

Transportation Handbook 2015 - 2016

GENERAL RULES AND PROCEDURES

Arrival Time

Elementary students should not arrive at the school before 7:50 a.m. This includes the town route buses. Please adjust your routes accordingly. Students will have enough time for breakfast, etc. even when they arrive at 7:50 a.m. If drivers encounter challenging road conditions or bad weather, teachers and food service staff will accommodate late arrivals. Special arrangements may be necessary for students with disabilities.

Students should not be picked up before 6:45am. Exceptions to this rule must be cleared by District Office staff.

Elementary school morning arrival time 7:50 - 8:00 a.m.

Preschool PM session arrival time 12:05 - 12:09 p.m.

Elementary PM Bus Line-Up, be in the bus loop by 2:50 p.m.

Breakdowns

In the event a bus driver is experiencing a problem, be it mechanical, weather related, etc., the driver should contact the District Office and the District Office will determine how the balance of that person's route will be handled.

Office personnel or the lead bus driver (as directed by the office), will determine which drivers will pick up students in any given area. In order to avoid confusion, drivers should NOT decide among themselves who will pick up which students.

Cameras

The cameras are an important part of the District effort to maintain good bus behavior and safe transportation. Please make sure the video equipment is programmed and in proper working order. Report any problems to the District Office immediately so the video system can be repaired. There are extra tapes available at the bus garage office. The bus garage has a VCR and computer for drivers to view recordings to make sure equipment is working properly.

Cleaning Procedures

Bus Interior: Drivers are expected to do a thorough job of sweeping their bus out as needed, but at a minimum of two times per week. Sweeping the bus aisle on a daily basis will minimize the amount of dirt and debris that accumulates under seats. Remove wrappers and other debris from between seat cushions on a regular basis.

Bus Washing: Each driver is responsible for washing his or her assigned bus as needed, but at least twice monthly.

1. The District will provide tokens for the Rush City Car Wash on Fairfield Avenue.
2. Each driver will be responsible to pick up tokens for their own bus at the district office or from the lead driver.
3. Each time a driver picks up tokens the date and number of tokens taken will be recorded and the driver will initial the Bus Washing Record.
4. **Buses must always be clean (inside and outside) for extra-curricular trips before leaving town.**
5. The driver should wash and clean the bus/van thoroughly inside and out after the last route at the end of the school year (sweeping, windows, washing outside, etc.). The driver will receive the second half of bus cleaning pay after the end-of-year checklist has been completed by the driver and approved by the Lead Driver.

Spare Buses:

Short term use – A driver using a bus for one or two days will keep the interior swept.

Long Term use – A driver using a spare bus for a regular route over an extended period of time, will assume the responsibility of keeping that bus clean, inside and out, for the duration of the time he/she is using it.

District Buses

While each driver is assigned a particular bus for regular routes, ANY bus is available to any driver for use on extra trips or for summer assignments. When using a bus other than your own for an extra trip, return it to the garage in the same or better condition than when it was taken. Buses may not be used for personal business. Buses should be returned to the bus garage, not parked at the driver's house, when there are a few hours between runs.

DOT Physical

An applicant for a school bus driver's endorsement must be in good physical and mental health, able-bodied, and free from communicable disease. Each school bus driver is required to take and pass a physical examination every two years to retain the school bus driver's endorsement. If the driver does not pass the physical examination or return the certificate within two years of the date of the last physical, the commissioner of public safety will cancel the school bus endorsement.

Rush City Schools has contracted with JobCare at the Fairview Clinic in Rush City for DOT physicals. It is recommended that all DOT physicals be done at this site. However, if drivers choose to go elsewhere, Rush City Schools will reimburse drivers up to the current JobCare rate. Once the physical has been completed the driver must send in a copy of the Medical Examiner's Certificate to the Department of Public Safety. The address is: Driver & Vehicle Services, 445 Minnesota St., Suite 180, St. Paul, MN 55101-5180. Drivers may also fax it to the following number: 651-297-4447. The clinic does not send in the driver's certificate as they have in the past. Drivers are responsible for sending it in.

