**(SCHOOL DISTRICT)**



***Transportation Employee***

**Policies and Procedures Handbook**

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***INTRODUCTION***

This handbook will outline requirements, guidelines, personnel regulations and operations of employees assigned to the (School District) Transportation Department. As a transportation employee, you are a part of a very special team. You are a professional and you have worked hard to achieve that status.

The responsibilities of transportation professionals are many. Most importantly, we are responsible for the safety of impressionable young children. We are expected to be a model of safe driving. Remember that our passengers are the drivers of tomorrow. They observe our driving habits as well as our behavior. Give them a positive example to follow--drive defensively, cautiously and courteously.

Our buses are rolling billboards advertising the (School District). Whatever you do or say when driving your bus is a direct reflection on all school bus drivers and on our school district. Demonstrate to the public by your safe and courteous driving why we are proud of who we are, what we do, and whom we work for.

(School District) strives for an excellent safety record. We have people who care about the students we transport, and they take pride in their jobs. Every one of you makes an invaluable contribution toward this achievement in excellence.

It would be impossible to anticipate every possible emergency or situation and how you should react. Even to attempt to do so would produce an extremely voluminous and ultimately incomplete handbook. You are trained, professional drivers. You will have to make some decisions based on your training and good judgment. When this becomes necessary, always remember the safety of your passengers is your first consideration. Consider your options, the possible consequences, then choose what you feel is the best and safest solution under the circumstances.

The (School District) Transportation Employee must become thoroughly familiar with the contents of this handbook. This handbook will be amended as needed, and the amendments distributed to all drivers.

Good Luck in your chosen profession,

(School District’s Transportation Manager)

Transportation Manager

***SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS***

Special instructions will be issued from time to time, and all such instructions will be followed during the time they are in force. These instructions may be verbal or written. Written notices will be posted on the bulletin board and all personnel are requested to check the board each time they return to the bus compound. Special bulletins may also be distributed in driver's boxes. Any questions regarding these notices or bulletins should be referred to the Transportation office for clarification.

***All drivers must read the daily board and check his/her box every time they return to the Transportation Compound.***

Compliance with the rules and regulations set forth in this handbook protects the School Bus Driver and School District, and promotes the highest degree of safety, efficiency, and professionalism in pupil transportation.

A copy of this handbook will be provided for each employee. Employees are expected to become thoroughly acquainted with its contents and are encouraged to review this handbook on a regular basis. Please do not store this handbook in the bus.

It is your responsibility as a Certified School Bus Driver to be aware of the laws, rules and regulations affecting your profession. **While employed by (School District), all bus drivers shall obey all laws, rules and regulations applicable to the transportation of school pupils and safe vehicle operation including:**

* The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) School Bus Driver Curriculum,
* Michigan Vehicle Code (MVC), Michigan Education Code (MEC),
* City and County Ordinances,
* (School District) “Pupil Transportation Handbook – Information for a Safe and Orderly Transportation System,”
* Michigan Association for Pupil Transportation (MAPT) School Bus Driver Bulletins, and
* Federal rules and regulations pertaining to school buses and school bus drivers.

The items listed above hereby made a part of this handbook and shall be observed by (School District) bus drivers at all times while on duty.

***GENERAL EMPLOYEE REQUIREMENTS***

**ALCOHOL AND DRUGS/DRUG FREE WORKPLACE POLICY**

The use of alcoholic beverages before reporting for duty, while on duty, or between shifts is expressly prohibited. You shall not operate a school bus with the odor of alcohol on your breath. If you are requested to take a blood, breath, or urine test or other kind of test to determine the amount of alcohol in the blood, you shall do so. **Refusal to submit to such a test will be sufficient cause for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.**

Any drug or medication taken orally or otherwise, that affects the central nervous system, is prohibited. These include, but are not limited to, amphetamines, barbiturates, narcotics or other dangerous drugs or controlled substances specified under Sections 102 (6) of the Federal Controlled Substance Act (21 USC 802 (6). You must not operate a school bus while under the influence of any of the above-mentioned substances, whether or not prescribed by a physician. **Drug testing, as required under Federal Law will be strictly adhered to.**

The use of prescribed drugs is deemed appropriate, as long as the use is not abused. The driver must carry proof of the prescribed drug in his/her possession at all times while on duty and furnish it upon request. The prescribed drug must not in any manner diminish the driver's ability to safely operate the school bus.

Any driver found to be affected by any substance that might impair normal body function or judgment will be relieved of any driving assignment pending an investigation of the circumstances. Other drugs or substances purchased "over the counter" might be considered **unsafe** for the employee if they tend to reduce alertness, bring on drowsiness, or slow down reaction time. These substances include, among others, some antihistamines, pain relievers, and remedies for colds, and hay fever. If you require medication, check with your physician or pharmacist as to the possible side effects that might effect your employment before taking the medication.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, (Public Law 100-690, Title V, Subtitle D), it is the policy of the (School District) to provide a drug-free workplace.

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace, which includes all facilities under the control and use of the (School District).

Any violation of this prohibition by an employee of the (School District) may result in (1) requiring such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program; or (2) disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**ASSIGNMENT OF KEYS**

A key to the Transportation Compound gate and Drivers' Lounge will be assigned to each employee as required. **You are** **responsible for the key and for having it with you whenever you are on duty**.

All employees assigned to a bus shall have a key available to them to drive that bus. The keys are located on the **Key Board** in the lounge. All Employees are to pick up bus keys at the start of each assignment and return them to the **Key Board** daily at the end of each assignment. **All employees individually and collectively** are responsible for keys assigned to them. Employees needing a spare bus for any reason will see a Mechanic to check out a key.

If a key is lost, the Employee last assigned will be required to submit a written report stating the facts about the loss.

Assigned keys shall not be duplicated, loaned, and/or used by anyone other than the person to whom they are issued. The keys shall be used only by the employee in his/her official capacity as a (School District) representative.

## BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

## As sure as children ride on our school buses, you will at some time in your career have a student get hurt or sick on your bus or an employee will get hurt or sick in the workplace. Knowing how to respond appropriately can protect you, the injured passenger and your other passengers on the bus. All employees must know the potential danger of bloodborne pathogens and safe work practices to minimize risk. Bloodborne pathogens are microorganisms carried by human blood and other bodily fluids. Unfortunately, children are as prone to bloodborne diseases as adults are. That means you are as much in danger of infection from the children that you work with as any other group in society.

#### Transmission

Knowing how bloodborne pathogens are transmitted is your first line of defense from infection. They may be present in blood and other materials, such as:

* Body fluids containing visible blood
* Torn or loose skin

Bloodborne pathogens can cause infection by entering your body through:

* Open cuts and nicks
* Skin abrasions
* Dermatitis
* Acne
* The mucus membranes of your mouth, eyes, or nose.

## *Universal Precautions*

Most approaches to infection control are based on the concept of Universal Precautions – treating all blood and bodily fluids as if they were potentially infectious. This approach is critical because it is impossible to tell who is infected with a bloodborne pathogen simply by appearances. Many people who carry infectious diseases have no visible symptoms and no knowledge of their condition. Remember that an exposure can lead to infection. Using Universal Precautions may literally save your life.

#### Body Fluid Clean Up Kit

All buses are equipped with body fluid clean up kits for the protection of employees and passengers. Make sure your bus has adequate supplies for the type and number of students you transport.

#### Procedures

In the event that you come into contact with the “spill” of ANY bodily fluid (i.e. vomit, blood, excrement, urine, saliva, running sores, etc.) these are the procedures you are to follow using your Clean Up Kit:

1. GLOVE UP FIRST!

2. Apply any necessary First Aid measures and, if needed, clean up the student.

3. Prevent the spread of fluids to any other passenger and parts of the bus. If possible, clean up the bus at this time.

4. Put all used gloves, tissues, towels, masks, and waste into the RED plastic bag marked “Infectious Waste” and seal it.

5. Clean hands with towelettes and dispose in the same bag. Do not touch any other part of your body and do not eat drink, or smoke until you have thoroughly cleaned your hands under running water.

6. Take the student to school or bus stop per office instructions.

7. Finish your assignment per office instructions.

8. Upon returning to the bus compound, dispose of the plastic bag in the designated receptacle in the driver’s lounge.

9. Wash your hands thoroughly.

10. Proceed to clean the bus:

* Re-glove
* If applicable, sweep out any debris
* Use appropriate cleaning solution provided by the garage
* Clean the bus concentrating on all areas that the driver and student may have touched. (seatbelt, radio, seats, windows, etc.)

11. Dispose of cleaning solutions and materials and used supplies appropriately. All sponges, rags, etc should be put into a RED plastic bag marked “Infectious Waste” and sealed. Dispose of the plastic bag in the designated receptacle in the driver’s lounge.

12. Wash your hands thoroughly.

13. Restock clean up kit as necessary.

## BREAK TIME

When one assignment ends and the next one starts WITHIN 20 minutes, you are allowed to stay “on the clock” or “on duty” and be paid straight through. If, there is a break of MORE than 20 minutes, drivers are expected to go “off the clock” or “off duty” and are NOT paid for this time. This work rule applies to assignments between your morning, mid day, and afternoon runs i.e. shuttles, noon runs, etc. This does NOT apply to “lay over” time approved in advance between morning and afternoon high school and elementary runs.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER**

It is very important that the District and the Department always have on file a current address and phone number for each employee. "Change of Address" forms may be obtained from the Transportation Secretary. Complete the information requested, and return it to the Transportation Office within five days.

**CONDUCT WHILE ON DUTY**

Employees should always keep in mind that they are employed to serve the public and to be courteous at all times to students and adults. It is the responsibility of all employees to conduct themselves in a manner that will reflect credit upon themselves and the school system, so both may enjoy the confidence of the public. The use of boisterous, profane, or vulgar language by an employee on duty in a school bus, on school property, while on trips, in restaurants, out in the community, or near students or adults is highly inappropriate and sets a very poor example for students.

It is the policy of the district to have a tobacco free workplace. Smoking and the use of tobacco products by all persons shall be prohibited on school district property. This shall include school buildings, grounds, school owned vehicles and school sponsored events off campus. In addition, employees shall not smoke in the presence of students or while at bus stops.

Eating and/or drinking while driving or when students are aboard is not permitted.

Misunderstandings with parents and the general public can be avoided if the bus employee politely explains that they are following orders. Please refer the person to the Transportation Office at (Phone Number) for stop changes.

Make every attempt to avoid verbal confrontation with **anyone**.There will be times when it is not easy, but nothing will be satisfactorily resolved through anger. Politely refer the other party to the Transportation Office. When you return to the compound, or by two-way radio, alert the office to the problem so that they may be prepared to deal with this situation.

## CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLANS

In order to provide a safe and orderly work environment for all transportation employees, we have developed a “Crisis Management Plan.” The plan has been designed to be a practical document for use during a Declared Emergency of such magnitude, i.e., tornado that the department or a driver would be isolated from immediate outside assistance.

The Transportation Manager, with assistance from the Transportation Employee Safety Committee, will see to it that the information required by the Plan is supplied and that this information is reviewed and updated annually.

The Transportation Manager or designee has the ultimate responsibility for all local decisions in a disaster situation. The Transportation Manager will be available to all emergency teams, the emergency radio equipment, police and fire personnel, parents and the news media.

For more information regarding our plan, please refer to the RED binder in the lounge, ask any Safety Committee Member or the Transportation Office.

**LEAVE REQUESTS**

Whenever an employee knows **in advance**, of any important appointments, jury duty, etc., they are requested to complete and submit a “Request For Leave” form.

**NON-DRIVING DUTIES**

The time on duty when not driving will be spent doing a variety of tasks; i.e., completing paperwork, updating route maps, inside cleaning of buses, or other assignments consistent with the job description.

**PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

As a professional, we ask that you use common sense in choosing your attire for work. You are transporting impressionable young children. While hairstyle and clothing are individual and personal, employees are expected to model clean hygiene and be well groomed when reporting for work. The Transportation Department shall be concerned only when these are extreme and could cause distraction, disruption, or be unsafe. Shoes must be worn at all time while on duty for safety reasons. All garments must be hemmed with seams, no cut offs or clothes with holes. Some articles of clothing that are **inappropriate** are:

* Garments where the torso or entire thigh is exposed; i.e., tube tops, half shirts, halters, micro minis, short shorts, bathing suits, gym shorts, physical education clothing, tank tops, jogging shorts, cut-offs, and flimsy silky shorts.
* Clothing or buttons which show obscene words or pictures, ethnic or religious slurs, sexually suggestive statements or that promote illegal activities including the use of alcohol, marijuana, tobacco and drugs.
* Hair curlers worn in the workplace.
* Clothing, colors or paraphernalia related to juvenile or adult gang-related activities.
* Open-toe sandals, thongs, sandals, or any other style of shoes that are open at the toe, top or heel and offer no protection to the foot. Spiked or high heels over one inch are inappropriate for drivers. This is for the safety of the employee.
* Employees whose appearance is not appropriate for work may be sent home by the Transportation Manager for a change of clothes.

**RELATIONSHIP WITH PUPILS**

You are expected to establish and maintain a professional relationship with all students. Any act by you that might cause anyone to be concerned with or suspicious of your relationship with any student must be carefully avoided. Specific situations to watch for and prevent:

* Drivers are encouraged to refrain from allowing students to address them by their first name. To allow a student to address you on a first name basis is the first step in breaking the professional relationship between you and your passengers.
* Do not discuss personal matters, other drivers or school employees with your students.
* Do not make, or attempt to make, any appointment with students outside of school hours.
* Unless a student needs help in getting on or off the bus because of injury or disability, avoid putting your hands on a student.
* Gifts or rewards of an edible nature should not be given to students due to student safety and medical concerns.

**SUBSITIUTE DRIVERS**

The first responsibility of a sub driver is to drive the route of an employee who is not at work or has been given another assignment. That employee assumes the hours and duties of that route.

**REPORTING FOR DUTY**

All employees are to report for regular driving duties at the time specified by the Transportation Manager. In order to provide the best possible service to our "customers" and to assist with record keeping, please observe the following absence reporting procedures. These methods of requesting leaves and reporting absences will reduce our chance of not covering your assignments when you are not here and makes your time sheets easier to reconcile. The more notice you can give us, the more time we have to arrange for a substitute.

## *Short Notice Absences*

## If you become ill after regular office hours, please call the Dispatcher AT HOME BEFORE 9:00 PM. Special Education drivers and aides shall call BETWEEN 5:00 and 5:30 AM. Regular drivers shall call BETWEEN 5:30 and 6:00 AM. Please respect the Dispatchers personal time and DO NOT CALL BETWEEN 9:00 PM AND 5:00 AM. Except in the case of an emergency, all other absences during the regular workday shall be reported NO LESS THAN 2 (TWO) HOURS prior to your regular assignment. Upon your return to work, complete and submit a "REQUEST FOR LEAVE” form.

