

SAFETY PHILOSOPHY

Our challenge and commitment as Head Start school bus drivers is to ensure that safe work habits are followed, that safe conditions exist each day in the work environment and that the elements of a safety culture are continuously emphasized by all employees.

EMPLOYMENT QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

1310.16 Driver qualifications.

The position you have accepted has primary responsibility for transporting Head Start children safely. You are required to follow all applicable school district, county, state and federal policies, regulations and laws. The following is a list of minimum requirements for employment.

1. Drivers – Maintain a valid Commercial Drivers License (CDL), medical certificate and state certification for school bus drivers.
2. Have no convictions or pending arrests which could interfere with your ability to perform your duties.
3. Maintain a good driving record consistent with job classification.
4. Maintain standards of behavior consistent with the responsibilities of transporting school children.
5. Attend In-service training programs as required throughout the year.
6. Receive, read, and comply with applicable school district, county and state policies and procedures included in handbooks, manuals, notices and training programs.
7. Be available to perform all work assigned as scheduled.
8. Fully comply with attendance standards as set forth by the school.

Applicant Review Process/Notification

1310.16 (b)

- ✓ Applicants are advised that a criminal background check will be made.
- ✓ Driving record will be checked, including check of record through the National Driver Register, if available in State.
- ✓ After conditional offer and before applicant begins, a medical examination, performed by a licensed doctor of medicine or osteopathy to establish that applicant possesses the physical ability to perform any job-related function with any necessary accommodation.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. Employees shall report to work on time and as scheduled.
2. Prior to operating a bus for the first time each day, drivers shall perform a pre-trip inspection and complete a Daily Vehicle Inspection Report (DVIR) prior to each route. The DVIR must be turned in at conclusion of the workday.
3. Drivers should **always** be on their vehicle when loading or unloading passengers.
4. Drivers shall not leave the vehicle while passengers are on board except in extreme emergencies. In such emergencies, the employee shall first notify dispatch where possible, shut off the engine, **take the key and set the emergency brake**.
5. Employees shall not allow passengers to sit or stand in the driver's compartment.
6. Drivers shall instruct passengers on loading and unloading procedures, safety rules and rules of conduct, recognition of danger zones around vehicle and safety procedures in crossing the street to and from vehicle at stops. School bus safety will be reinforced in the classroom as an integral part of the curriculum.
7. Drivers shall **unload or load passengers only at the designated time and place**. Any variation in time or place shall require authorization from the principal.
8. Drivers shall enforce strict discipline on the vehicle and shall enforce all rider rules of conduct as outlined on the Bus Riders Rules and Regulations card. Violations of rules shall be reported to the supervisor.
9. Employees shall wear seat belts at all times while the vehicle is in motion.
- 10. Drivers shall stop the vehicle, open the service door, open driver's window, look and listen in both directions, and close the service door before crossing any railroad tracks with or without passengers on board. In manually shifted vehicles, drivers shall not shift gears while on railroad tracks.**
11. Drivers shall keep the service door closed at all times when the vehicle is in motion.
- 12. Employees shall not leave the vehicle unattended with the engine is running at any time.**
13. Employees shall avoid backing up or making "U" turns whenever possible, except when necessary for safety or physical barriers. In the event backing is required either by route or emergency, whenever possible, adult supervision should be utilized at the rear of the backing vehicle. When backing up drivers must assure a clear passage to the rear, engage hazard lights, and honk horn/reverse beeper as the vehicle is backing. Backing in a school bus loading zone is prohibited.