Downtime

During the “downtime” while on field trips, athletic trips, etc., drivers are expected to stay available and flexible to the class/team and advisor(s). If the driver is not required to stay “on site” with the class/team, the driver must remain available by phone, radio or cell phone at all times.

Driver’s License

It is state law that **drivers must maintain a valid Class A, B, or C Minnesota driver’s license with a school bus endorsement** and that the school district has a copy of each driver’s license. When drivers renew their license they must come into the District Office and get a copy made for their personnel file.

Drug/Alcohol Testing

All school district employees whose positions require a commercial driver’s license will be required to undergo pre-employment, reasonable suspicion, random, and post-accident drug and alcohol testing. See Board Policy #416.

Evacuation Drills

Drivers are responsible for completing a bus evacuation drill for their bus during the first two weeks of school. A form needs to be completed and returned to the district office documenting the bus evacuation drill.

Extra Trips

Sign Up: Extra trips are posted and drivers may sign up for trips following a rotation established by the district. The lead driver or transportation secretary may assign extra trips when needed to reduce the number of sub drivers needed. Day trips are not available to noon route drivers unless assigned by the lead driver or transportation secretary.

Compensation: Drivers are paid the hourly rate according to the compensation schedule established by the School Board, which includes 15 minutes for a pre-trip inspection. If the driver is unable to complete their regular route and do the extra trip, the driver will receive both the regular route pay and the extra trip pay.

Fueling

The driver is responsible for ensuring that his or her assigned vehicle is adequately fueled for each trip. The engine shall be turned off while fueling. Drivers should never fuel with passengers aboard.

Helpers

Drivers may choose to appoint two students to serve as bus helpers for the school year. Helpers are expected to participate in the bus evacuation drill. They will receive passes to all home athletic events (excluding tournament play). Drivers who choose to appoint bus helpers should fill out the form and return it to the district office.

Inspections

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety states (Unit IV, Section 4.1):

A thorough daily school bus inspection must be performed at the beginning and end of each day. It should consist of three distinct parts (1) a pre-trip inspection before the vehicle is driven, (2) an operational inspection while the bus is being driven, and (3) a post trip inspection at the end of the day.

Drivers must carry a completed copy of a pre-trip inspection form indicating that the vehicle they are driving is free from any defects that would interfere with the safe operation of their school bus. Rule 7470-1300.

Drivers are expected to do a thorough pre-trip inspection each day; an operational inspection while driving (common sense); and a post trip inspection at the end of each trip.

Drivers are required to check their buses for students, vandalism, and articles left on the bus after each trip.

Safety Equipment: All drivers are responsible for ensuring that the necessary safety equipment is aboard the bus, including fire extinguisher, first aid kit, bodily fluids clean-up kit, flashlight, reflectorized emergency warning device, and any additional items required by the district. Drivers of vehicles for disabled students will ensure all student health information cards are on board the bus.

Pre-Trip inspection includes:

Mechanical Check:

Coolant level, oil level, power steering fluid, alternator, water pump, air compressor (air brakes), power steering pump, check belts and hoses, check for leaks, wheel (tire, lugs, rims), brakes (drum, lining), springs, shock absorbers.

External Inspection:

Lights (signal, stop, headlights), axle seals, doors and mirrors, reflectors, fuel tanks, mud flaps.

Conventional Brakes:

Test brakes, parking brake, electrical assist (if so equipped).

Air Brake System:

Air leak check, air buzzer sounds, parking brake.

Internal Inspection (Engine running, parking brake on):

Oil pressure builds, ammeter/voltmeter, lighting indicators, steering play, horn(s), clutch/gearshift, heater/defroster, mirrors, windshield, wipers, safety/emergency equipment, fuses/breakers, fire extinguisher, reflective triangles/flares

Other:

Emergency exits, 8 lamp system, rear door and buzzer, first aid, body fluids cleanup kits.