### *Advance Notice Absences*

Any time you know in advance that you might be absent from your regular assignment, please complete and submit to the office a “Request For Leave” form as soon as possible.

Employees are asked to use discretion regarding reporting to work while still ill and possibly exposing students and co-workers to infectious illnesses. Employees are requested to call the Transportation office by 5:00 PM the day before they expect to return form an absence of 3 or more days.

***Employees who are a minimum of five (5) minutes late, and when a sub driver has been assigned for a replacement, the employee will be docked for the time they are on the clock until they leave for their next morning, noon or afternoon assignment.***

*Explanation*

You are scheduled to start your shift at 6:30 am and you do not arrive until 6:45 am. You will be sent home when a sub driver has been assigned to cover your route for the duration of the morning shift, and you will be docked the appropriate amount of pay for that morning.

**SICK LEAVE**

Employees receive sick leave each year as specified in the current bargaining agreement. It must be remembered that sick leave is a privilege provided if there is need and is not to be abused. Unused sick leave is cumulative from year to year for all employees, and provides the best "salary insurance" anyone could have during an extended illness. It is advantageous to use your benefits wisely.

**TIME AWARENESS**

In order to maintain schedules and record accurate information on reports, you must have a reliable watch. An inaccurate watch cannot be accepted as an excuse for missed schedules or errors on time reports. Your watch should be set to the correct time when you report for duty each morning.

**TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The **Transportation Manager's** responsibility is the overall management of the safe and efficient operation of the Transportation Department. This includes the personnel, safety and training of staff, routing and scheduling buses, drivers and routes.

The **Secretary’s** primary responsibility is to provide the secretarial and organizational functions for the department, all special education and extra and co-curricular transportation.

The **Dispatcher’s** primary responsibility is to work with the secretary on the day to day driving assignments for regular transportation and to answer phones and 2 way radios.

The **Mechanic’s** responsibility is to service, maintain and repair the bus fleet to reduce or eliminate breakdowns and disruptions in service.

The **Driver Trainer's** responsibility is to provide training including behind the wheel, assisting with in-service training, etc.

The **Bus Driver's** responsibility is to drive a school bus safely with or without passengers aboard, and to keep the bus clean at all times. Drivers are responsible for completing all required paperwork accurately, legibly and must submit the Pre Trip Inspection Report and other required paperwork **on the day** that the work was performed.

The **Transportation Paraprofessional’s** responsibility is to work with the bus driver as a team to assist with loading and unloading passengers, pupil management needs, and medical and behavioral issues on the bus.

It is **Every Employee’s** responsibility to work towards the following “Guiding Principals as (School District) Transportation employees:

* *Performance.* Your primary and most important responsibility is to perform to your highest ability.
* *Punctuality.* You must report to work promptly to maintain a teamwork environment.
* *Personal hygiene and appearance.* You are the front-line representatives of the school district.
* *Communication.* Learn the chain of command so that you will know who see with questions.
* *Respect.* Any type of harassment to staff, students or the community will not be tolerated.
* *Courtesy.* Live by the Golden Rule: Treat others as you want to be treated.
* *Confidentiality.* You are expected to maintain the confidentiality of any information you may have access to in relation to your position with PPS.
* *Waste prevention and good housekeeping.* A safe and productive workplace is beneficial to you and the school district.

**VACATION LEAVE**

Employees covered under collective bargaining agreements that are eligible for paid vacation may take accumulated time during the winter, spring, and/or summer recesses or at other times when their services are not required and approved by the Transportation Manager in advance.

**VIOLENT INCIDENTS**

Too often we hear news accounts of incidents involving disgruntled employees, dissatisfied customers, estranged spouses, alienated students and other individuals who, for whatever reason, decide to resolve situations through acts of violence. Although infrequent in occurrence, these incidents have the potential to strike any work place environment. The incident may be isolated and pose a minimal threat to the entire site, or may be wildly indiscriminate and result in a serious threat to every person.

It must be recognized, however, that the nature of a violent event and the manner in which it unfolds will determine the response. Life safety concerns are paramount in these incidents and immediate evacuation or other protective actions must be taken to ensure the safety of all people on site. For more information, please refer to the Transportation Crisis Management Plan.

***GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR DRIVERS OF DISTRICT VEHICLES***

**ASSIGNMENT OF DAILY BUS ROUTES AND BUSES**

Route Bidding and bus assignments will occur as per the current collective bargaining agreement

All bus drivers shall report for duty on the Bid day to enable the bidding process to be completed in a business like manner. Any employee unavailable to personally attend bidding may designate another person to bid for them. It is suggested that the employee state their preferences in numerical order and sign the list on the appropriate form.

The District reserves the right to assign specific special needs buses to specific routes.

Any bus driver who fails to exercise their bidding rights will have an assignment made for them.

**BACKING OF VEHICLES**

One of the most dangerous maneuvers any driver performs is that of backing a motor vehicle. In order for the professional school bus driver and the school district to operate the safest transportation system possible, the backing maneuver shall be avoided whenever possible. The following rules and procedures apply to all (School District) Bus Drivers when they must back up.

* On all routes where turn arounds are required, the bus driver shall use the designated turn around.
* All pupils shall be required to board the bus BEFORE backing through the turn around.

* At all drop off locations, students shall remain in the vehicle DURING the turn around maneuver.
* Do not back up when students are outside the bus.
* Back up for the shortest distance possible – just enough to allow you to proceed forward.
* School buses shall not back up on any school property unless a responsible adult guide is behind the bus to assist the bus driver. This maneuver shall be completed only when there are no children present.
* Use a spotter whenever possible. Depending on the age and abilities of the passengers, the oldest and most responsible inside the bus may be used as a spotter.
* Always make sure that your back up beeper (if equipped) is working, or honk your horn, to get the attention of those around you when backing up. Silence on the bus is also recommended so that you can hear any warning noises outside the bus, such as the horn of another vehicle.
* The professional school bus driver is responsible at all times for the safe operation and control of their school bus.

*NEVER BACK A BUS AT OR NEAR SCHOOL UNLESS THERE IS A RESPONSIBLE ADULT PRESENT AT THE REAR OF THE BUS TO DIRECT YOU. PRIOR TO BACKING, EMPLOYEES SHOULD ALWAYS SOUND THE HORN IF THE BUS IS NOT EQUIPPED WITH A BACK UP BEEPER.*

***"DO NOT BACK UP UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY"***

**BACKING FROM PARKING STALLS**

When backing out of a FRONT parking stall, drivers shall honk 2 times before backing up slowly. When backing out of the back parking stall, drivers shall honk 1 time and back out 2 windows and stop then proceed straight out with all due caution watching for pedestrians and other vehicles. If your bus is equipped with a “back up beeper” you are not required to use your horn while backing up.

**BUS PARKING AND SECURITY**

When off the clock, all drivers are to park their buses in the assigned stalls in the bus compound. All safety precautions must be closely observed while entering, leaving or driving in the Transportation Compound. The speed limit in the compound five (5) miles per hour and must be strictly adhered to. When backing up in the Transportation Compound, always sound the horn if the bus is not equipped with a back up beeper and use extreme caution. Only back up far enough to turn and drive forward. Be aware of hazardous objects.

All school buses shall be parked either at a school or at authorized bus parking locations. Parking at private homes or at any other location between runs is permitted only when authorized in advance by the Transportation Office.

At the end of each workday, every bus driver SHALL close all bus windows, doors and roof hatches, sweep the floor and empty the trash can.

The Transportation compound gates and buildings will be open during regularly operating hours. If you report for work after regular hours, on weekends, or holidays, etc, the gates and buildings should be locked. It is your responsibility to see that they are locked upon your departure, even when you believe that another employee will be coming in shortly or you yourself "will be right back." Take the time to make sure that our compound is safe for all employees.

**CELL PHONE USE**

For the safety and convenience of bus drivers and passengers, we have a limited number of cell phones available in the Transportation Office. These phones are available to be checked out for trips on a first come, first served basis. Preference for phones will be given to drivers based on trip distance, duration or other special considerations. Phones are to be used only for district business. Drivers may be charged for personal phone calls. Phones should be returned to the Transportation Office at the end of the trip or no later than the next working day.

According to the American Automobile Association, a driver is 4 times more likely to be involved in a collision while they are using a cell phone. As cell phones have become more commonly available for use, professional school bus drivers need to be aware of these dangers and take appropriate action to maintain a safe environment for passengers, other motorists and the employee.

Bus Drivers are expected to give full attention to driving and to the road - driving safely is our first and foremost responsibility. Therefore, bus drivers shall pull off the road in a safe location and secure the bus before making or answering a call.

The driver may make rules regarding the use of passenger’s cell phones.  If a driver deems a passenger’s cell phone use is distracting to the safe operation of the vehicle, the driver may immediately prohibit its use.

## COLD WEATHER OPERATIONS

When the outside temperature drops below freezing (32 degrees) drivers are expected to change their routines. The first change is to PLUG IN your bus when parking overnight. This helps keep the engine block warm to assist with starting the diesel engines and will add to the useful service life of the bus. Do not leave any bus running unattended outside our compound. While in our compound, buses should not be left running any longer than the amount of time necessary for the pre trip inspection.

When waiting between runs or while on trips the engine should not be idled any longer than necessary. Don’t depend on the bus to keep you warm. Dress appropriately for the weather conditions expected for that time of year.

Keep your windshield and wipers clear of ice build up. This will allow you to see the road, other drivers and students at bus stops better.

**CONCENTRATION OF BUSES**

When there is a concentration of buses at one location, a 2-way radio should be monitored at all times. Drivers are to remain with the buses. If drivers must leave the buses, it will be for a brief time and for an identified destination only.

**DEPARTMENT POLICY REGARDING DRIVER SAFETY**

The (School District) Transportation Department desires all employees who operate motor vehicles on district business do so in a safe and reliable manner. When driving on district business in a district vehicle or in a personal vehicle used for district business, all employees are required to be in compliance with all local, state and federal laws governing the use and operation of vehicles in the State of Michigan, and/or other states you may drive a vehicle while on district business. Unsafe driving will not be tolerated by the (School District).

**DRIVING CAN BE A PAIN**

Reduce the stress of driving whenever possible. Follow these simple tips:

* Take a brake! Get out and stretch. Pressure in the lower back region often occurs after prolonged periods of sitting. Back exercises will help.
* Sit up as straight as possible. Adjust your seat to fit you. Forward, backward, up, down, bottom and back tilt and lumbar support all make an impact on your body support and comfort.
* Adjust your inside and outside mirrors for maximum viewing after you adjust your seat.

You owe it to yourself and it will make you feel better in the long run.

**DRIVING PROFICIENCY**

We require each employee to demonstrate that the employee is capable of safely operating each different type of vehicle (i.e., conventional, transit and lift buses) before driving such vehicle(s) unsupervised. Please make an appointment with a trainer for this training.

**FUELING BUSES**

Drivers shall maintain at least a half tank of fuel in the bus at all times. It is the responsibility of each employee to see that the bus is returned to its stall, **cleaned** and **fueled** after use. While fueling the bus, the employee must remain within easy reach of the fuel hose nozzle to prevent any spilling of fuel. There are no exceptions to this rule.

We are fortunate to have an electronic fueling system. Please be aware of the following procedures and information when fueling. Should you have any questions, please ask a mechanic.

* You may fuel any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
* All school buses use diesel fuel only.
* Insert the fuel card assigned to that vehicle in the card reader.
* Enter your PIN. (Ask for your PIN in the Transportation office.)
* Enter the current odometer mileage reading.
* Fuel the bus.
* Protect the environment. If you should accidentally spill some fuel, sprinkle absorbent powder (available in the garage) on the fuel spill and notify a mechanic immediately. *(Michigan Department of Environmental Quality requirement)*
* If you use a bus other than your regularly assigned bus, always fuel the bus before you park it. Be considerate of your fellow drivers.
* Never leave any bus with less than 1/2 tank of fuel.
* Never fuel a district vehicle with passengers onboard.
* Never smoke while fueling.
* Always turn the engine off while fueling.
* Drivers are to remain outside the vehicle and in view of the fuel nozzle in case of emergency. *(Michigan Department of Environmental Quality requirement)*
* Do not leave your bus parked unattended at the fuel pumps.

Employees are responsible for maintaining proper amounts of fuel, oil and water in their assigned buses. When using a bus other than your regularly assigned bus, the bus shall be left with a full tank of fuel swept and the trash can emptied.

##### FUEL CONSERVATION

All employees are requested to do their part to hold the line or reduce the fuel costs to the taxpayers of (School District). Please observe the following rules for fuel conservation:

* **Do not** leave your engine running any longer than that necessary for a complete pre trip inspection.
* **Do not** leave your engine running unattended at any time.
* Shut the engine **OFF** between runs (on layovers) whenever possible.
* Shut the engine **OFF** when loading & unloading passengers at schools.
* Don’t be a **LEADFOOT**. Start off slower and start stopping sooner.
* Time the traffic signals on your route so you don’t have to stop.
* Shut the engine **OFF** when fueling.

**GENERAL PROPERTY**

Drivers shall not permit any greater quantity of freight, express, or baggage in vehicles than can be safely and conveniently carried, without causing discomfort or unreasonable annoyance to passengers. In no event shall aisles, doors, steps or emergency exists be blocked.

Drivers of buses carrying groups such as bands, drill teams, etc., are reminded that State Laws require doors and aisles to be kept clear at all times. It is also required that bulky items such as bass drums, tubas, or boxes of miscellaneous equipment be placed on the bus in an appropriate location before loading the pupils. Pupils will then be loaded until the remaining seats have been filled.

Brooms shall not be left on the floor or laid across the aisle leading to an emergency exit. All such equipment must be attached securely to a sidewall. Trash containers must be of a size and type that does not obstruct the aisle or step-well.

## HEALTH ISSUES

Out of consideration of those passengers and other employees with medical conditions, drivers and passengers should refrain from using any aerosol spray, cologne, perfume, tobacco or other items with strong odors while on the bus. This is especially true for special education students and buses. Be aware of, and respect, your passenger’s medical issues and needs.

**HIJACKING AND KIDNAPPING**

In the past, school buses have been hijacked both by a pupil passenger and by persons who were not passengers. Also, several threats have been made but not actually carried out. Consequently, this is a subject that needs to be addressed. You, as a school bus driver, must know both **what to do** and **what not to do** if you are ever faced with a hijacking situation or a kidnapping. ***Do not try to be a hero****.* Accept your situation as it is, and be prepared to wait until help arrives. In a hostage situation, both the hostages and those holding hostages are under great stress. If the hostages are able to appear calm, then the stress on the kidnapper may be reduced. For more information, please refer to the Transportation Crisis Management Plan.