14. Employees shall not make a right turn on red light except at intersections specifically designated and approved by supervisor.
15. Maximum speed for school buses is 55 MPH. Vehicle shall not travel at the posted 65-MPH speed limit on interstate highways. This applies to all travel, including bus movement and delivery. Employees shall comply with the State laws regulating speed of commercial vehicles.
16. Employees shall keep the inside of the vehicle clean and neat. At a minimum, floor must be swept, rubbish removed and dashboard whipped off on a daily basis. Periodically, the floor must be mopped, windows and mirrors cleaned to allow unobstructed vision.
17. Drivers shall be responsible for seeing that the first aid kit, fire extinguisher, seat belt cutter and required warning devices are on the vehicle and meet established safety standards. **The contents of the first aid kit are the responsibility of the driver.** Any discrepancy must be reported immediately.
18. Employees shall immediately report any damage to property or vehicle to supervisor. Such a report shall include a written explanation of the cause and extent of the damage.
19. Employees utilizing vehicles with music radios must maintain a suitable volume level. Music and language shall be appropriate for children.
20. The parent or person (adult with limited exceptions) designated by the parent/guardian in writing must meet students. Such designations kept on the bus by driver and in the campus office. Should a driver be unable to drop off a student, the driver should contact the campus immediately and return the student to the campus to be picked up by a parent/guardian or adult that as be designated to do so in writing.
21. All vehicles on route must have the proper route number posted in the designated holder. If the employee is given a spare vehicle, it is the responsibility of the employee to be sure to move the route number to the spare (backup) bus.
22. No driver of a bus shall pass another bus at any time on any street, highway or freeway, unless that bus is making a turn, has slowed down or stopped due to a mechanical problem. Buses, by law, must travel in the right hand lane.
23. Any employee accidents or injuries must be reported to the principal immediately and in accordance with State requirements. Employee injury reports should be documented on an incident report form and given to the principal as soon as possible. Failure to immediately report an accident or injury is grounds for discipline up to and including termination.

24. It is the responsibility of drivers to ensure that their assigned route sheet or books are correct. All stops must be noted in the correct order. Directions must be current and the route must be driven as per the route sheet/book. Safety related changes must be immediately brought to the attention of the principal. Drivers are not permitted to stop at any location to drop off or pick up students who are not listed as an authorized stop on the route sheet/book.
25. Routes are always to run according to the scheduled times (fix routes). The planning of fixed routes are established with the safety of the children being transported as the primary consideration. In the event of a delay it is the driver's responsibility to notify the campus as soon as possible of the reason for such delay and the expected delay. Drivers are required to have a reliable timepiece in their possession while on duty to help ensure on time service.

Alternate routes will be determined by the driver for safety reasons, hazards or barrier. The decision is based on the shortest most efficient route.

The time of the route is kept to a minimum based on the shortest, safest route available or practical.

26. Employees are responsible for maintaining order on the bus. In doing so, employees must adhere strictly to approved student management techniques. Employees may never under any circumstances, unnecessarily touch a student or use corporal punishment in any manner. Employees may not deny a child the opportunity of riding the bus, or drop the student off at a stop other than the designated stop, unless there is a written note from parent or school official.
27. Employees are not permitted to eat or drink while onboard vehicles while on duty.
28. Employees are required to carry the appropriate credentials (driver's license, school bus certificate, medical examination card, and CPR card where applicable) to operate a school bus with them at all times while on duty. This includes all required documents relating to the licensure and proof of insurance requirements of the vehicle to which they are assigned.

ACCIDENTS AND BREAKDOWN PROCEDURES

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTING:

In the event of an accident or incident, employees must immediately assess the accident/incident ensuring the safety of the passengers. Employees are required to radio into the principal immediately in the event of an accident or student injury incident. When reporting an accident/incident, please give a brief description of the situation to the office so they can send you the appropriate assistance.

FAILURE TO REPORT AN ACCIDENT/INCIDENT OR WORK INJURY IMMEDIATELY COULD RESULT IN TERMINATION.

INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED WHEN REPORTING AN ACCIDENT/INCIDENT:

1. Route number and bus number.
2. Exact location. Use nearest cross street or identifiable landmark.
3. Number of students on board and names of any injured students.
4. Are paramedics required for either vehicle's passengers?

BREAKDOWN PROCEDURES:

If a breakdown occurs, pull completely off the road; ensure the safety of passengers, contact dispatch via radio or telephone immediately. Set emergency warning reflectors. Drivers shall remain with the vehicle until officially relieved. Conduct emergency evacuations when necessary for the safety of the children and other passengers.

INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED WHEN REPORTING A BREAKDOWN:

1. Route number and bus number.
2. Exact location. Use nearest cross streets or identifiable landmark.
3. Number of students on board.
4. Portion of route you were doing when the bus broke down.
5. Next portion of route needing coverage.
6. Nature of breakdown, note gauge indications, unusual noises.
7. Any information you have which may aid dispatch in a speedy recovery of your recovery of your vehicle.

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ANIMALS OR PETS:

The only animals allowed on the bus are guide dogs, authorized by the school district.

ASSIGNMENT OF EQUIPMENT:

Buses are assigned to routes based on the number of students transported, and the type of route. Because of operational requirements and/or maintenance, a driver could be assigned a spare bus. Assignment of equipment to routes is at the sole discretion of operations.