Post-Trip inspection includes:

- **Always check bus for passengers left on bus**
- Service Brakes
- Parking Brakes
- Steering Mechanism
- Lighting Devices and reflectors
- Tires
- Horn
- Windshield Wipers
- Mirrors
- Wheels and Rims
- Emergency Equipment

Loading or Unloading Students

1. The driver will activate the flashing 8-light system of the bus at least 300 feet before stopping to load or unload students when outside an incorporated municipality, and 100 feet before stopping within an incorporated municipality, and will keep lights on until loading or unloading is completed and persons who must cross the roadway or highway are safely across.
2. Bring the vehicle to a complete stop and disengage gears by shifting gear shift lever into neutral position or selector into neutral or park position before loading or unloading students.
3. Prior to discharging students, open door, activate red flashing lights and extend the stop arm. Discharge students only after conditions appear safe.
4. Keep door open and 8-light system operating until all students have been loaded or unloaded safely.
5. When students are a safe distance from the bus or seated on the bus the driver may continue the route.
6. The driver will not permit students to stand or get on or off the bus while it is in motion.
7. Drivers will load and unload students only at designated locations.

Crossing Highways and Streets

1. Students shall pass approximately 10 feet in front of the school bus so they are visible to the driver and cross the road only upon receiving a hand signal from the driver.

2. When necessary, the driver may ask another student to escort a student across the road or personally escort the student across the road, after stopping the bus, removing the ignition key, and setting the brake.

Mailboxes/Bulletin Board

Each driver has a mailbox in the bus garage office. Please check your mailbox daily for any important information. Check the bulletin board for messages/announcements that pertain to the group.

Repairs

If a driver is experiencing a problem, which requires immediate or same day service, the driver should notify the District's repair provider immediately so he can schedule his workday accordingly. The driver must also inform the lead driver or District Office about the repair needed.

Reports/Forms

It is the responsibility of the driver to completely fill out and timely turn in all reports, discipline referrals, time sheets, and pre-trip inspection sheets.

Bus Conduct Reports

Drivers will use Bus Conduct Reports to inform building principals of misbehavior on the bus. The driver will deliver the completed Bus Conduct Report as soon as possible to the appropriate principal's office, with a video recording, if necessary.

Bus Logs

Turn in your Bus Logs on the **last day** of each month. **Do not put more than one month on a sheet.** Extra trips on weekends may be recorded under Additional extra-curricular trips or on the extra lines under the Extra Trips.

Pre-trip Inspection

Pink Pre-Trip Inspection forms should be completed prior to each "run" or trip; not just once a day.

Time Sheets

Time sheets should be handed in on the 6th and 21st of each month. Time sheets may reflect an additional 15 minutes before and after an extra trip to allow for these inspections and other pre-trip and post-trip duties.

Routes

A regular bus route includes an AM route and a PM route (approximately 3 hours per day).

No driver is to make changes in the pick-up or drop-off schedule for his or her route without prior authorization. No stops are to be added, deleted or moved without approval. No driver may deviate from the established route without prior permission from the Lead Driver or Transportation Secretary except as required by an emergency or by unexpected road conditions.

If a route change has been approved it is the driver's responsibility to contact and communicate the change to parents.

Only authorized passengers may be transported in a bus. Other students must give the driver a "Student Bus Permit" that has been signed by office staff. Any other passenger must be specifically approved by the District Office. Students may be released from the bus at only two points, the designated bus stop or at school, except in case of an emergency or as otherwise authorized.

Salary/Wages

Bus Route: Drivers are paid a salary for each route according to the compensation schedule established by the School Board. Bus drivers also receive a stipend to keep the bus clean, inside and out.

Van Route: Drivers are paid hourly for each route according to the compensation schedule established by the School Board. Van drivers are paid a minimum of one hour per route. Van drivers also receive a stipend to keep the van clean, inside and out.

Tobacco

Per Board Policy #419, tobacco use by the driver or the passengers is prohibited in any school vehicle.

Wabasto Heater

Drivers should not start the Wabasto heater until the correct heater valve has been opened. Talk to the lead driver or mechanic before starting the Wabasto heater.

Warm Up Time

Bus company service people discourage idling a bus to warm it up. Bus warm up time is 5-10 minutes in the morning, if needed during cold weather. No warm up time is needed for noon routes or afternoon routes because the bus will idle about 10 minutes at each school.