**INSPECTIONS**

All professional school bus drivers are expected to perform daily inspections of their buses as part of their regular duties for (School District). There are several reasons for these inspections:

* Reduce risk in the performance of your duties
* Safety of you and your passengers
* Preventing breakdowns
* Eliminate frustrated students, staff and community
* Reduce delays and inconvenience to passengers
* Prolong vehicle life
* Reduce transportation costs
* And last but not least, they are LEGALLY REQUIRED. (MVC 257.683)

There are three basic types of school bus inspections that every (School District) bus driver shall complete each day.

*Pre Trip Inspection*

Bus drivers shall perform a complete pre trip inspection of their assigned school bus prior to operation on the road to ascertain that it is in safe condition, it is equipped as required by all provisions of law, and all equipment is in good working order. This inspection shall be documented on the “Pre Trip Inspection Report.”

Any defect that renders the bus inoperable or makes the operation hazardous shall be reported immediately in writing on a “Request for Repairs” form. The bus will notbe driven until this condition has been checked and corrected by a mechanic.

Minor defects noted shall be followed up with a “Request for Repairs” form submitted to the mechanics prior to departure.

A separate form must be completed for *each bus* you drive daily. All forms shall be *turned in daily* at the end of your scheduled work period.

*Between Trip Inspection*

After completing each run during the day, every bus driver shall take a few moments to perform a complete Between Trip Inspection of the following items:

* Check for students remaining or sleeping in the bus
* Check for adequate fuel
* Check for vandalism
* Check for personal belongings passengers may have left behind
* Clean the interior as needed (sweeping, windows, etc.)

*Post Trip Inspection*

After completing your last morning, mid day or afternoon run or trip and before securing the bus, every bus driver shall take a few moments to perform a complete Post Trip Inspection of the following items during the bus cool down period:

* Refuel the bus. Never leave a bus with less than ½ tank of fuel. When using a bus other than the one you are regularly assigned, always be considerate and refuel for the next driver
* Park the bus in the designated location
* Put the transmission in neutral
* Set the parking brake
* Check for students remaining or sleeping in the bus
* Check for needed supplies
* Check for vandalism
* Check for personal belongings passengers may have left behind
* Clean the interior as needed (sweeping, windows, etc.)
* Secure the vehicle, close all windows, doors and roof hatches
* Record your mileage
* Turn the engine “off”
* Observe outside of bus for any changes
* Turn in all required paperwork

At the completion of the driver's work day, each driver shall submit a daily documented report indicating the condition of the vehicle and recommending any repairs deemed necessary. Whether discovered by or reported to the driver, all vehicle defects and deficiencies likely to affect safe operation or cause mechanical breakdown of the vehicle shall be listed.

Attention to these items will help each of us to provide our customers with the quality service they deserve and expect. Should you have any questions regarding these bus inspection procedures, please do not hesitate to ask a trainer. For more information on conducting a proper Pre-Trip inspection, request a copy of the "Pre Trip Inspection Guide" from a trainer.

For more information on inspecting a school bus, please refer to MAPT School Bus Driver Bulletin # 11 in the appendix of this handbook.

**LEAVING THE DRIVER'S COMPARTMENT**

When a pupil is aboard, the driver shall not leave the driver's compartment without securing the bus by stopping the engine, effectively setting the parking brake, placing the transmission in the neutral position, and removing the ignition keys, which shall remain in the driver's possession. (This excludes lift buses.)

**LICENSES AND CERTIFICATES**

The Transportation office shall maintain a list of all Commercial Drivers. The list shall include the employee's name, expiration dates of the license, beginning & continuing education, and medical certificate.

It is the employees’ responsibility to maintain these documents. The District will offer the required Continuing Education training hours to all bus drivers. On occasion, additional medical examinations may be required by the school district. While every attempt will be made to remind you, it is **your** responsibility to keep **your** driving documents current.

Every employee shall have in his/her possession at all times while on duty, the appropriate class driver's license, a school bus driver's certificate, medical certificates, plus any other licenses, papers or certificates as prescribed by law and the District.

## LOST AND FOUND

Articles left on the bus by passengers are to be turned in to the Transportation or School Office, unless you know the owner and can return the article during the next run or next day. Do not throw away these items or take them home with you. We must attempt to find their rightful owner.

**MECHANICIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

*Brakes*

Brakes are the most vital working part of a school bus or any motor vehicle. You must have a good working knowledge of the type of brakes you are operating, including how they operate, how they should be maintained, and how they should be checked out. The difference between correct and improper use of brakes can make as much as 50% difference in brake lining life.

The most common error is "over braking." This means that the brake pedal is depressed too far or too long for the amount of braking required. Plan your stops ahead so that extreme braking is unnecessary. As your bus slows down, feather back slightly so that the stop is smooth. This makes a better ride for your passengers and eliminates strain on the suspension system.

For long down grades, a light steady pressure on brakes, along with correct gear selection, gives the most effective braking and generates the least amount of heat and wear.

*Headlights*

Headlights shall be on at all times while the bus is in motion outside the compound.

*Instruments and Gauges*

The only way a driver can be constantly aware of the conditions within the engine and braking system is to train himself/herself to frequently check the instrument panel. Any variations from normal should be investigated immediately. Failure to do this could mean the loss of air and could cause a serious accident. Loss of oil pressure or high engine temperature can destroy an engine in a matter of seconds. All gauges and instruments must be constantly monitored.

*Shut-Down Procedure (Non-Emergency)*

Except for a momentary stop, allow engine to idle for two minutes before shutting down. After extended operation under heavy load, allow engine to idle three to five minutes before shutdown. This procedure allows internal temperatures to equalize and prevents boil-over.

**MIRROR ADJUSTMENT**

It is the policy of the (School District) Transportation Department for bus drivers to perform a complete bus inspection before transporting students. Part of this inspection shall include a check for proper adjustment of all the bus mirrors. It is the professional driver’s responsibility to check the mirrors and to make, or have made, the necessary adjustments completed before leaving the bus compound. If a driver cannot make the necessary adjustments by him/herself, they shall request the assistance of another driver or mechanic to assist with the required adjustments.

To assist each driver with implementation of this policy, a “Mirror Adjustment Station” has been painted on the ground in the bus lot. Any driver may easily use this station at any time when they exit the lot. The required field of direct or indirect vision shall be checked by the driver to comply with the requirements of this policy.

Attention to this policy will help each of us to maintain the visibility necessary to protect our student’s safety and to verify proper alignment in order to view the “Danger Zone” around the bus.

Should you have any questions regarding the use of the mirror station, please see a trainer or mechanic.

For more information on mirror adjustments, please refer to MAPT School Bus Driver Bulletin # 4 in the appendix of this handbook.

**NEW PUPILS**

New pupils are frequently taken to school in the morning by the parents, with the result that their first ride on a bus occurs in the afternoon. It is of the utmost importance that bus drivers determine the proper bus stops for all pupils before leaving the school. This is particularly important concerning younger students. *It is the responsibility of the bus driver to deliver pupils to the correct designated bus stop.* If, for any reason, you are unsure about a designated stop, immediately contact the transportation office.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS**

As a school bus driver, you play a key role in projecting an image of the school system to the public. Whether the image is good or bad depends, to a large degree, on the impression created by you as a professional driver in your daily operation. Because you are constantly in the public eye, you must act as "good ambassador" for the school system and the community. As a professional driver, you must be aware of and constantly practice good public relations with all the following groups.

***SAFETY OF YOUR PASSENGERS TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER***

***ALL OTHER CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDING YOUR SCHEDULE***

*The Pupils Who Ride Your Bus.* Public relations with pupils, as well as with all others, simply means presenting yourself and those you represent in the best possible way.

*Teachers and Other School Personnel.* You, as a bus driver, represent the Transportation Department and the (School District). Always conduct yourself in a manner to reflect credit upon yourself and the department you represent. If a difference of opinion develops between a teacher and you, courteously explain your position. If the difficulty persists, refer him/her to the Transportation Manager. The professional school bus driver has a responsibility to the school district to do the best possible job. Because the safety of pupils is involved, the District and the public expect much more than minimum performance from a professional school bus driver.

*Parents.* From time to time, a parent will be unhappy about a bus stop or perhaps about a Conduct Report his/her child has received. Often, you can resolve the situation by a simple and courteous explanation of the facts. If your explanation doesn't solve the problem, refer the person to Transportation, giving them the telephone number and the name of the person to be contacted. (Do not delay the bus schedule to have a discussion with a parent.) ***ABOVE ALL, DO NOT ENTER INTO AN ARGUMENT WITH A PARENT****.*

*The Public.* You, the school bus driver, are the most visible contact the general public will have with the school system. Everything that you do, or do not do, is being observed. This particularly is true in your driving habits.

The bus driver shall conduct himself/herself in a professional manner so as not to jeopardize his/her future as an employee with the (School District), nor jeopardize any individual/pupil by careless or wanton acts.

Employees are expected to not engage in disrespectful conduct, including actions, language and attitude toward management personnel, fellow employees, school personnel, parents, passengers or any other person contacted during the performance of work for the district.

# **REMEMBER TO BE: CAUTIOUS, COURTEOUS, SAFE, AND PROUD**

**RADIO/P.A. USE (AM/FM)**

Newer buses may have AM/FM radios with public address systems installed. This option has been demonstrated to provide the bus driver with a powerful pupil management tool when used correctly. Rules regarding the use of the vehicle radio or a portable radio, tape or CD player shall be solely made by the driver.  If a driver deems a radio (even if student-owned) is distracting to the safe operation of the vehicle, the driver may immediately prohibit its use.  The station must be age appropriate for the children who are listening to it. The broadcast of vulgar or offensive music or talk is prohibited on the school bus. The radios shall be turned off if students become too loud. Drivers are encouraged to use the radio as a tool for rewarding good behavior.

The public address system can be used to communicate with passengers on the bus without the driver “yelling” at the students. The use of a normal tone of voice will enhance the driver’s ability to communicate and maintain control of passengers. The system may also be broadcast outside the bus. This can be useful when approaching or at bus stops to remind students to back away from the bus or to watch for hazardous conditions.

**RAILROAD CROSSING PROCEDURES**

The District requires that bus drivers stop at **ALL** railroad crossings with or without passengers aboard to safely comply with Public Act 187 Section 257.1857.

1. All school buses shall stop not less than fifteen (15) or more than fifty (50) feet from the nearest track.
2. All drivers shall signal their approach and stop the school bus parallel to and as close as practical to the appropriate edge of the highway.
3. All drivers will turn off all heaters, fans, blowers AM/FM radios, and fully open the entrance door and driver’s window.
4. Drivers may use the dome lights to signal the passengers to be quiet.
5. All drivers will listen and look to insure that the tracks are clear of an approaching train, and proceed only when tracks are safe to cross and the entrance door is closed.
6. In addition, (School District) bus drivers, with or without passengers, shall stop at all traffic-control signal- device crossings. All railroad crossings within our district boundaries are listed below with three (3) exceptions to this rule as noted below.
7. Always be on the alert while driving inside and outside of our district. Power outages can and do affect crossing lights. Other area districts have documented failures of traffic-control signal device crossings, which have led to close calls. We do not want any of our students or employees to become statistics.

Should you have any questions regarding railroad crossings, please review the Vehicle Operations unit of your Bus Driver Curriculum student manual, ask a trainer or the Transportation Office.

**Railroad Crossings in (School District)**

(LIST OF CROSSINGS) (state if stop required both directions or any particulars)

**(e.g. Franklin Rd. west of Lincoln Dr.) stop required both directions**

(Crossing #2) stop required both directions

(Crossing #3) stop required both directions

(Crossing #4) *\*Exception:* no stop required when traffic-control signal device is operating normally

(Crossing #5) *\*Exception:* no stop required when traffic-control signal device is operating normally. However *when the traffic-control signal device is flashing* stops are required in all directions and left turns are prohibited

For more information on Railroad Crossings, please refer to MAPT School Bus Driver Bulletin # 2 in the appendix of this handbook.

## REPAIRS

Unless the driver of a school bus is the mechanic charged with the care and maintenance of the bus, the driver shall not make any repairs or modifications of the bus or its equipment except necessary emergency repairs on the road.

**ROUTES AND SCHEDULES**

Before the start of each school year, routes will be assigned to each driver. These routes, plus stopping points and time schedules, will be listed on a route sheet. Accurate copies of route sheets must be kept on file in the office at all times.

Schedules and routing are to be followed exactly as shown on the route sheet. If there is any discrepancy between your route sheet and the actual route you follow, see the dispatcher as soon as possible so that necessary corrections may be made to the route sheets. If you feel that a time or route change would improve the service, feel free to make the suggestion to the Transportation Office. Do not change a route before you receive approval from the office, unless it is an emergency. Route changes need to be reviewed to determine their safety, affect on the community and ability to deliver consistent service.

Drivers should not arrive early at a bus stop and wait for students, especially where students cross the street to get to the bus. If you are running early for your first pick-up, find a safe place close by, but out of sight of the stop, park and wait until the scheduled time to be at the stop. ***NEVER LEAVE A SCHOOL OR A BUS STOP EARLIER THAN THE STOP TIME LISTED ON THE ROUTE SHEETS.*** School and bus stop arrival and departure times **MUST** be strictly adhered to. Route changes should be submitted as corrections to the current route instructions. Minor changes may be submitted in writing to dispatch.

No unscheduled stop shall be made on your route unless absolutely necessary and with the Transportation Office's approval. If it does become necessary for you to stop, do not park on private property.

**SAFE RIDING PRACTICES**

Good pupil behavior while entering, riding, or leaving the bus contributes in many ways to safe transportation. Such conduct makes it possible for the driver to give full attention to the routine matters involved in the safe operation of the bus and holds to a minimum those conditions that might cause pupils to be injured. You are expected to instruct students in safe bus riding practices. You should stress: safe riding practices, loading and unloading procedures, proper seat position, crossing procedures, proper noise level, student's responsibility, and general behavior for bus passengers.

Some crashes are indirectly caused by students who distract the bus driver. A program of instruction in safe riding practices is needed to make students aware that, as passengers, they are responsible for their own safety, as well as the safety of others. Each school year, the school district requires each pupil who is transported from home to school in a school bus to receive appropriate instruction in safe riding practices and emergency bus evacuation drills.Because drivers are charged with the responsibility for the bus and its passengers at all times, it is essential that they become completely familiar with every aspect of safe riding practices.

