

709 – STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SAFETY POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide safe transportation for students and to educate students on safety issues and the responsibilities of school bus ridership. All references in this policy to school bus shall include any school owned vehicle used to transport students.

II. PLAN FOR STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SAFETY TRAINING

A. School Bus Safety Week

The education district may designate a school bus safety week. The National School Bus Safety Week is the third week of October.

B. Student Training

1. The education district shall provide students enrolled in grades kindergarten through 10 with age appropriate school bus safety training. The training shall be results oriented and shall consist of both classroom instruction and practical training using a school bus. Student training shall fulfill all statutory requirements.
 - a. transportation by school bus is a privilege, not a right;
 - b. education district policies for student conduct and school bus safety;
 - c. appropriate conduct while on the bus;
 - d. the danger zones surrounding a school bus;
 - e. procedures for safely boarding and leaving a school bus;
 - f. procedures for safe vehicle lane crossing; and
 - g. school bus evacuation and other emergency procedures.
2. All students in grades K through 6 who are transported by school bus and are enrolled during the first or second week of school must receive the school bus safety training by the end of the third week of school. Students in grades 7 through 10 who are transported by school bus and are enrolled during the first or second week of school must receive the school bus safety training or receive bus safety instruction materials by the end of the sixth week of school, if they have not previously received school bus training. Students in grades K through 10 who enroll in a school after the second week of school, are transported by school bus, and have not received training in their previous school districts shall undergo school bus safety training or receive bus safety instructional materials within four weeks of their first day of attendance.

3. The education district will make reasonable accommodations in training for students known to speak English as a second language and students with disabilities.
4. The education district must provide students enrolled in grades K-3 school bus safety training twice during the school year.
5. Students taking drivers training instructional classes and other students in grades 9 through 12 must receive training in the laws and proper procedures for operating a motor vehicle in the vicinity of a school bus.
6. The education district with students transported by school bus at public expense must conduct a school bus evacuation drill at least once during the school year.
7. The education district shall adopt and make available for public review a curriculum for transportation safety education.
8. The education district may provide student safety education for bicycling and pedestrian safety for students in grades K-5.

III. CONDUCT ON SCHOOL VEHICLES AND CONSEQUENCES FOR MISBEHAVIOR

- A. Riding the school bus is a privilege, not a right. The education district's general student behavior rules are in effect for all students on school buses; including nonpublic and charter school students.
- B. Consequences for school bus misconduct will be imposed by the education district under adopted administrative discipline procedures. In addition, all school bus misconduct will be reported to the student's program coordinator or building principal or their designee. Serious misconduct may be reported to local law enforcement.
 1. **School Bus Rules**

If the bus safety rules are broken, the education district's discipline procedures are to be followed. Consequences are progressive and may include suspension of bus privileges. It is the school bus driver's responsibility to report unacceptable behavior to the student's program coordinator or building principal.
 2. **Rules on the Bus**
 - a. Immediately follow the directions of the driver.
 - b. Sit in your seat facing forward.

- c. Talk quietly and use appropriate language.
- d. Keep all parts of your body inside the bus.
- e. Keep your arms, legs and belongings to yourself.
- f. No fighting, harassment, intimidation or horseplay.
- g. Do not throw any object.
- h. No eating, drinking, or use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.
- i. Do not bring any weapons or dangerous objects on the school bus.
- j. Do not damage the school bus.

3. Consequences

Consequences for school bus misconduct will apply to all regular and late routes. Decisions regarding a student's ability to ride the bus in connection with co-curricular and extracurricular events (for example, field trips or competitions) will be in the sole discretion of the education district. Parents or guardians will be notified of any suspension of bus privileges. Consequences for violations of this policy may include, but are not limited to: verbal warning, contact with parent or guardian, suspension of bus privileges for various periods of time, or revocation of all bus riding privileges without time limitation.

a. Discipline

Based on the severity of a student's conduct, more serious consequences may be imposed at any time. Depending on the nature of the offense, consequences such as suspension or expulsion from school also may result from school bus misconduct. Special circumstances may exist for students with disabilities. See Policy 506 Student Discipline, Section XIV Disabled Students.

b. Vandalism/Bus Damage

Students damaging school buses will be responsible for the damages. Failure to pay such damages (or make arrangements to pay) within two weeks may result in the loss of bus privileges until damages are paid.

c. Notice

School bus rules and consequences for violations of these rules will be reviewed with students annually and copies of these rules will be made available to students.

d. Criminal Conduct

In cases involving criminal conduct (for example, assault, weapons, possession or vandalism), the appropriate education district personnel and local law enforcement will be informed.

IV. PARENT AND GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

A. Parent and Guardian Notification:

The education district school bus rules will be provided to each family. Parents and guardians are asked to review the rules with their children.

B. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities for transportation safety:

1. Become familiar with education district rules, policies, regulations, and the principles of school bus safety, and thoroughly review them with their children;
2. Support safe riding and walking practices, and recognize that students are responsible for their actions;
3. Communicate safety concerns to their school administrators; and
4. Have their children properly dressed for the weather.

V. OPERATING RULES AND PROCEDURES

A. Training shall be provided annually to each school vehicle driver, including training drivers how to do the following:

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

7. A driver may not operate at school vehicle while communicating over, or otherwise operating, a cellular phone or music device for personal reason, whether hand held or hands free, when the vehicle is in motion. "Cellular phone" means a cellular, analog, wireless, or digital telephone capable of sending or receiving telephone or text messages without an access line for service.