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Operate the vehicle in a safe and efficient manner.

1. Safety: The primary concern of each driver is safety. Drivers will exercise extreme caution during the loading and unloading process as well as when driving.
2. Defensive Driving: All drivers are to drive defensively at all times. Defensive driving means driving in a manner to avoid accidents despite adverse conditions created by roads, weather, traffic, or errors of other drivers or pedestrians.
3. Emergency Doors: Emergency doors must be unobstructed and operable.
4. Service Door: The service door of the bus must be closed at all times while the bus is in motion.

6. Railroad Crossings: All vehicles used to transport students must stop at railroad crossings, whether they are loaded or empty. The 4-way hazard lights are to be used before stopping and when crossing the tracks.
7. Speeding and Other Moving Violations: No bus will travel faster than road, traffic and weather conditions safely permit, regardless of the posted speed limit. Any driver convicted of a moving violation with a school bus will face disciplinary action. Other reports or warnings regarding speeding will result in suspension and/or termination.
8. Backing Up: Buses shall not be run backwards on the school grounds or any other location if it can be avoided. If it is necessary to run a bus backwards on school grounds, the driver shall have another responsible person assist from the outside in back of the bus to keep other persons out of the path and to issue warnings to the driver of approaching traffic. Backing out of the bus garage is an exception.
9. Safe Distance: When arriving or leaving the school grounds, the driver must not follow closer than 50 feet from the vehicle directly in front of the bus or closer than 500 feet when traveling on the highway
10. Seat Belt: Driver's must use the seat belt whenever the bus is in motion.

B. Ensure the safety, welfare and orderly conduct of passengers while on the bus.

1. Management System: Each driver will establish and maintain a management system where students look to the driver for direction, basic respect is practiced, and bus rules are followed.
2. Student Discipline: Although drivers are responsible for maintaining order on the bus, drivers must always remember that the types of actions they may use are limited. Drivers must never use corporal punishment. Drivers have no authority to deny a child the privilege of riding the bus, or drop the student at other than the designated stop. Any denial of bus-riding privileges must come from the school authorities.
3. Bus Rules: Drivers are to enforce school bus rules consistently and bus stop rules as appropriate.
4. Severe Behavior: Students who misbehave severely may be returned to the school immediately and reported to the building principal.
5. Standees Prohibited: Standees are not allowed on a moving school bus. All passengers must be seated before the bus is in motion and must remain seated until the bus has stopped.
6. Dangerous Items: No weapons, or items that may be classified as dangerous, may be transported on a school bus. This includes any weapons, animals, and other dangerous or objectionable items. Companion dogs are allowed.

C. Follow emergency procedures when appropriate.

In an emergency stop, the driver should turn on the four-way hazard warning lights, and running or clearance lights. Drivers should remain with students and ensure their safety during emergencies. Any time a driver steps out of the bus when students are on the bus the driver shall stop the bus, remove the ignition key, and set the brakes.

1. Getting Assistance: Use the radio system or cell phone to contact the District Office or alternative emergency numbers. Report the location and number of the bus, the nature of the problem, and the status of the passengers. If the above methods fail, ask a passerby or other motorist to contact the District Office using the nearest telephone, or send two responsible students to the nearest house to summon help. The driver should write out the number and location of the school bus, the nature of the emergency, and the status of the passengers.
2. Cold Weather Stop: If stuck or stalled in cold weather, the driver should call for assistance and wait for help. The driver should avoid relying on the engine to provide heat for the driver and passengers as long as possible. If it is necessary to run the engine to provide heat, the driver will make sure the exhaust pipe is clear of snow, open windows for ventilation, and check passengers frequently for headaches or drowsiness.
3. Evacuation: Drivers should evacuate buses only when there is a danger of fire, collision or other potential hazard. Drivers should inform passengers that there is an emergency, and in very calm and precise terms, tell them exactly what they are to do. When possible, drivers will keep all evacuees at least 100 feet from the bus. They should be loaded back onto the bus only when the driver has determined it is safe to do so.
4. Accident: In case of an accident, the driver should immediately assess students for injuries and begin any emergency first aid procedures if necessary. The driver must also notify the school district and law enforcement of any school bus accidents immediately. Upon providing emergency care and notifying the district, the driver shall:
 1. Cooperate with police and/or ambulance service to assist with the care of students.
 2. See that all injured students receive proper care.
 3. Determine facts pertaining to the accident.
 4. Record names of all students involved.
 5. Call transportation/district staff to give a list of names and circumstances so they can begin calling parents.
 6. Discuss the accident only with police and school district officials.
 7. Remain at the scene of the accident until released by the driver's supervisor.
 8. Complete mandatory drug/alcohol testing as soon as possible after the accident. See Board Policy #416.
 9. Before leaving for the day, the driver shall fill out an accident report.