## SEAT BELT USE

All of our buses are equipped with a driver’s seat belt. The (School District) wants all professional drivers to be as safe as possible while performing their duties. Therefore every driver in transportation shall wear his or her seatbelt while driving a district vehicle, and while driving any other vehicle on district business. Recent changes in state law make the drivers use of a seat belt a primary enforcement item and drivers can be pulled over and sited for non-use.

**TRAFFIC CITATIONS**

Commercial drivers are held responsible for obeying traffic rules and regulations at all times. Any employee receiving a traffic citation while on duty will be held responsible for the payment of any fine resulting from employee error including, but not limited to, speeding, turning, etc. The Transportation Department requires all driving personnel to submit to the Transportation Manager a copy of any traffic citation received while driving a School District vehicle on the day of the incident. While off duty, drivers must always be aware that all traffic tickets must be reported to the district and could affect their employment status.

**TRANSPORTATION OF HAZARDOUS OR LARGE ARTICLES IN A SCHOOL BUS**

In order to insure the maximum safety of passengers and employees, it is the policy of the department that passengers and drivers shall not be endangered by transporting hazardous or large articles.

Therefore, articles, animals, or insects that will obstruct the clear view of the driver, obstruct any window, emergency exit, aisle or entrance door, or that would cause discomfort or unreasonable annoyance to passengers, or that may break and cut, get loose, and sting or bite the driver or passengers, or otherwise become hazardous and endanger the safety to passengers or the driver while in route or in event of sudden stops or accidents shall not be transported in the passenger compartment of a school bus. Examples include skateboards, scooters, hockey sticks, and etc.

Bus Drivers shall insure conformance with the following guidelines.

1**.** Any article that, because of its size, cannot be safely carried down the aisles shall not be transported.

2. Any article that cannot be held on the lap or otherwise carried in the space allocated to the passenger without impinging on the space of another passenger shall not be transported.

3. Live animals and insects shall not be transported. Exception: Guide dogs when accompanying their owners.

4. Glass containers not enclosed in protective covering shall not be transported.

5. It shall be the responsibility of the driver to insure that the bus is properly loaded and equipment secured and in no way becomes a hazard and endangers the safety of passengers or the driver or obstructs the driver's clear view.

6. It is unlawful to operate any vehicle that is not safely loaded beyond legal limits. No driver shall drive a vehicle transporting passengers in violation of this provision.

**TWO WAY RADIO COMMUNICATIONS**

All of our buses are equipped with two-way radios. How you use these radios is very important. We are fortunate to have the privilege of being allowed to use the airways to operate our buses more efficiently. We must, however, ensure that we use the radios according to FCC regulations.

**The radio shall be used for District business purposes only.**

It is **not** to be used to tell another employee what you want him to pick up for your lunch, or to discuss other personal business. Remember, the FCC, and others in the district can and do monitor our transmissions.

It is important not only to avoid non-business communications, but also to make your business as brief as possible. In order to keep messages as short as possible, use the 10 codes provided in each bus. Set your watch before you leave the compound to avoid unnecessary time checks. If you have something to say which will take some time, try to get to a telephone and call the office. If you have sensitive information, do not discuss it on the radio if possible. Also, consider if the situation can be dealt with when you return to the compound.

Even the best of radios is of no value if it is not turned on with the volume at an audible level. When you start you bus in the morning, **TURN ON YOUR RADIO AND ADJUST THE VOLUME CONTROL.** It is very frustrating for others who are trying to reach you when your radio is off or turned down. When you return to the compound to park your bus, turn your 2-way radio off.

Any radio malfunction is to be reported in writing on Repair Request and turned in to the Transportation Office immediately so that repairs can be ordered.

***Basic 2-way radio operating procedures:***

1. Turn on/off switch in the ***ON*** position.

2. Before using the radio, make sure the BUSY light is off and you don't hear anyone else transmitting. The busy light means the frequency is being used. You should avoid breaking into someone else's transmission unless it is an emergency. **In an emergency, ask for a "BREAK"** **in their conversation**.

3. When you are ready to transmit, push in the button on the microphone and **hold it in** while you speak. As soon as you are finished speaking, release the button--otherwise no one will be able to respond to you. Please hold the microphone directly in front of you about four or five (4-5) inches from your mouth. Speak slowly and distinctly, otherwise your transmission will be garbled.

4. When you have finished your transmission, you must sign off; such as "72, clear, over, 10-4, etc."

5. Be alert and listen to all of our transmissions while you are in your bus. Even though you are not being called, you may be able to be of assistance or hear information that could affect your route.

6. If a crash has occurred, involving one of our vehicles, please restrict radio communications to clear the air to enable transmission of accident information. Please observe Codes 1 & 2.

**VEHICLE CLEANING**

Bus Drivers are responsible for cleaning their assigned bus (including spare buses) as follows:

* Floors are to be kept clean at all times and if necessary, mopped. Every bus shall be kept clean and free of litter.
* All windows are to be kept clean.
* Dash, windshield, and driver's area are to be kept clean and uncluttered. The use of decorative magnets and stickers is prohibited.
* Seats are to be kept clean and free of litter and graffiti.
* Excessive amounts of personal articles should not be allowed to accumulate on the dash, above the sun visor in the bus or the compartments.
* Do not store food or food items on any bus.

**VEHICLE OPERATION**

Be alert to overhead and side hazards such as projections, tree limbs and shrubbery. Report such hazards in writing to the office.

Be especially careful to keep tires from coming into contact with curbs and abutments to prevent tire and wheel damage.

A bus driver will not use any vehicle other than the one assigned. Verify your assigned bus before the inspection. If you have any questions, check with the office. **Exception:** If during an evening, weekend, or holiday trip the assigned bus cannot be used because of a defect, use an unassigned bus of the **exact same type**.

The exercise of good judgment in avoiding risks and strict compliance with the law will, in most instances, prevent accidents. Do not force the right-of-way at the risk of a crash.

Do not start a bus or release the brake while parked unless you are satisfied that no one is working, hiding, playing, etc., under the bus.

Buses are to travel in the right hand lane whenever possible.

Mechanics will normally drive buses in and out of garage. Due to the nature of work performed, drivers should not disturb or distract shop employees or loiter in the shop area. If you have business in the shop, walk only on the perimeter of the work area.

## VIDEO CAMERAS

Video cameras are available to bus drivers for various safety and security reasons. Camera boxes have been installed on every PPS bus. Cameras are issued from the office on an as needed, first come, first served basis. Drivers are expected to install and remove cameras from their buses as needed. If you need assistance with learning how install or remove a camera, please see a mechanic.

Video tape recordings of students are considered district property and confidential in nature. Drivers should take care that tapes are not be viewed by persons who have no specific rights to see confidential student information. Drivers are responsible for the security of the tapes and cameras assigned to them.

***DRIVER TRAINING***

The goal of the District and the Driver Trainers is to produce *SAFE AND COMPETENT* School Bus Drivers. To meet this goal, the Driver Trainers will train employees to meet or exceed the minimum prerequisite, and behind the wheel skills and regulations as set forth by the State of Michigan. (MCL 257.1851 and 257.1852)

The District will offer in-service training, for all certified school bus drivers in our District. It is up to the employees to attend the scheduled in-service and safety meetings. It is each employee's responsibility to maintain the required number of Continuing Education class hours.

## PREREQUISITE TRAINING

Prior to scheduling a CDL Drive Test, all trainees shall receive minimum prerequisite training in the following areas of pupil transportation:

1. Introduction to the School Bus
2. Pre Trip Inspection
3. Basic Operating Techniques
4. Rural Driving Skills
5. Residential Driving Skills
6. Urban Driving Skills
7. Pupil Loading/Unloading Procedures
8. Emergency Procedures
9. Air Brake Systems
10. Heavy Duty Automatic Transmission Use

Experienced bus drivers are expected to demonstrate proficiency in the above areas.

**RENEWAL OF DRIVING DOCUMENTS**

It is the policy of the Transportation Department to assist all commercial drivers with the maintenance and renewal of all necessary driving documents as required by law. In order for this to be accomplished in an orderly and equitable manner, the following guidelines have been established for regular permanent employees.

Regular training and Continuing Education will be scheduled during working hours and permanent employees will be in a paid status during the training. Employees who do not take advantage of the training offered as scheduled in advance are responsible for obtaining said training on their own time and at their own expense.

Written tests for Commercial Drivers Licenses are to be completed on the employees’ time. Drivers are expected to report for duty at their regularly assigned time and to drive as much of their regular assignment as possible on test day.

Employees shall use the district designated medical provider for examinations at no cost to the employee.

**BUS DRIVERS CERTIFICATION RESPONSIBILITIES**

Maintain clean driving and criminal records.

Maintain a valid commercial driver's license of the appropriate class and endorsement.

Maintain a current medical examination card.

Maintain the required number of Continuing Education training hours.

Be free from negative side effects of alcohol and drugs.

**DRIVER TRAINERS RESPONSIBILITIES**

Provide prerequisite training for all district school bus driver trainees.

Provide CDL books as required.

Provide in-service training at safety meetings or staff development days as required.

For more information Commercial Drivers License Road Tests, please refer to MAPT School Bus Driver Bulletin # 9 in the appendix of this handbook.

***DEFENSIVE DRIVING***

**ACCIDENTS AND BREAKDOWNS**

In any discussion of accidents, prevention must be the key word. Strict compliance with all laws and regulations of vehicle operation, plus the knowledge and application of the practices of **DEFENSIVE DRIVING** will eliminate the causes of most accidents.

**DEFENSIVE DRIVING**

Your responsibility as a professional school bus driver places with you a special obligation to be a defensive driver. The principle of defensive driving is to operate a motor vehicle at all times in such a manner that you will react properly to avoid a crash. A defensive driver is one who continually keeps on the alert, recognizes a crash-producing situation far enough in advance to apply the necessary preventive action and concedes the right-of-way when necessary to prevent a crash.

The question no longer becomes "Who was at fault?" The question becomes one that every professional driver recognizes as being the only important one, **"Did I do everything I reasonably could have done to avoid the crash?"**

Every driver must learn and practice the art of Defensive Driving if we are to maintain and improve our safety record. This goes beyond legal accountability. Decisions made during the review of the crash will be based on over all preventability and not on a specific violation of traffic laws.

**SEVERE WEATHER AFFECTING SAFE OPERATION OF BUSES**

When tornado watches or warnings are issued by the U.S. Weather Bureau, (School District) students will be retained in school until dismissal time or until such time that, in the judgment of the Superintendent or designee, they may be safely dismissed.

1. If a tornado watch is announced during the day, students will be dismissed at the regular time.
2. If a tornado warning is in effect, students will not be dismissed and will be moved to designated areas within each school.
3. Extra-Curricular Activities: When adverse weather conditions close school or a tornado warning or watch is in effect, after school, evening educational or athletic events are permitted only when a building administrator is on site to monitor the situation and when authorized by the Superintendent or designee. If no building administrator is on site, the extracurricular activity will be stopped and any (School District) employee has the responsibility for dismissing the activity. This will normally be the adult in charge of the activity. The employee will make a responsible and reasonable effort to move visitors within buildings to appropriate designated shelter. Any adult visitor or student accompanied by an adult that decide to leave during this situation will not be stopped but leave the building at their own risk.
4. Tornado Warning the following actions, as time permits, shall be accomplished:

a. Inside Building: Employees should **DROP AND COVER.** Stay away from windows and open spaces. Interior rooms, closets or interior hallways are best. All Transportation personnel should assemble in pre-planned assembly areas. Take roll and make list of missing employees.

b. Outside Building: If you are in a vehicle, get out and take shelter in appropriate building.

If no shelter is available nearby, use a ditch, ravine or culvert.

1. Should isolated areas of the district experience severe inclement weather that reduces visibility or where road conditions are impassable, a bus driver has discretionary authority to discontinue service. The driver shall notify the Transportation Office of the exact location, circumstances and any change in status via the 2-way radio. While on a trip, the bus driver shall follow the procedures outlined above in this section. If the Transportation Office is unavailable via the 2-way radio, the bus driver shall assess the situation and use his/her best professional judgment after consulting with the teacher or other adult in charge. A cell or pay phone could be used to contact transportation or school authorities. At the first possible opportunity, the bus driver shall contact one of the Transportation Emergency Contacts as indicated on the emergency card in the First Aid Kit.
2. Out of town trips will be reviewed and, if needed, delayed until conditions improve. The Transportation Manager may cancel field or athletic trips after consulting with the Principal(s) due to severe weather or other emergency conditions.
3. It shall be the standard operating procedure for (School District) not to knowingly enter areas outside of our district boundaries that have been closed by local officials due to severe weather or other emergency conditions.

If a bus driver discontinues service he/she shall:

1. Ensure that the school bus is parked in a safe location and completely off the roadway.

If safely possible, move the bus away from the bus stop. This will help keep students on the bus. Once a student boards the bus the driver ***SHALL NOT*** allow them to get off the bus to return home.

2. Secure the bus and turn OFF all exterior lights.

3. Inform dispatch of their exact location and disposition via the 2-way radio.

4. When conditions improve the bus driver shall notify dispatch when proceeding on route.

**WET BRAKES**

Braking efficiency can be severely diminished when wheels go through deep puddles or flooded streets. Check them immediately! Don't wait until you need them. If they fail to work properly, apply the brake and the accelerator, moving ahead slowly until the squeeze effect and heat build-up dry them out and they operate normally.

**WET AND ICY PAVEMENT**

Many drivers forget to change their driving habits when driving on wet or icy pavement. These drivers are dangerous to themselves, and to you. Traction is poor and it can easily require twice the distance to stop on wet or icy roads that it does on dry roads. There is also a much greater possibility of skidding because of the reduced traction and the relative ease with which brakes can lock, or tires can spin. Apply your brakes intermittently to avoid a skid. Double your normal "following" distance. Use the right lane to avoid potential "head-on collisions."

Remember that roads are most slippery just after the rain starts to fall. The water combines with accumulated road film, and the road surface can become as slippery as ice, until the rain washes the film away. To avoid "hydroplaning," avoid high speeds when the road is covered with water. Hydroplaning is caused when the tires rise to the surface of the water; this results in complete loss of control of the vehicle.

For more information on Defensive Driving, please refer to MAPT School Bus Driver Bulletins # 6 and 7 in the appendix of this handbook.

For more information on Inclement Weather, please refer to MAPT School Bus Driver Bulletins # 8 and 14-18 in the appendix of this handbook.