B. Type III Vehicles

1. Type III vehicles are restricted to passenger cars, station wagons, vans, and buses having a maximum manufacturer's rated seating capacity of 10 or fewer people including the driver and a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less. A van or bus converted to a seating capacity of 10 or fewer and placed in service on or after August 1, 1999, must have been originally manufactured to comply with the passenger safety standards.
2. Type III vehicles must be painted a color other than national school bus yellow.
3. Type III vehicles shall be state inspected in accordance with legal requirements.
4. A Type III vehicle cannot be older than 12 years old unless excepted by state and federal law.
5. If a Type III vehicle is education district owned, the education district name will be clearly marked on the side of the vehicle. The Type III vehicle must not have the words "school bus" in any location on the exterior of the vehicle or in any interior location visible to a motorist.
6. A "Type III vehicle" must not be outwardly equipped and identified as a Type A, B, C, or D bus.
7. Eight-lamp warning systems and stop arms must not be installed or used on Type III vehicles.
8. Type III vehicles must be equipped with mirrors as required by law.
9. Any Type III vehicle may not stop traffic and may not load or unload before making a complete stop and disengaging gears by shifting into neutral or park. Any Type III vehicle used to transport students must not load or unload so that a pupil has to cross the road, except where not possible or impractical, then the driver or assistant must escort a pupil

across the road. If the driver escorts the student across the road, then the motor must be stopped, the ignition key removed, the brakes set, and the vehicle otherwise rendered immobile.

10. Any Type III vehicle used to transport students must carry emergency equipment including:
 - a. Fire extinguisher. A minimum of one 10BC rated dry chemical type fire extinguisher is required. The extinguisher must be mounted in a bracket, and must be located in the driver's compartment and be readily accessible to the driver and passengers. A pressure indicator is required and must be easily read without removing the extinguisher from its mounted position.
 - b. First aid kit and body fluids cleanup kit. A minimum of a ten-unit first aid kit and a body fluids cleanup kit is required. They must be contained in removable, moisture- and dust-proof containers mounted in an accessible place within the driver's compartment and must be marked to indicate their identity and location.
 - c. A Type III bus must contain at least three red reflectorized triangle road warning devices. Liquid burning "pot type" flares are not allowed.
 - d. Passenger cars and station wagons may carry a fire extinguisher, a first aid kit, and warning triangles in the trunk or trunk area of the vehicle if a label in the driver and front passenger area clearly indicates the location of these items.
11. Students will not be regularly transported in private vehicles that are not state inspected as Type III vehicles. Only emergency, unscheduled transportation may be conducted in vehicles with a seating capacity of 10 or fewer without meeting the requirements for a Type III vehicle. Also, parents may use a private vehicle to transport their own children under a contract with the district. The education district has no system of inspection for private vehicles.
12. All drivers of Type III vehicles will be licensed drivers and will be familiar with the use of required emergency equipment. The education district will not knowingly allow a person to operate a Type III vehicle if the person has been convicted of an offense that disqualifies the person from operating a school bus.
13. Type III vehicles will be equipped with child passenger restraints, and child passenger restraints will be utilized to the extent required by law.

VIII. EDUCATION DISTRICT EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- A. If possible, school vehicle drivers or their supervisors shall call “911” or the local emergency phone number in the event of a serious emergency.
- B. School vehicle drivers or bus assistants for special education students requiring special transportation service because of their handicapping condition shall be trained in basic first aid procedures, shall within one month after the effective date of assignment participate in a program of in-service training on the proper methods for dealing with the specific needs and problems of pupils with disabilities, assist pupils with disabilities on and off the bus when necessary for their safe ingress and egress from the bus; and ensure that protective safety devices are in use and fastened properly.
- C. Emergency Health Information shall be maintained on the school bus for students requiring special transportation service because of their handicapping condition. The information shall state:
 - 1. the pupil’s name and address;
 - 2. the nature of the pupil’s disabilities;
 - 3. emergency health care information; and
 - 4. the names and telephone numbers of the pupil’s physician, parents, guardians, or custodians, and some person other than the pupil’s parents or custodians who can be contacted in case of an emergency.

IX. EDUCATION DISTRICT MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

- A. All school vehicles shall be maintained in safe operating conditions through a systematic preventive maintenance and inspection program adopted or approved by the education district.
- B. All school vehicles shall be state inspected in accordance with legal requirements.
- C. A copy of the current daily pre-trip inspection report must be carried in the bus. Daily pre-trip inspections shall be maintained on file in accordance with the education district’s record retention schedule. Prompt reports of defects to be immediately corrected will be submitted.
- D. Daily post-trip inspections shall be performed to check for any children or lost items remaining on the bus and for vandalism.

X. SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY DIRECTOR

The school board has designated an individual to serve as the education district's school transportation safety director. The school transportation safety director shall have day-to-day responsibility for pupil transportation safety. The school transportation safety director will assure that this policy is periodically reviewed to ensure that it conforms to law. The school transportation safety director shall certify annually to the school board that each school vehicle driver meets the training competencies required for a type III vehicle by Minn. Stat. § 171.321, Subd. 4. The school transportation safety director also shall confirm annually to the Executive Director that students have received school bus safety training in accordance with state law. The name, address and telephone number of the school transportation safety director are on file in the education district office. Any questions regarding student transportation or this policy may be addressed to the school transportation safety director.