5. Injuries/Medical Emergencies: Drivers will be trained for first aid and CPR procedures. For serious injuries drivers will first contact the District Office to call 911, or alternative emergency numbers. Drivers should administer proper first aid according to their training and level of ability. If an injured passenger is taken to the hospital, record the student's name and the name of the hospital.
6. Dangerous Weapons: If a driver observes or learns that a passenger may have a dangerous weapon on the bus, the driver should remain calm and call for assistance without alerting the passenger suspected of having the weapon. The driver should give the location of the bus to the District Office, continue the route, and wait for assistance.
7. Fire: In the event of a fire, the first priority is to evacuate the bus. Drivers will make certain passengers are safe before attempting to put out the fire.
8. Tornado: If it is likely that a tornado will hit a vehicle, and there is no escape route available or no time to drive to a safe location, the driver will evacuate the bus, taking the first aid kit. The driver will take the students to the basement of a nearby building or to the nearest depression or ditch upwind (toward the storm) of the bus, far enough away from the bus so that the bus will not roll over on them, away from power lines and trees, if possible, and instruct them to lie face down or cover their heads with their arms. If the students are wearing coats or jackets, these can be used to provide additional protection for their heads and bodies.

If drivers are on the road when they hear a tornado warning or spot a tornado, and there is no time to evacuate the students after stopping the bus, drivers should have the students assume the protective position, remaining in their seats, with their heads below window level.

D. Communicate effectively with school staff, students, parents, law enforcement officials and the motoring public.

1. Students: Clearly communicate expectations to students. Treat students with respect and refrain from any conduct which is, or could be perceived, as demeaning, intimidating or harassing.
2. Parents: Informed parents can assist drivers. Parents can provide important information that will allow the driver to be more effective with a student. Be polite, considerate, and provide accurate observations for parents.

Before School Starts

ALL drivers **MUST** contact by phone **all families** on their bus routes prior to the beginning of the school year. This is especially important to families with kindergarten students. The points to cover would include:

- Introduce yourself as the bus driver for their children

- Indicate the pick-up time for their children in the morning and the drop-off time in the afternoon
- If there is a turn around at their pick up, check for space considerations in all seasons
- Ask if they have any questions or concerns

A reasonable number of attempts to call a household would be 3, or leave a message if they have an answering machine. If you cannot reach some families or they do not have a phone number or answering machine, call the district office secretary and inform her of the pickup times for those students. If the family calls the school, the secretary will be able to inform them of the time.

3. School Staff: School staff will be of considerable assistance to drivers. They are trained in the education of students and it is in their best interest that control and discipline be maintained on the bus. Therefore, it is very important drivers have good relationships with the school staff and give them full cooperation.
4. Public: It is important to remember that to the general public, the driver represents the school. Buses are one of the most visible vehicles on the road. Drivers must deal with students, parents, and other motorists in a polite, professional and considerate manner.

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER TRAINING

A. Training

All new bus drivers shall be provided with pre-service training, including in-vehicle (actual driving) instruction before transporting students and shall meet the competencies specified by the Department of Public Safety. All school bus drivers shall receive pre-service training and ongoing training in the areas outlined below.