***LOADING AND UNLOADING PROCEDURES***

**BUS STOP SAFETY**

Every effort has been made to establish bus stops in the safest available locations. Survey all bus stops on your route to make sure they have been placed in the safest possible locations and that the stop meets the legal requirements. ***It is the responsibility of every bus driver to make sure that route sheets are updated promptly to indicate correct bus stop locations and student crossings****.* Watch for trees or poles that may be close to the curb line. Guy wires that brace power lines are a particular hazard because they are sometimes hard to see. Watch for holes or water puddles that might make a stop unsafe.

Stop the bus close to the curb if possible. If the stop cannot be made within easy stopping distance from the curb, stop far enough from the curb so that passengers must step down to the street and then into the bus. Do not allow pupils to jump from the curb to the step.

In places where parked cars or other obstructions make it impossible to make a "square stop" next to the curb, the following procedure is to be followed:

1. Stop the bus as far to the right as possible, keeping the bus in a straight line on the road being traveled.

2. This does not block any more of the road than stopping the bus with the nose in, tail out, method. It allows full use of the mirrors for observing traffic approaching from the rear and visibility of the overhead lighting system to other motorists.

It is permissible enter “Bike Lanes” to load or unload student passengers. Use **extreme caution** in approaching and leaving bus stops and school loading zones. When pupils are near, do not move the bus until you check and recheck all mirrors and are certain that movement of the bus will not create a hazard to the pupils. Pre-school pupils and pets can create special hazards when the bus is making stops in residential areas.

At all passenger stops, whether loading or unloading the bus will be secured by having the transmission **in neutral and the parking brake applied.** If you must leave the driver's seat, shut down and secure the bus and take the keys with you.

Buses will be put into gear only after all passengers are boarded and **seated**. Check right mirrors, cross-view mirrors, inside rearview mirror and left mirrors. Re-check the left mirrors before moving.

## CROSSING PROCEDURES

Bus Drivers are expected to teach and review these important safety procedures with all student passengers. Parents, who escort their children to and from the bus when crossing, must set the example for their children and are requested to adhere to these important safety procedures also. Everyone needs to know that not all cars stop as required by state law, even when the red lights are flashing on school buses.

**When crossing the street to board the bus:**

1. Students wait in a group at the designated bus stop at least 10 feet away from the edge of the roadway.

2. The bus driver gives one instruction to cross. Drivers will hold their hand palm out to indicate "STOP" and will drop their hand when it is safe to cross the street. If it is dark, the driver may turn on an inside light to be seen easier.

3. Students proceed directly across the road always staying well in front of the bus and board the bus. Stay out of the "DANGER ZONE!"

4. Do not stop in the middle of the street or cross behind the bus.

**When crossing the street after leaving the bus:**

1. Students exit the bus and take 10 giant steps in front of the bus staying on the side of the street. Stay out of the "DANGER ZONE!"

2. Students stand in a group and look to the driver for instruction to cross.

3. Drivers will hold their hand palm out to indicate "STOP" and will drop their hand when it is safe to cross the street. If it is dark, drivers may turn on an inside light to be seen easier.

4. Students proceed to a point even with the left side of the bus and STOP.

5. Students look left and right for passing cars.

6. Students look to the driver for instruction to complete the crossing.

7. Do not cross behind the bus.

8. If a paper or article goes under the school bus, always ask the bus driver for help.

9. Do not get mail from roadside mailboxes until after the bus leaves the stop.

**DESIGNATED BUS STOPS**

A school bus driver **shall** stop to receive or discharge pupils **only** at a school bus stop designated by the school district. Schedules and routing are to be followed exactly as shown on the route sheet. If there is any discrepancy between your route sheet and the actual route you follow, see the dispatcher as soon as possible so that necessary corrections may be made to the route sheets. If you feel that a time or route change would improve the service, feel free to make the suggestion to the Transportation Office. Do not change a route before you receive approval, unless it is an emergency. Route changes need to be reviewed to determine their safety, affect on the community and ability to deliver consistent service.

Bus stops are set by the Transportation Office and **may not be changed** without authorization. If you feel there is a safety problem at any bus stop, complete a “Bus Stop Review Request” form and submit it to the Transportation Office. If parents request a change in bus stop location, relay that request to the office.

***For your own safety and the safety of your passengers, do not take it upon yourself to make unauthorized bus stop changes!***

**DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY AT BUS STOPS**

As the school bus approaches a bus stop during a loading and unloading procedure, and when the bus leaves the stop, when does the driver's supervision start and stop as far as the students' safety is concerned?

The driver's supervision starts approximately at a point where the driver can recognize a pupil as the bus approaches or leaves a bus stop. If a driver, while at the bus stop, observes a pupil doing something wrong: (e.g., destroying property, playing in the roadway, running across the roadway to the bus), the driver, for safety of the pupil, should take action to correct the situation. The driver should also report the problem to the Transportation Manager. **While the bus is stopped to load or unload, the pupils are the direct responsibility of the driver**.

If a tardy student repeatedly runs across the street to catch the bus, the bus driver shall warn him only once, then fill out a Bus Conduct Report.

**HAZARDOUS LOADING OR UNLOADING CONDITIONS**

#### Loading or Unloading At a Turnaround

It is best not to back a bus anytime when pupils are present unless someone on the outside is directing this maneuver. In the event you must back up, sound the horn before backing to warn people around the bus.

Let's discuss an example of where you must do a backing maneuver on a bus route to turn around. You are on a route in the morning picking up pupils at a turnaround point. **Always stop and load** the pupils before turning around. This way, you know where the pupils are. Then perform the backing maneuver. On the return route, always do the backing first.

There are many areas of concern in bus loading zones. It is recommended that each bus stop and school site be handled on an individual basis, because no two are alike. District policies relating to loading and unloading zones should always be followed.

The great responsibility of loading and unloading the passengers safely rests with the driver. As professional bus drivers, we must follow the recommended procedures if we are to prevent crashes and injuries from occurring. For more information on loading or unloading procedures, refer to your copy of Beginning School Bus Driver Student Manual or see a Driver Trainer.

**PICK UP AND DROP OFF CLARIFICATIONS**

Bus drivers are responsible to “Pick up and discharge students only at their designated stops except with written permission to do otherwise.” Here are some clarifications that you might find helpful.

1. When going to school, all bus drivers are expected to pick up their students at their designated bus stops and transport them to their assigned school(s). At no time should a driver allow any student to exit the bus at any location other than their assigned school. Drivers should not deviate from their normal route or otherwise allow a student to return home or anywhere else along the route, even if they “forgot” something or “will be right back.” Politely tell the student that he/she can call their parents from school to resolve the matter later. Part of your job as bus driver is to train your students to come to their bus stop on time and prepared to board the bus. If one of the students that you have seen at one of your bus stops does not board your bus for any reason, you are to either 1) radio the pertinent information in to transportation immediately *–or-* 2) make a report in person to the students assigned school office upon arriving at school at the end of that run.
2. Bus drivers should not refuse a student transportation going to school due to lack of a note. Transport the student to school and follow up with the parent, school or transportation office immediately at the end of the run.
3. When taking students home, all bus drivers are expected to pick up their students at their assigned school(s) and transport them to their designated bus stops. Drivers should not deviate from their normal route or otherwise allow students to board the bus at any location other than their assigned school without appropriate written permission. At no time should a driver allow any student to exit the bus at any location other than the student’s assigned bus stop. Drivers should not deviate from their normal route in order to allow students to exit the bus at the school or anywhere else along the route, even if they “forgot” something or “will be right back.” Politely tell the student that he/she will have to resolve the issue later.
4. Students desiring to exit a bus at any bus stop other than their regularly assigned bus stop shall have a note signed by the school or transportation office, which shall designate exactly where the student is expected to get off the bus.
5. Bus drivers shall only pick up and drop off students at legally designated bus stops.
6. This applies to each and every student, 1st through 12th grades, kindergarten, young 5, pre-school and special education, that is transported by the (School District) Transportation Department.

The examples outlined above are by no means a complete listing of every conceivable possibility. Use your common sense as you have been trained. By following the procedures outlined above, you will reduce the risk of liability to the district and to you as an employee. More importantly, you will also ensure the safety and well being of your passengers. As a professional school bus driver, you are responsible for the safety, care and control of all the children you transport. Rest assured that, as a district, we will stand behind and vigorously defend those employees who follow established policies, procedures and regulations.

**ROTATIONAL UNLOADING OF STUDENTS**

Federal and State regulations require that all passengers on school buses participate in emergency evacuation drills. The key to any type of evacuation must be an orderly exit from the bus following a pre-planned method. By having a regular procedure for exiting the bus from the main door that all passengers follow daily, this same procedure, even under emergency conditions, can be used with a minimum of confusion and delay.

All bus drivers are strongly encouraged to establish and use the following unloading procedure. By using this method, unloading can be accomplished in a minimum of time and with a maximum of safety.

1. For routine unloading at schools or other final destinations, the driver's position should be standing in an appropriate position to maintain control of the unloading process.

Some drivers walk backwards down the aisle dismissing passengers seat by seat after effectively securing the bus. This is helpful to determine exactly who may be leaving trash on the bus, causing vandalism, or to reduce pushing and shoving.

2. Pupils are to be instructed by the driver to remain seated until directed to stand.

3. After all pupils are off the bus, the driver will check the bus after ***EACH RUN*** for damage, lost articles, sleeping children, etc.

4. Drivers are expected to explain the unloading procedure to the pupils and to the teachers on extra trips, and to closely supervise the operation so that compliance becomes an automatic daily action.

For more information on Loading and Unloading, please refer to MAPT School Bus Driver Bulletin # 5 in the appendix of this handbook.

For information on a Handrail Alert, please refer to MAPT School Bus Driver Bulletin # 19 in the appendix of this handbook.

***PASSENGER MANAGEMENT***

Student management and discipline on school buses is one of the biggest problems confronting school bus drivers. It is also the most misunderstood area of transportation. The daily ride to school can be an important part of a student's progress toward independence and educational achievement. The driver plays an important role in influencing the behavior patterns of pupils who ride the bus. The bus ride to and from school can become a pleasant experience in which the pupil anticipates or it can become a dreaded experience for both the driver and pupil.

All pupils must behave appropriately as passengers on a school bus. Clearly understood and well-enforced rules are necessary for successful management of pupils who ride school buses. Most of the students on your bus know the (School District) rules for behavior. Many of the older high school students are licensed drivers and are aware of safe driving practices. Students know when the driver breaks the rules. If you, as a driver, don't follow the correct procedures, don't expect the students to follow the rules either. Many of your passengers will look upon you as a role model. The students will expect you to demonstrate leadership and to set an example for them. The kind of example you give the students will determine many of their responses towards you. If you scream and shout at the students, they will scream and shout back. If you keep a dirty and untidy bus, you can expect the students to throw trash and paper about. If you gossip about students, teachers, and your private life, the students will repeat, and frequently expand on, your stories.

The fundamental techniques of pupil management can be learned by all drivers and used successfully. Successful pupil management is not based on how many bus conduct reports are written to maintain order on the school bus, but rather on the fact that order has been established without the necessity of writing the reports. Drivers who are having problems in the area of pupil management should study the techniques used by their co-workers who are particularly successful in this field. If a driver has persistent problems with pupil management, assistance from the Transportation Manager should be sought.

Your primary concern as a school bus driver is to transport your students to and from school safely. Your job will be easier if the passengers on your bus do not distract you while you are driving, allowing all of your attention to be given where it is needed most--**on the roadway**. This does not mean that you ignore your passengers to maintain your safe driving. You are responsible for the conduct of your students even if no crash has occurred. Pupils transported in a school bus shall be under the authority of, and responsible directly to, the driver of the bus, and the driver shall be held responsible for the orderly conduct of the pupils while they are on the bus.

You must establish and maintain a rapport with your students, not only as a group, but individually. You must also be aware that the age level of the children will cause their emotional and behavioral needs to be different. A six-year-old behaves differently from a fourteen-year-old. To expect them to act the same would be foolish. It is important to inform your students what type of behavior is expected of them. However, to be successful, you must do this according to the age level of your group.

Children at different age levels do not behave the same. When transporting your passengers, remember the following points.

1. All children seek and require recognition and acceptance.

2. Children need firmness, fairness and consistency to behave properly.

3. The example you set the first day will influence the way students will respond to you all year long. It's always easier to "loosen" up as the year progresses than to "tighten" up.

4. If you must correct a student, do so privately. Do not berate a child in front of a group. The student will resent this and usually react negatively to it.

5. Don't threaten students with actions you cannot enforce. Students will lose their respect for you and will continue their disorderly conduct.

6. Positive reinforcement of correct behavior (by using praise and recognition) is more successful than negative reinforcement (threats, citations, yelling at students).

7. Develop and maintain open lines of communication with your students, supervisor, parents, and school staff.

**PRINCIPLES OF PUPIL MANAGEMENT**

Polite requests or reminders, using the public address system when available, may help to head off a discipline problem if it is a minor infraction. Sometimes a word of warning or a remark directed to the offender may suffice.

In some cases the driver may stop the bus along the side of the street to regain control of the passengers. The very act of stopping the bus to reprimand a student lends emphasis to the situation. If, because of a serious discipline problem, it is necessary for you to return to school with students, notify dispatch via 2-way radio so that we may alert the school.

**A WORD OF CAUTION: *Stopping the bus or returning to a school should be used sparingly for it to maintain its desired impact upon the students. If it were to become routine, its effectiveness would be greatly diminished.***

You should stand up and speak to the offender in a courteous manner but in a firm voice. **There should be no anger involved.** If discipline is necessary, the student should be moved to a seat near the driver. **A student cannot legally and must not be put off a school bus to walk home**. In cases of continued pupil misconduct, and after efforts to correct the misconduct by oral warning and discussions, follow the proper procedures for student discipline.

You should learn the names of your passengers whenever possible for there is great warmth in a friendly "good morning" or "good afternoon" coupled with the pupil's name. A friendly comment on a class project or a report card indicates your genuine interest. When this kind of rapport is established, students will often accept correction without resentment because you have shown that their best interest is your primary concern.

The mature bus driver realizes that his passengers are not completely developed as adults, and he can neither demand nor expect to get complete adult behavior. Language that the particular age group can understand must be used. Obviously, the approach to a problem with high school age pupils will not be on the same level as that used with elementary school pupils. Parents recognize an orderly and well-managed bus and will immediately condemn a driver who is too lenient and does not have control. Likewise a parent will comment on a driver who is too firm or who has unrealistic expectations for his/her student's age group.

Pupil management demands that all talking to the pupils must be done without shouting, excitement, or evidence of irritation. The bus driver must be careful in his talks to pupils never to threaten them with violence and must carry out his instructions to the pupils without evidence of favoritism. If the driver overlooks violations of conduct of one pupil, the driver loses the respect of the other pupils. Your attitude should be friendly, cheerful, and businesslike.

