the driver. Transportation of the student will begin after required paperwork is received from the special ed department.

The success of programs for special education students depends upon the people who have daily contact with them. Such people probably possess characteristics like extra patience, mental alertness, flexibility, resourcefulness, enthusiasm, emotional stability, personal warmth, understanding and sympathy. Bus drivers must be able to exercise mature judgment in relation to both the care of special students and the responsibilities of driving them. Special education students and their parents place a great deal of confidence in the driver. Nothing should permit this confidence to be threatened.

Training for Special Education Route Drivers

All new drivers of students for whom specialized transportation requirements have been identified as part of the student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be required to complete a training module which covers a variety of topics unique to transporting students with disabilities. Such training will include a demonstration by the driver of proficiency in the use of specialized equipment utilized in transporting special education students such as wheel chair lifts, wheelchair securement systems, restraint mechanisms, star seats and lap belts. Proficiency must be demonstrated immediately prior to a special needs route assignments, and annually thereafter. An experienced driver, driver trainer, or supervisor will ride along on the driver’s first day on the new route to ensure understanding of the equipment used and familiarity with the route and students.

Discipline of Special Education Students

It is important to maintain a safe bus at all times. Bus rules apply to special education students as well as their non-disabled peers. Documentation is extremely important in determining appropriate consequences for behaviors. Understanding the student and his/her unique needs and disability is necessary in determining whether the student’s actions are inappropriate or a manifestation of their disability. In either case, the school and parents must be involved in solving the problem. In cases where the student has a behavior modification procedure in place (BIP or BAP) at the school and/or at home, the bus ride should become part of this plan.

Successful discipline programs reinforce good behavior with praise. Good behavior and praise may also be in the form of correcting their actions when asked. Food should not be used as a reward—the student may have a medical or dietary restriction, allergic reaction or may choke. Consistency and patience is key to maintaining a safe bus while transporting students with disabilities.

Students who continue to exhibit unsafe behaviors should have a behavior modification program (BIP or BAP) written and attached as an addendum to their IEP. This will require involvement of the transportation supervisor and school

administrator. The expectations must be specific, required safe behaviors outlined, as well as consequences for noncompliance, which can include removal from the bus for a period of time. Again, a determination must be made as to whether the behavior is a result of the student's disability. If the disability is causing the behavior, then traditional discipline is not appropriate.

Because of IDEA (Individuals Disability Education Act) and FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education), removal of a special needs student from the bus must meet certain criteria. If a pattern of unsafe behaviors are established and suspension is warranted, the student must not miss more than 10 days per year of their FAPE due to transportation services being suspended. Although a student cannot be permanently suspended from this related service if the suspension prevents the student from access to special education services, it is our duty to act upon behavior which endangers the driver or other students. As an escalation in incidents or severity is noticed, reconvening the IEP committee is recommended. Prior to permanent removal of a student, a manifestation determination and IEP review is required. .

LOADING / UNLOADING PROCEDURES

“The Danger Zone - The Trouble Spot”

Students shall be prohibited from unloading when they must cross a major thoroughfare, except for two lane highways when such crossing can be done in a safe manner as determined by the local school board in consultation with local traffic regulatory authority.

1. Check all traffic before activating 8-way overhead safety lights. Activate amber warning lights 500 feet from stop in rural areas and 200 feet from stop in town.
2. Approach the loading zone with extreme caution, stopping just short of the nearest student or drop-off point.
3. After the bus has stopped, open door to activate stop sign and red lights, apply the parking brake and place the transmission in neutral. Do not keep applying pressure on foot brake. You will not be able to build up air pressure if you keep your foot on the service brake.
4. Instruct students not to cross behind the bus. Students need to cross at least ten feet in front of the bus. Instruct students not to approach the bus to load until the air brake is activated. Also train students not to stand up in their seats until the bus has come to a complete stop.
5. Train students to watch you for a signal that it is safe to cross the road. When you determine that it is safe for the students to cross the road, point to the students and then point to the other side of the road that they are to cross to. Make sure students cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus.
6. When loading or unloading has been accomplished and all students have safely crossed or discharged, recheck mirrors for traffic and students, put transmission in gear, release the brake, and close door.
7. Account for all students as they exit the bus. Use mirrors to account for all students before proceeding, making certain they are clear of the danger zone.
8. Ensure all students are seated before you deactivate the red lights and proceed on the route.

Loading And Unloading Safety Tips

Loading and unloading students are among the most important maneuvers made by the driver in the course of a school day. As stated above, it must be done correctly the first time: you cannot change a fatal mistake. There can never be “too much” emphasis and importance placed on this critical procedure. To ensure the continued safe transporting of Colorado school children to and from school, it is paramount to maintain a high level of training, emphasizing proper loading/unloading procedures.

Establish a signal for bus drivers to indicate to students when it is safe to cross.

The signal must clearly indicate it is for the students, not for motorist who may mistake it as a signal for them to proceed. An effective signal: the bus driver points to the students, makes eye contact, then points in the direction of the crossing. All bus drivers should use the same signal.

Instruct student riders in safe loading/unloading procedures

No horseplay or running at the bus stops.

Stand away from the curb or roadway.

Cross far enough in front of the bus to be able to see the driver (ten feet).

Do not move toward the vehicle until the driver signals and traffic is stopped.

Stop and check for traffic before entering the traffic lanes of the road.

Do not cross the roadway until you see the bus driver gives the signal.

Do not attempt to retrieve anything that has fallen around the bus.

Do not bend down or look under the bus, stay standing.

Use handrail when entering and leaving the bus.

Be seated as quickly as possible and remain seated while the vehicle is in motion.

Approach the bus stop with caution.

Check traffic in all directions using mirrors.

Know where the students are located and observe their behaviors. Stop before reaching the students. Do not open the door if students are pushing and shoving. Go to the first window and instruct students to line up accordingly as the bus door will not open until there is order and it is safe to load.

Consider the roadway surface where you are stopping; slippery, rough, dips, etc.

Set the air brake, place transmission in neutral.

It is paramount to ensure the bus doesn't inadvertently move and endanger a student.

Stay alert while stopped in the loading zone.

Account for all students outside the bus.

Observe that all traffic is stopped and there are no approaching vehicles before allowing students get off the bus or to cross the roadway.

Check mirrors carefully before moving the bus.

If something appears in a mirror, no matter how small, look again or get out and check. Trust your instincts!

Make sure all students are clear of the bus before moving.

Do not be distracted by students inside the bus. Take care of these incidents after all students outside the bus are safely located.

Use the discipline procedures if a student continues to act up.

Move from the loading zone cautiously, only after making sure all the students outside the bus are in a safe location.

Display professional courtesy to the motoring public.

When students are safely located, allow traffic build-up to pass by pulling to the side of the road if it is safe to do so. Proceed with caution.