1. Pre-Trip Inspection
Both new and experienced drivers must be familiar with the elements of the mandatory pre-trip inspection required under Minnesota law including:
 - a. The engine compartment — belts, valves, fluid leaks
 - b. Engine start, warning lights, gauges, horn
 - c. Fuel level
 - d. Brakes — pedal reserve and air/vacuum gauges
 - e. Interior — seats, floor, lights
 - f. Electrical charging system
 - g. Emergency door
 - (1) smooth latch operation
 - (2) alarm buzzer
 - h. Entrance door operation
 - i. Lift door operation and alarm

- j. Lift equipment for wheelchairs
- k. Wheels, service brakes, emergency brake
- l. Exterior Lights — headlights, brake lights, market lights, turn signals
- m. Exhaust system
- n. Windows, windshield, and inspection sticker
- o. Eight light system and stop arm
- p. Emergency equipment — first aid kit, bodily fluids clean-up kit, flash light, reflectors, two way radio

2. Fundamentals and Techniques of School Bus Driving

The driver training program must include:

- a. Relevant laws
- b. Rules of the road and school district safety policies
- c. Defensive driving
- d. Driving in inclement weather conditions
 - (1) reduced visibility — rain, snow, fog
 - (2) wet roads
 - (3) icy roads
- e. Dealing with pedestrians and students in traffic
- f. Operation of the manual or automatic transmission
- g. The use of the drive train for stopping the school bus
- h. Situations where the hand brake will and will not stop a moving bus
- i. Steering and turning techniques
- j. Right and left turn maneuvers
- k. Gauging the speed of other vehicles on cross streets
- l. Use of mirrors
- m. Merging into traffic
- n. Visual perceptions
- o. Safe following distances
- p. Safe passing procedures
- q. Safe backing procedures
- r. Use of the eight-light system and school district policy regarding its use
- s. Loading and unloading procedures
- t. Knowledge of the danger zone concept
- u. Policies and procedures for railroad crossings
- v. Response to an approaching emergency vehicle while unloading
- w. Procedures for leaving the bus unattended

3. Special Education Transportation

Special education transportation requires skills and abilities that exceed those required to provide normal school bus service. Drivers will be familiar with:

- a. What to do in a medical emergency
- b. Handling wheelchairs
- c. Operating lift equipment
- d. Proper use of wheelchair securing devices

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- e. Use of seat belts for designated students
 - f. Handicapping conditions
 - g. Responsibilities of the bus driver and the bus aide
 - h. Situations where a responsible person is not available to receive a student
4. Emergency Procedures
Drivers must be prepared to deal with emergency situations while operating on routes and field trips. Included in these emergency situations are mechanical breakdown, fire, accident, or passenger injury. See Emergency Procedures above.
5. First Aid
All drivers must be trained in first aid, including the Heimlich maneuver, procedures for dealing with obstructed airways, shock, bleeding, and seizures.
6. Private or Confidential Student Information
All drivers should know the types of student data that are considered private or confidential under Minnesota Statutes
7. Student Discipline
- a. Creating a positive attitude on the school bus
 - b. Oral and visual communication skills between the driver and the passenger
 - c. Dealing confidently with a disruptive student
 - d. District discipline policy
 - e. Developing and enforcing workable rules
 - f. Incident report forms
 - g. District policy on possession of weapons by a student
 - h. District policy on sexual, racial and religious harassment/violence
 - i. District policy on smoking
8. Human Relations
- a. Appropriate driver behavior
 - b. Sensitivity to a diverse student population
 - c. Sensitivity to handicapping conditions
 - d. Relations with parents and school staff
 - e. Working with a special education bus aide
9. Chemical Abuse
- a. How alcohol and/or drugs can affect driving skills
 - b. Drug-testing programs
 - c. State and federal requirements

B. Evaluation

All drivers will be evaluated for the following competencies at least once annually:

1. Safely operate the type of school bus the driver will be driving
2. Understand student behavior, including issues relating to students with disabilities
3. Ensure orderly conduct of students on the bus and handle incidents of misconduct appropriately
4. Know and understand relevant laws, rules of the road and local school bus safety policies
5. Handle emergency situations
6. Safely load and unload students