Loud talking on the bus is a problem that requires much patience. Absolute silence among students is not a healthy school bus atmosphere. You must understand pupil management sufficiently well so that you will know that issuing an order does not complete the teaching process. You must patiently and constantly repeat the rules for some students. If there seems to be one prime offender, the problem should be discussed privately with the student without constantly bringing the problem to the attention of all the students.

When a crisis does develop, you must act promptly and decisively. You must handle the matter without anger or emotion. It is poor policy to reprimand a whole busload for the misdeeds of a few. All disciplinary measures should be related to established and recognized violations of behavior standards. Do not make up a rule to try to fit a particular situation. Follow the established rules and regulations.

**BE FAIR**

You must take pride in the appearance and operating condition of your bus and you should make your passengers feel welcome aboard.

You should be friendly, but not overly familiar with your students, nor should you encourage your passengers to be overly familiar with you. You do not seek popularity with the students but you do seek respect and an amiable relationship. Friendliness is the keynote in establishing good relationships with fellow workers as well as with students.

If a complaint or accusation is made by a student or a parent against a driver it is important that the professional driver not respond in a negative manner. Whether the complaint or accusation is confirmed or unfounded drivers shall not “retaliate” or treat the student(s) any different that any other on the bus. This may seem difficult but is absolutely necessary if you are to maintain the respect of your passengers.

**BE FIRM**

Firmness implies decision-making. Decision-making must not be based upon anger. You must be certain that your students understand the rules. These should be explained in a friendly and firm manner using a positive approach. Once the rules are understood, you must see that they are enforced. If they are over-looked on the first serious offense, it is easy to ignore them on the second offense, and virtually impossible to reinstate them on the third. The result could be chaos and an open invitation to challenge the authority of the bus driver. Firmness does not mean inflexible rigidity. There is nothing wrong with "one more chance" but "one more chance" does not mean "two more chances." Firmness will not result in loss of friendliness. Be consistent in recommending similar disciplinary actions for similar violations. The school bus driver has the authority and responsibility to implement established rules and regulations. You are held accountable for the acceptable behavior of students on your bus. The bus driver's decisions and actions are always subject to review by the Manager.

**MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY**

As a driver, you will meet hundreds of students, parents, and staff during a school year. Naturally, all of these people will not have the same ethnic background, economic standards, language, or religious beliefs as you.

Our country is culturally diverse. Americans take pride in being Americans, but also are proud of their ethnic heritage. The students on your bus may speak another language, dress differently, and make judgments based on their cultural background. You may have strong personal beliefs about certain groups of people. Your own beliefs should not interfere with your treatment of your student passengers. Remarks about a student's background are unprofessional, and will inhibit your effectiveness as a bus driver. Remember, if you show respect for others' beliefs and cultures, you will be respected for your fairness and tolerance.

**PASSENGER RELATIONS**

Bus Drivers will maintain a professional relationship with all students. As a precaution to avoid any possibly of misunderstanding, the only time a driver is permitted to put his/her hands on a student, is when and if a pupil is in need of assistance in boarding or alighting from the bus because of an injury, physical handicap or when restraint is necessary to avoid harm to the student or others. When addressing a student, use his/her correct name. DO NOT refer to them in any way that is derogatory or that may embarrass them before the other students. A bus driver must be considerate, yet at the same time firm and consistent.

**PHONE CALLS TO PARENTS**

Making a phone call to a parent or guardian with “bad news” may be one of the most dreaded tasks for any bus driver. Before making that call, be sure to identify the act or actions that are getting the student into trouble and present the concern to the parent by asking for their help - this helps to demonstrate an overall concern for the child instead of simply ‘reporting’ that their child was ‘bad’. Secondly, take some time before making the call and put yourself in their shoes - if someone were calling to inform you that your child was experiencing difficulty, what tone of voice and type of statements would you expect to hear from a caring, professional person?

Situations when students are having difficulty are often an opportunity that is missed in demonstrating to parents that we can help them overcome the obstacle interfering with their child’s progress - and in the process of overcoming, we can solidify a strong and trusting relationship with those parents. Plan ahead!

**PUPIL DISCIPLINE**

Pupils transported in a school bus shall be under the authority of, and responsible directly to, the driver of the bus, and the driver shall be held responsible for the orderly conduct of the pupils while they are on the bus. Continued disorderly conduct or persistent refusal to submit to the authority of the driver shall be sufficient reason for a pupil to be denied transportation. In complying with the above stated regulations, the District has established specific guidelines for pupil conduct on a school bus and specific procedures to enforce those guidelines.

At the start of each school year, the district provides all students with a "PUPIL TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK – INFORMATION FOR A SAFE AND ORDERLY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM." In the handbook is a list of expectations for appropriate conduct at bus stops and on the bus. Also included are the CONSEQUENCES OF MISBEHAVIOR. The basis for these rules comes from the Board of Education.

The driver of a school bus shall not eject any school pupil unless the pupil is given into the custody of a parent or any person designated by the parent or school. Please note the decision to issue a Bus Conduct Report is subject to review by the Transportation Manager.

Each driver should feel free to discuss pupil discipline problems with the principal or designee, a driver trainer or Transportation Manager. When detailed background information is supplied on each particular incident, the principal or designee and the Transportation Manager will be better able to assist and support the driver in carrying out his/her responsibilities. The Transportation Manager is the primary administrator responsible for bus discipline issues.

**Under no circumstances will a bus driver put a pupil off the bus while in route. There is absolutely NO EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE.**

After the bus driver has established that students know what behavior is acceptable, the following procedures should be followed in the event disciplinary action is necessary.

**REPORTING MISBEHAVIOR ON BUSES AND AT BUS STOPS**

***Step 1*** The first violation by a student will be handled by the bus driver as a verbal warning. Check the first box under the student’s name, write the date of the verbal warning on the form after “Step 1” and have the student sign to acknowledge the warning.

***Step 2*** The second violation will be handled by the bus driver by contacting the student’s parent/guardian at the bus stop or via telephone. Write the date of the contact on the form after “Step 2” and have the student sign to acknowledge the warning.

***Step 3*** The third violation will result in the written notice being sent home with the student. Write the date of the incident on the form after “Step 3” and have the student sign to acknowledge receipt of the form.

1. The bus driver will deliver the top 2 copies (white & green) of the conduct report to the student.
2. The driver shall submit the YELLOW copy to the Principal on the day of the incident.
3. The bus driver shall keep the PINK copy of the report.
4. The driver shall submit the GOLD copy to the Transportation office on the day of the incident.

***Step 4*** The fourth violation will result in the second written notice sent home with the student.

1. Follow the same procedures as outlined under “Step 3” above.
2. Note the day of suspicion on the form in the space indicated.
3. Call the parent/guardian and principal to notify them of the date of suspension.

***Step 5 and beyond*** will be handled as above and shall be signed by the Transportation Manager under normal circumstances. School administrators may handle discipline at their school in extreme cases.

**Please Note:**

* Complete the Bus Conduct Report on the day of the incident.
* A parent/guardian is required to sign each Bus Conduct Report to acknowledge receipt.
* Bus drivers are required to notify parent/guardian before any one-day suspension.
* An administrator is required to sign each conduct report that results in a multiple day suspension.
* The GREEN copy of each report, with appropriate signatures, must be returned to the bus driver before the student may ride the bus again.
* Bus drivers shall return the GREEN copy of the report to the Transportation office.

**Suspending students from buses is a last resort.**

**It is a driver's responsibility to use every effort possible to change**

**the student's behavior relating to misconduct on the bus before suspension.**

***REMEMBER - Good pupil management is conducive to***

***student respect for the bus driver and vice versa.***

**CONSEQUENCES OF SEVERE OFFENSES OR ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES ON BUSES**

1. Immediate suspension of riding privileges may occur for law violations, including, but not limited to assault on another person, destruction of property, possession or use of a weapon or the possession or under the influence of a controlled substance including alcohol or other intoxicants when approved by an administrator.

2. Bus privileges may be suspended for severe offenses or illegal activities upon the first occurrence.

3. Parents are responsible for providing transportation to and from school, in cases where bus-riding privileges have been suspended.

For more information on Discipline, please refer to MAPT School Bus Driver Bulletin # 3 in the appendix of this handbook. You will find an additional outline on Pupil Discipline in the appendix of this handbook.

For information on Special Education Students, please refer to MAPT School Bus Driver Bulletins # 12 and 12.1 in the appendix of this handbook.

***TIPS FOR BETTER TRIPS***

**EXTRA AND CO-CURRICULAR TRIPS**

When you arrive at a school for a trip during school hours and the group is not waiting for you already, you should go to the school office and report to the School Secretary or Principal. Inform them of the destination and depart and return time, as stated on the trip ticket. If there is any difference between the trip ticket and what the teacher expects, Dispatch should be called for instructions. Changes in destination require approval before departure.

Drivers may never transport more pupils than shown on the capacity card in each bus. Every passenger must have a safe seat.

After loading all teachers and pupils, the driver shall introduce himself/herself and again confirm the destination and return time. This must be done before leaving school. Upon arriving at the destination and before unloading, it shall be your responsibility to confirm the leaving time with all teachers to return to school on schedule.

Before leaving the school, you are to courteously *EXPLAIN* the *BUS RULES* and the emergency procedures to the passengers. Your explanation must be geared to the age group of pupils. If a discipline problem develops during the trip, work with the teachers to take corrective action.

Supervision by a faculty member or responsible adult must be provided for all school activity trips. On many trips, two or more teachers, administrators, or parents will be present and when they are on board, they are there to assist the driver. Their impression of the driver will be their impression of the (School District) Transportation Department and all of its drivers.

Students are not to transfer between buses for the return trip, except in circumstances approved by the senior sponsor in charge.

If a meal stop is approved for the trip, attempt to arrange a satisfactory stopping place with the sponsor. Noise is largely a matter of personal opinion. Rooters are usually energetic, but need not be unruly. Liberties should never be permitted that might jeopardize their safety.

Work through the sponsor at all times. They are there for your added protection and assistance, but their presence does not relieve you of responsibility. Rest stops should be planned with the sponsor.

We have a legal and moral responsibility to assure the safety of our passengers. We must be ever conscious of that responsibility when scheduling drivers and buses for field trips.

Trips will be assigned according to the current collective bargaining agreement. Every effort will be made to distribute extra trips as evenly and fairly as possible.

**OUT OF TOWN ASSIGNMENTS**

The professional bus driver is to carefully map out his/her route to the destination to ensure an optimum safety and a minimum of trouble. If necessary, request assistance ***in advance***from the Transportation Office. Do not wait until you have passengers on board the bus to ask for directions. This reflects poorly on both you the driver and our department.

**TIPS FOR BETTER TRIPS**

1. Any questions regarding destination or directions should be resolved **before** the day of the trip.

2. Drivers should report to the **compound** no more than 20 minutes prior to the designated pick-up time to inspect the bus and travel to the school.

3. Drivers are expected to be on time for trips. The designated leave time is the time you should have students loaded and you are ready to leave. If the teacher(s) aren't ready, be patient -- you are being paid for the time.

4. If you arrive at a pick-up location and no one is waiting for the bus, wait five (5) minutes past the scheduled leave time then radio the office for instructions. After school hours or when the office is not available, drivers should use good judgment; a wait of fifteen (15) to twenty (20) minutes would be reasonable.

5. If you are late because of a prior run, trip or bus defect, radio dispatch. We will notify the school. Otherwise, you should be on time. Being late tends to make drivers rush through inspections and hurry to schools. By the time you finally arrive at the school, we have had angry teachers or staff calling and complaining about the **late** bus, and your trip is off to a negative start.

6. Before you leave the school, verify all destinations and return times. If the group wishes to make stops not previously arranged, radio dispatch to obtain approval. You should also:

A. Remind teachers that they are responsible for the conduct of their students, in addition to parking fees, bridge tolls, etc.

B. Give your passengers a brief, concise explanation of safe riding practices and emergency evacuation procedures.

7. On all trips, other than home-to-school, there must be adequate adult supervision. This is required by district policy. If there is not supervision, radio dispatch for instructions. During the evening, weekends or holidays, drivers are to use their best judgment as to transporting students without adult supervision and to report the incident to the Manager the next working day. If necessary, drivers can call an office staff member at home for instructions in these cases. In any event, no student shall ever be left stranded at any time.

8. Safety is your first responsibility; discipline is the teacher or coach's responsibility. Field trips are an extension of their classroom.

9. Off-campus or Walk-on coaches have presented a unique problem for the schools. If you arrive for a sports pick-up and no coach is present, radio dispatch for assistance. Because we have radios, we may advise you to proceed. However, if a driver radios in with discipline problems in route to a destination, we may instruct the driver to return to school. If discipline problems occur in route home, exceptions may not again be made for that team or group.

10. ***Bus Convoy Travel****.* Before leaving on a trip, all drivers in a convoy should get together with the driver of the lead bus and acquaint themselves with the route to be traveled; this will help the convoy operate safely and cooperatively. When several buses are traveling together, the lead bus shall remain under the legal speed limit that enables the driver to keep the second bus in sight at all times. The second bus driver shall be responsible for keeping the third bus in sight at all times and so on through as many buses as are in the convoy. The **minimum** amount of space between buses in convoy is 500 feet by Michigan law. (MCL Sec. 257.643) When approaching the destination, the lead bus shall slow its pace sufficiently to allow all buses to arrive as a group.

11. ***Driver's Responsibility at Destination.* Upon arrival at your destination and before discharging passengers, again verify the return time and pick-up point with the teacher.**

It is understood that drivers waiting at destinations may have to leave their bus for brief periods for meals, restrooms, etc. You are to ascertain from the adult in charge as to the loading and departure times of the group before leaving. When leaving your bus unattended all windows and doors should be closed, provided that the convenience of all passengers and the safety of the bus are not in jeopardy. When several buses are waiting together at a destination, at least one driver should remain with the buses at all times to provide for any need of the passengers and to protect the buses against vandalism.

Bus engines shall not be run for extended periods to keep the driver warm. When the weather is expected to be inclement during the trip, drivers should dress appropriately. Drivers should stay close by the destination should the group wish to return earlier than expected.

12. For trips outside the district and when a bus has been left unattended, drivers should use their best judgment and inspect their bus prior to the return trip. An appropriate inspection would include the following items at a minimum: brakes, lights, tires, undercarriage and a check for body damage or vandalism.

13. The maximum speed limit for school buses in Michigan is 55 mph. Observe this limit at all times.

14. Buses shall be left cleaned and fueled.

***EMERGENCY PROCEDURES***

**ACCIDENTS**

Student safety and the avoidance of unsafe highway situations are to be uppermost in the mind of a (School District) Bus Driver at all times. The prevention of accidents will best be accomplished by the exercise of good judgment, risk avoidance, and with strict compliance with all applicable laws.

**ACCIDENT KITS**

Every (School District) school bus is equipped with an accident kit. Inside this kit are the following forms: seating chart, student injury report form and an accident report form. (Please see “ACCIDENT REPORTING FORMS” below for more information.)

**ACCIDENT REPORTNG FORMS**

In order to fairly evaluate and classify various types of occurrences, three basic reports have been adopted. Each form has been designed to cover a particular type of accident or incident.

1. “***Accident Report”*** This form will be used for vehicle accidents where there is District driver involvement to any degree. This form is available in the Drivers Lounge and the Transportation Office. It is to be completed by the driver and returned on the day of the accident or the next regular workday.

All incidents of objects being thrown at the bus or attempts to damage the bus or injure its occupants may be reported on this form, whether or not actual damage or injury occurs. It may also be used to supplement a “Student Accident Report.”

1. ***“Report of Accident.”*** This form will be used for any time you are injured on the job. This form is available at the Transportation Office. It is to be completed by the driver and returned to the Transportation Office within 24 hours of the occurrence.
2. “***Student Accident Report.”*** This form will be used when a pupil incurs an injury while the pupil is under the supervision of the driver. This form is available in the Drivers Lounge and the Transportation Office. It is to be completed by the driver and returned to the Transportation Office within 24 hours of the occurrence.
3. ***“School Bus Accident Seating Chart.”*** This form will be used for bus accidents when students are aboard. This form is available in the Accident Packet on the bus. It is to be completed by the driver and passengers at the time of the accident and returned on the day of the accident or the next regular workday along with the “***Accident Report.”***

**REPORTING OF ACCIDENTS**

It is all of our responsibility to perform our duties in such a manner that demonstrates care and concern for students, co-workers, the community, and district property. The main objective is to work in such a manner as to prevent any accident from occurring. Unfortunately, accidents do sometimes occur. The procedures outlined below apply to all transportation employees in case of an accident.

Employees shall verbally report the following situations to the transportation office on the day of the occurrence. The verbal report shall be followed up in writing on the appropriate form, within 24 hours or the next regular workday, to the transportation office:

1. Any damage to a school district owned vehicle.
2. Any personal property or other motor vehicle damage caused by a transportation employee in the course of his/her employment.
3. Any injury to any passengers, students or employees.
4. Any other occurrence not meeting the above criteria including, but not limited to:

* Vandalism to district vehicles by unknown person(s).
* Damage or vandalism to other vehicles or personal property by students on buses or under the supervision or control of the bus driver.

If the office is closed at the time of the occurrence, employees shall make every effort to notify a member of the office staff via home telephone or pager. These numbers can be found on the yellow “Transportation Emergency Contact” card in the First Aid kit in each bus.

Mechanics shall report any new vehicle damage whether or not it has been previously reported (i.e.: body damage; broken, damaged or missing mirrors or clearance lights; etc.) to the Transportation Manager before making repairs.

**PROCEDURES AT THE SCENE OF A CRASH**

If a crash does occur, you as a school bus driver must assume, in addition to your legal obligations, other immediate responsibilities. Because the circumstances of each accident are different, the sequence procedures may vary, but the following general procedure is recommended:

1. STOP where accident occurred.
2. Shut off ignition.
3. Quickly ask your passengers if anyone is injured.
4. If there are serious injuries radio the office or have someone call 911.
5. If there are no apparent injuries, get the license plate number of any other vehicles involved. They may leave the scene.
6. If your vehicle is in a dangerous position, turn on your 4 way hazard lights and put out your reflectors and/or flares.
7. Evacuate your passengers ONLY IF NECESSARY! (Fire or potential of fire, or vehicle in hazardous position.)
8. If you have not already done so, radio or telephone the transportation office. After hours, call the home numbers or page the staff member(s) listed on the yellow “Transportation Emergency Contact” card required or call 911.
9. Ask to see the other driver’s license and copy down name, operator’s license number, address, and etc.
10. Do not move your vehicle unless absolutely necessary, but if you have to, mark the position of your tires on the pavement before moving your vehicle.
11. Do not discuss the accident or admit to any negligence, even if you think that you may be at fault. These questions can be answered later by our insurance agent.
12. Do cooperate with investigating law enforcement officers and give them the best information possible, but do not speculate or guess regarding details about which you are uncertain.
13. Make a complete written report of the accident details and submit the report to the Transportation Office on the same day as the accident.
14. Drivers involved in a crash are required by law to give certain information to the other drivers, such as name, age, driver's license number, and vehicle information, and to receive and write down the same information from the other driver(s) involved.
15. Obtain all necessary information from bus passengers. This should include the passenger's name, phone number, and seat location. Use of a seating chart is helpful for this purpose.
16. If an injured person is removed to a medical facility, be sure to obtain the name and location of the medical facility from the person taking the injured person.
17. A driver is not to leave his bus to seek help except when there are no pupils aboard who can be sent for help. Pupil(s) may not be left unsupervised.
18. Transportation must again be notified when all the above is completed and the bus has been released and is ready for service or removal from the scene.

**WITNESSES**

1. As soon as the immediate needs of passengers are taken care of, the scene has been made as safe as possible, and Transportation has been notified, the driver will attempt to obtain as many witnesses to the accident as possible.

2. Secure names and addresses of outside witnesses.

3. Check each name carefully to see that all information is legible before witnesses leave the scene of the accident. If the writing is not legible, it is of no value.

4. Secure the names and addresses of every occupant of the other vehicle involved, clearly indicating who was driving.

**CRASHES WITH UNATTENDED VEHICLES**

The driver of any bus that collides with an unattended vehicle shall immediately locate and notify the owner or operator of such vehicle, and give him the name and address of the owner of the bus, or leave in a conspicuous place on the unattended vehicle, a written notice giving the names and addresses of the driver and owner of the bus. The accident shall be reported on a Transportation Accident Report Form.

**MECHANICAL DEFECTS**

If in your judgment any malfunction or mechanical defect of the equipment was a contributing factor to a crash, this information must be included in the original accident report. Transportation will arrange for a mechanical inspection **before the bus is moved** from the scene. The driver will make a written report of any known or suspected defects.

**REPORTING ACCIDENTS OR INCIDENTS DURING REGULAR HOURS**

1. **All accidents or incidents are to be reported immediately**. The driver will make no decision whether an occurrence is serious or not. Whenever a bus comes in contact with another object, or if there is any injury, it **MUST BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY. THERE CAN BE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE!** Check immediately for any injury to students or other persons involved in the accident and radio the Transportation Office. Transportation will then be responsible for making any calls on school days from 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

2. The telephone numbers for reporting accidents are (List School District Phone Number (s)). Should this number be busy, keep trying. If you cannot get in touch with dispatch, call the Transportation Office at (Transportation Office Phone Number(s)).

3. If for any reason you are unable to place the call yourself, you should ask the assistance of the first passer-by or the resident of the nearest house. Be sure to give the person making the call for you the necessary information to enable Transportation to get the proper assistance to you.

**REPORTING ACCIDENTS WHEN TRANSPORTATION IS CLOSED**

After 5:00 p.m. weekdays, on weekends or holidays, you should notify the Transportation Manager at home. When reporting the accident, you should be prepared to give as many details as possible. In the event you are unable to reach the Transportation Manager at home you can page him/her.

**NECESSARY INFORMATION FOR CRASH REPORTS**

Since it is difficult for a person involved in a crash to remember the many details after leaving the scene, it is essential that you make written notes at the scene and identify all witnesses immediately after necessary emergency measures have been taken. The Accident Report form is to be completed by the driver, who may be assisted by a Transportation Manager.

In order for the Transportation Manager to fairly evaluate crash reports, both in terms of cause and preventability, clear, accurate, and concise reports are essential. Also, because people reviewing these reports seldom have first hand knowledge of the facts involved, it is extremely important that the reports be completed in such a way that any person reviewing them would be able to accurately diagram the occurrence on the basis of the information furnished.

For the guidance of drivers in preparation of their reports, the following procedure is recommended.

1. Identify and describe the location. Include street names, widths, number of lanes, traffic volume, etc.; also, specify what traffic controls are present and any other physical factors that relate to the occurrence.

2. Describe movements or actions of each party immediately preceding the occurrence. If other vehicles are involved, describe each separately, and identify as V-1 or V-2, etc. Include and identify any skid marks.

3. Describe point of impact (POI) and movement of vehicles to point of rest (POR). The point of impact should be related to curb lines or the edge of the road. Indicate place and approximate amount of damage to each vehicle.

4. If the driver of the other vehicle(s) will make a statement, include this also.

5. Draw a complete diagram that will allow anyone reviewing the crash to relate the narrative portion of the report to the actual event.

**NEW DAMAGE TO VEHICLES**

In situations where a driver finds new damage to a vehicle, they shall notify the garage or office before leaving the compound so that a mechanic can inspect the vehicle.

**MECHANICAL BREAKDOWNS**

For dependable service and maximum safety, every school bus shall be kept in top operating condition. Since every vehicle is subject to wear or damage, it shall be inspected each day before use, and defects must be reported promptly so that maintenance can be performed **BEFORE** the bus becomes disabled or involved in a crash.

Every school bus driver has a vital responsibility in school bus maintenance because the driver is most likely to notice a malfunction.

You are required to make a thorough daily inspection before use. As a conscientious bus driver, you will continue to check all systems throughout the day, knowing that the condition of the bus can change as the day progresses. You shall be alert to any "Warning Signals" that indicate the bus is not operating properly. Watch instruments and gauges. Use the four senses; *SIGHT, SMELL, FEEL, AND HEAR*. This continued alertness will permit you to spot possible trouble and act accordingly before the condition causes damage, or contributes to a breakdown or accident. Loss of oil pressure; overheating of water temperature (more than 200 degrees) or transmission temperature (more than 250 degrees); or the rapid loss of air in a bus equipped with air brakes indicate problems in which the bus should be parked, shut down and secured in a safe location immediately. ***WHEN IN DOUBT SHUT IT DOWN!***

**REPORTING BREAKDOWNS DURING REGULAR HOURS**

All breakdowns must be reported immediately and directly to the office. The office will then be responsible for notifying the garage. The driver must again notify dispatch when the bus has been repaired and is ready for service.

The regular dispatch number is to be used to report breakdowns if you cannot reach dispatch via two-way radio. It is recommended that you keep adequate coins in the bus in case the only telephone available is a pay phone. Toll Charges may be reversed to report an emergency, accident, or breakdown.

When making the call be prepared to furnish as much information as possible about the circumstances of the breakdown. The exact address or location is necessary. Be as specific as possible in describing the nature of the problem so the mechanic can be dispatched with the necessary tools or parts to make the needed repairs.

**REPORTING BREAKDOWNS WHEN TRANSPORTATION IS CLOSED**

Each driver shall have a "Transportation Emergency Contacts" card in their possession while on duty. One is also located in the First Aid kit in each bus. Call the appropriate number for further instructions. Drivers are directed to first call the Lead Mechanic, and then the other Mechanic listed on the card.

**SENDING PUPILS FOR ASSISTANCE**

**A driver shall not leave his bus to seek aid in case of accident or emergency except when there is no pupil aboard who can be sent for help**. It is important that the bus and its passengers are in the driver's view and control.

In situations where outside assistance is necessary, the following procedure is recommended and is to be done in the following order:

1. If possible, give the necessary information in writing to an adult passer-by and request him to make the necessary call.

2. If it is necessary to use pupil passengers as messengers, follow this procedure:

A. Provide the necessary information in writing.

B. Select the **TWO** oldest and most reliable pupils.

C. Instruct them to go to the nearest house and request the occupant to make the phone call. After giving the written request to the occupant, the pupils are to return immediately to the bus. They are NOT to enter a private home at any time.

3. Discretion and good judgment must be used. If the students are very young, special education students, or students with special problems, DO NOT SEND them for assistance. Wait with your bus and students until a passer-by comes along or the Transportation Department locates you. It is of the utmost importance that you always follow your route exactly, and if a change occurs in the route, immediately make the necessary changes on the route sheets.

For information on Staking Out A School Bus, please refer to MAPT School Bus Driver Bulletin # 10 in the appendix of this handbook.

For more information on Accident Responses, please refer to MAPT School Bus Driver Bulletin # 13 in the appendix of this handbook.

***EVACUATION PROCEDURES***

**SCHOOL BUS EMERGENCY EVACUATION**

During your driving experience, there will be times when knowing what, how and when to do something during an emergency will be of great value to you and your passengers. When an emergency develops, every passenger looks to the driver for direction. The parents of the students you will be transporting expect performance from you in an emergency. This is part of your job to know what to do and to be able to instruct your passengers on emergency procedures in advance so that they will know what to do in the event you will not be able to give assistance when it is needed. In the past, students have owed their lives to their bus drivers who were trained properly and who made the right decision at the right time.

In the event of an actual emergency, the decision to evacuate the vehicle is the initial step and one of the most important that the driver will have to make. The decision will initiate a chain of events to result in the safest possible situation for the passengers under the existing circumstances. The decision must be made as quickly as possible and be based on all the facts on hand. We stress the need for you, as a driver, to follow these policies to the letter and remember that you, as the driver, are responsible for your passengers and must protect them at all times.

A bus should always be evacuated when:

* There is a fire
* There is the potential for a fire to occur
* The vehicle is in a dangerous position

The driver must make a decision immediately if, under the circumstances, it is appropriate to evacuate the bus. Would it pose more potential harm to your passengers to keep them on board the bus? Are they safer inside or outside the bus? What are the conditions outside the bus? (Consider: weather, traffic, safe waiting area, etc.)

In emergency situations, expedient and orderly movement of people contributes to safety. Understanding and practicing recommended evacuation procedures will accomplish the expedient and orderly movement of people. Both the driver and the passengers should know what to do if there is an emergency.

**EVACUATION TRAINING DRILLS**

***The only thing tougher than planning for disasters, is explaining why you didn’t.***

Even though school bus drivers have sincere regard for the safety of their passengers, the possibility of a major accident is always present. For this reason, the Transportation Department has developed a plan for the emergency evacuation of buses in the event of such an occurrence. Both Michigan State and (School District) regulations require that all bus riders participate in at least 3 evacuation drills during each school year. Drills shall be conducted according to the procedures outlined in the MAPT publication “Emergency Evacuation Procedures.” A copy is provided in the appendix of this handbook. All evacuation drills shall be documented on the appropriate form that is located in the driver’s lounge.

The purpose of conducting the drills is to familiarize both the bus driver and the students with the procedures involved and the problems that are likely to occur. An explanation of the necessity for the drill and the method of carrying it out, implemented by actual participation will provide the safest possible procedure in the event that an actual emergency evacuation should become necessary. Different bus types may change the specific method that is employed, but general procedures listed are still applicable.

**EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

By law, all school buses must provide at least two methods or routes of escape. With proper training, each driver and passenger will know each route and how to operate each emergency door. The purpose of conducting an evacuation drill is to condition both the driver and the students with a procedure to follow if there is an emergency. The driver is the foundation of the evacuation program. If you panic, the children will panic. If you follow a systematic plan, everyday, the students will become conditioned in following this plan. When it becomes necessary to evacuate the bus, the students will naturally follow the plan because they have become conditioned to doing so. The goal of any evacuation program is to have the students be able to evacuate themselves.

Detailed instructions have been developed for training showing several different types of drills that can be followed. When selections are made relating to the drill to be used, keep in mind that the purpose is to teach our passengers a different way out of the bus other than the one normally used for loading and unloading purposes.

Your responsibility as a driver involves two parts:

1. The implementation of safe riding practices, which includes a daily systematic procedure for loading and unloading. The daily enforcement of the safe riding practices.

**Everyday, you the driver supervise a front door evacuation drill.**

2. The training and supervision of 3 annual evacuation drills. The evacuation drills will include a verbal presentation that will familiarize the students with the various routes of escape and all the safety features of the school bus.

**PREPARING FOR AN EVACUATION DRILL**

1. Know the rules and regulations concerning school buses and your responsibilities as the driver. Follow local policies to the letter.

2. As a driver, it is imperative you know your vehicle. Its engine, the braking system, and any special equipment it may have.

3. Introduce yourself and the subject.

4. Give the students reasons for an evacuation. Give examples "The goal of the evacuation is to..."

1. Develop a plan for orienting your passengers about your bus. There is no right way. Each plan will differ because of the driver, the age group, the type of students, and type of vehicle.
2. Develop a systematic plan for the evacuation of your bus. For an evacuation drill checklist, ask in the Transportation office.
3. Drivers must evaluate the prevailing conditions outside the bus and assure all safety precautions are followed in order to minimize the possibility of injury to passengers and staff.

For more information on Emergency Evacuation Procedures, please refer to MAPT School Bus Driver Bulletin # 1 in the appendix of this handbook.

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***APPENDIX***

MAPT School Bus Driver Bulletins

Attitude Is Everything

Share the Sunshine

Pupil Discipline Outline

Behavior Expectations on Extra Curricular Trips

PPS Transportation Organizational Chart

PPS Approved School and Grade Codes

Definition of a Professional, Code of Ethics

**INSERT MAPT SCHOOL BUS DRIVER BULLETINS**

(THOSE MENTIONED IN THIS HANDBOOK AND

ANY OTHER PERTINENT BULLETIN PUBLICATIONS)

**ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING**

What do you think is more important to your success in life -- attitude or aptitude? If you said attitude, you're right. A study by the Stanford Research Institute determined that 12 percent of our success depends on knowledge, while a whopping 88 percent of our success depends on attitude and positive thinking. What exactly is attitude? The dictionary defines attitude as "a mental position with regard to a fact or state." Attitude is the way you look upon the world and your life. A positive attitude can make all the difference in the world. Following is a list of positive and negative attitudes. Compare them and identify which ones you have!

**Positive Attitudes** **Negative Attitudes**

Enthusiasm Who Cares?

Caring Apathy

Genuine Phony

Exciting Boring

Knowledgeable Unknowing

Courage Fear

Endless Opportunities Dead-end Outlook

Adventure Same old thing

Faith Distrust

On top of environment Environment controls you

Picturing results Picturing struggle

Smiles are contagious Bad moods are contagious

Team spirit Me, me, me

Leader Follower

Originality Imitator

Make other people feel good about themselves Make other people feel bad about themselves

Compliment people Criticize people

Pass around a little sunshine Pass around clouds

Focus on today and tomorrow Focus on yesterday

Take responsibility Blame others

Meet problems realistically Let problems overcome you

Take initiative Let others take the initiative

Feel good about yourself Feel bad about yourself

Know that you are a valuable person Think you have no value

Know you can make a difference in the world Think you can make no difference in the world

Don't let ordinary annoyances get you down Frustrations over commonplace annoyances

Compliment yourself by thinking, Be hard on yourself by thinking,

"I did a good job today." "I'll never do this again."

So how do you go about getting a positive attitude and more importantly, keeping one when the chips are down? Although some people seem to be able to maintain a positive attitude almost all the time, most people have to make a conscious effort to attain and keep a positive outlook on life.

Here are some tips to get you started. Remember, the more you work at developing a positive outlook, the easier it gets!

1. Everyday, keep an "up" attitude about yourself.

2. Talk to yourself every day in a positive way. Say, "I know I can do it. I know I can do it. I will succeed."

3. Aim for the stars. If you don't make it, you'll land pretty high anyway. Remember that the only one who is a real failure is the one who doesn't try.

4. Mentally picture yourself as the ideal you want to be. Remember how you used to daydream when you were a young child? Let your mind "see" you exactly as you want to be. See yourself happy, attractive, confident, and succeeding in life's ventures.

5. Be enthusiastic. Genuine enthusiasm is the key to personal success.

6. Throw yourself into a worthwhile goal or project. Lose yourself in it. Your results will follow.

7. Take time to express appreciation to others. It will come back to you many times over.

8. Get excited about life. Take time to appreciate the wonder of it all.

9. Set your mental outlook as you drive to work every day. Instead of thinking, "It's going to be one of those days," think, "What exciting things can I do today?"

10. Don't get awestruck with other people. Remember that no one can be you as effectively as you can.

11. Set realistic goals for yourself. With each goal you reach, you build self-confidence and character.

12. Take pride in yourself for a job well done. Pat yourself on the back and do it often.

13. Strive always to reach your dreams.

14. Be a leader. Take the initiative. Be an example for others to follow.

15. You can be a winner.

16. Smile, smile, smile. A genuine smile is contagious.

17. Genuinely care about people. Whatever good goes from you comes back around to you.

***Share the sunshine...***

Everyone is capable of having a positive attitude. It is something you must do every day. It builds and builds, and grows and grows. So, don't wait another second. Put these principles to work for you now. With a positive attitude and outlook on life, you can reach exciting new heights of achievement and realize great personal rewards.

Be proud and say, "I got an "A" in attitude today." It's one of the first steps to success in pupil transportation or, for that matter, in almost any walk of life.

**PUPIL DISCIPLINE OUTLINE**

1. What you can do to help in the discipline process

A. Do demonstrate leadership

1. Have a positive attitude

2. Set guidelines and limits

3. Set a caring atmosphere

B. Do develop bus spirit

1. Involve students in naming the bus

2. Develop team spirit

3. Ask all students to help keep their bus clean

C. Do be a greeter

1. Greet each student as they get on the bus

2. Have students do the same to each other

3. Use students’ first name

D. Do point out what is working

1. Establish rewards for good behavior

2. Always point out the positive behavior

2. Discipline procedures

A. Purpose of the procedure

1. Sets standards of expected student behavior

2. Establishes standard disciplinary actions

B. Drivers responsibilities

1. Be consistent

2. Be fair

3. Know the rules

4. Set your standards

5. Do not play favorites

6. **Do not make promises you cannot keep**

C. Types of discipline

1. Verbal warning

a. Explain the reason for the warning

b. Explain the next step if behavior continues

2. Conduct report

a. Explain the reason for the conduct report

b. Be specific and positive

3. Suspension of bus privileges

a. Driver does not suspend students from bus for more than one day

b. The Transportation Manager will suspend the student for multiple days

c. Good documentation will take its course (be patient)

4. Do request assistance when needed from:

a. Driver Trainers

b. Transportation Manager

c. School authorities

D. Do maintain control of the situation

1. Do not get angry when taking disciplinary action

2. Do not let the student gain control

3. Remember, you are in charge

4. Do not touch the student

5. Follow through on all discipline

6. Praise in public and reprimand in private

E. Some Do's and Don'ts

1. Make sure you discipline the right students

2. Make sure you yourself observe the rule violation

3. Never use physical or mental abuse such as

a. Stopping bus and raising the windows

b. Degrading student through verbal statements

c. Slamming brakes on bus to prove a point

4. Do not use vulgar words towards students

5. Do not curse at students

6. Avoid yelling; too much dilutes the effect of reprimand

3. Understanding various cultures

A. Reasons certain groups act in certain ways

1. Family beliefs

2. Religious beliefs

3. Community influences

4. Ethnic beliefs

5. Peer group influences

B. Understanding the beliefs of others

1. Do not belittle the individual's belief

2. Try to understand the individual

3. Do not force your values on the individual

4. Understand that everyone must follow rules

4. Understanding yourself as a driver

A. The non-assertive driver:

1. Lets students misbehave

2. Does not know how to stop them

3. Backs down when challenged

4. Is afraid of students

5. Feels upset and overwhelmed

B. The hostile driver:

1. Gets angry and yells at students

2. Threatens, but does not take action

3. Calls students names

4. Uses physical force

5. Harms students psychologically

C. The assertive driver:

1. Is the boss on the bus

2. Says what he/she means and means what he/she says

3. Clearly and firmly tells students exactly how he/she wants them to behave

4. Stays calm and uses a normal tone of voice

5. Has a plan of action when students do not behave

# **(SCHOOL DISTRICT)**

# **Transportation Department**

To: Teachers, Coaches, and Chaperones

From: (School District’s Transportation Manager)

Transportation Manager

Re: Behavior Expectations on Extra Curricular Trips

The following information is being offered in effort to provide the safest and most educationally beneficial extra curricular trips possible for (School District) students. You are requested to review these behavior expectations with your students before leaving on each trip.

The safety of all passengers is the first responsibility of the driver. As the adult(s) in charge on an extra curricular trip, you are responsible for the appropriate conduct of the students while on the bus. All bus drivers have been informed that trips are an extension of your class and classroom behavior is expected. By working together as a team, you and the driver will assure a successful trip experience for all of our students.

• Adequate adult supervision is required on each bus. This is required by Board Policy.

• All destinations and the return time shall be confirmed between the bus driver and the adult in charge *prior* to departure from the school. A school administrator must authorize any changes *before* departing.

• All passengers shall have a safe seat and shall remain seated facing forward while the bus is in motion unless an adult asks a student to change his/her seat.

• All passengers are expected to help keep the bus clean. Eating, drinking, and gum chewing are not allowed.

• Out of consideration of those passengers with medical conditions, do not use any aerosol spray, cologne, perfume or other items with strong odors while on the bus.

• Meal stops must be requested and approved in advance on the Trip Request. Care should be taken to choose restaurants where the passengers do not have to cross the roadway to get to the restaurant and shall be coordinated by the driver and adult in charge.

• Rest stops are permitted and shall be coordinated by the driver and adult in charge.

• While it is expected that students are energetic on trips, they need not be unruly or excessively loud. Liberties should not be permitted that might jeopardize the safety of the passengers. Talking in classroom voices is expected. Singing or cheering should be coordinated with the driver. However, there should not be any whistling, screaming, profanity or verbal abuse.

• All passengers must be silent at all railroad crossings. The signal to be quiet will be a raised hand by the driver or adult, or turning the dome lights on and off.

• Permission must be obtained from the bus driver before playing radios, tapes or CD's.

• Passengers should not transfer between buses for return trips without permission of the adult in charge.

• Teachers and coaches are responsible for any parking fees, bridge tolls, etc.

• Aisles and emergency exits shall not be blocked by any luggage or other cargo.

• Throwing or shooting objects in or out of the bus is not permitted.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation, we hope that you have a safe and pleasant trip! Should you have any questions, please feel free the call the transportation office at (Phone Number).

***(SCHOOL DISTRICT)***

***TRANSPORTATION ORGANIZATIONAL CHART***

**Approved (School District) School and Grade Codes**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***SITE NAME*** | ***Abbr.*** | ***School ID #*** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Elementary #1 |  |  |
| Elementary #2 |  |  |
| Elementary #3 |  |  |
| Elementary #4 |  |  |
| Elementary #5 |  |  |
| Elementary #6 |  |  |
| Elementary #7 |  |  |
| Elementary #8 |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Middle School #1 |  |  |
| Middle School #2 |  |  |
| Middle School #3 |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| High School #1 |  |  |
| High School #2 |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Community Education Center | CEC |  |
|  |  |  |
| Administration Offices | ADM |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| ***Grade/Class Description*** | ***Code*** | ***Applies to:*** |
|  |  |  |
| Kindergarten AM | KA | All Elem. Schools |
| Kindergarten PM | KP | All Elem. Schools |
|  |  |  |
| Young Fives AM | YA | Select Elem. Schools |
| Young Fives PM | YP | Select Elem. Schools |
|  |  |  |
| Pre-Primary Impaired AM | PA | Elementary #3 |
| Pre-Primary Impaired PM | PP | Elementary #3 |
|  |  |  |
| Readyness Ed. Program AM | RA | Select Elem. Schools |
| Readyness Ed. Program PM | RP | Select Elem. Schools |

***Definition of a Professional***

# **Definition of a Professional**

* Seeks knowledge all of his/her life.
* Has served his/her full apprenticeship.
* Have specialized capabilities.
* Sets personal standards through his/her fellow professionals.
* Contributes to the welfare of mankind.

# **Professional School Bus Drivers Code Of Ethics**

School bus drivers who are in close contact with our children should be persons whose conduct is beyond reproach and who sincerely believe in setting a high moral standard at all times. As a professional school bus driver I will:

* Be proud of my position as a school bus driver in order that I may be an example in giving high quality service and deal honestly with others.
* Be a person of high integrity, desirable personal habits, clean speech, to the end that others may follow my example.
* Be generous in my praise; just in me criticism; endeavor to improve and not destroy.
* Promote safety and courtesy in my relations with pupils, teachers, parents and others.
* Be a resourceful person who leads in finding better ways of doing a job and helping others where possible.
* Associate myself with other transportation employees for the purpose of finding ways to improve our jobs by discussing our problems.
* I shall always bear in mind that I am a school bus driver and as such, my school shall receive CRITICISM or PRAISE by the way I conduct my business.
* Always uphold my obligations as a citizen to my nation, my state, my community, my employer and give them unswerving loyalty.
* I will deal patiently and respectfully with the children and young people so that when firm discipline is required they will respect my position as bus driver.
* With help, I will exert every effort to know the laws pertaining to professional driving and school transportation and obey them.
* Seeks knowledge all his/her life.
* Has served his/her full apprenticeship.
* Have specialized capabilities.
* Sets personal standards through his/her fellow professionals.
* Contributes to the welfare of mankind.

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