AUTHORIZED PASSENGERS:

Authorized passengers are limited to students and attendants assigned to ride a specific route to and from school, or individuals authorized to be transported on a charter or field trip. Employees shall not permit other passengers to ride without specific authorization from a supervisor. This restriction shall include the employee's preschool child, other relatives or friends. Employees allowing an unauthorized passenger on a school vehicle are subject to discipline up to and including termination.

CITATIONS:

Any employee who receives a traffic citation while operating a school bus is responsible, unless such citation is attributable to, or a result of the school's responsibility for equipment. Employees receiving a citation other than that listed above, while operating a school bus shall report it to a supervisor. It is the responsibility of the employee to pay any cost related to the citation. All citations must be reported to a supervisor immediately and may result in disciplinary action.

DRIVING CREDENTIALS:

All employees are responsible for keeping their credentials up to date. **Employees are strictly prohibited from driving without current credentials in their possession.** Be sure to notify your supervisor each time that your credentials are renewed.

EATING/DRINKING ON THE BUS-PASSENGERS:

Passengers on board school buses are not allowed to eat or drink on the bus unless authorized to do so.

MANDATORY IN-SERVICE:

All drivers must attend inservices meeting mandated by the district. Disciplinary action will be enforced for any driver not attending, up to and including termination.

PERSONAL DATA – ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER:

Please take care of your purse, keys, clothing, radios and the like. The district does not accept responsibility for lost or stolen personal property which you bring to work.

RELATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC:

You must always remember that to the public you are the school district. You must ensure that you deal with student, parents, school officials and other motorists in a polite and professional manner. If you become involved in a dispute you should courteously withdraw from the argument and refer the other party to a supervisor.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PASSENGERS:

The district strictly prohibits socializing of any kind, or carrying on prolonged personal conversations with passengers. Employees must **never** discuss issues concerning passengers with anyone other than school officials with a “need to know”.

SIGNS OR BANNERS:

Displaying signs or banners on buses is prohibited unless specifically authorized by your supervisor.

UNAUTHORIZED USE OF SCHOOL BUS:

Unauthorized use of a school bus is strictly prohibited. You must never permit an unauthorized person to operate the school bus. Using a school bus for any purpose other than to perform assigned duties is forbidden without the explicit permission of your supervisor.

SAFE DRIVING PROCEDURES

ADVERSE CONDITIONS:

For all adverse weather and road conditions, the best method of defense driving is to slow down. Always adjust to a slower speed in conditions that are less than ideal. On wet or slippery roads all maneuvers (braking, steering, and acceleration) should be done slowly and gradually. Give yourself extra room and time. Whenever you are in a tight spot and clearance is questionable, **stop** and get out if necessary to make sure you can make it.

ARM SIGNALS:

As a driver, never give any arm direction to a car, or anyone else. Let them make up their own minds. If you wave anyone around and something happens, you may be responsible. Any direction or orders from a driver can expose the district and possibly you to a law suit.

BULKY EQUIPMENT:

All carry-on objects must be small enough to put on a lap and hold securely.

CARELESS OPERATION OF SCHOOL BUS/PROPERTY:

Employees must take appropriate action to avoid damage to vehicles and other property. Employees shall respond as soon as practical when alerted to possible problems by engine, brake, and other warning devices. Careless use or abuse of vehicles and/or property may result in termination.

DANGEROUS ARTICLES:

No weapons or other dangerous articles (large, sharp, and flammable) may be transported on the school bus. If you have any question whether an article would be considered dangerous check with your supervisor.

DRIVING ON OR NEAR SCHOOL GROUNDS:

Always exercise extreme caution while the bus is in or near a school-loading zone. Drive at a very slow rate of speed and maintain a constant watch for pedestrians. Never back up the bus in a school zone without permission from a supervisor. Be particularly cautious as the bus is arriving at or departing from the area where children board or exit. Always enter the school-loading zone in first gear using extreme caution. Buses are not permitted to pass other buses in a school zone without permission from a supervisor.

EARPHONES:

Earphones or earplugs cannot be used while operating a bus.

EMERGENCY EXITS:

All emergency exits must be free and operable. Emergency exits must never be blocked or obstructed in any way.

HEADLIGHTS:

State law requires that the headlights of any school bus shall be on while carrying passengers. District policy is that the headlights must always be on while the bus is in motion.

LOADING AND UNLOADING PASSENGERS ON SCHOOL GROUNDS:

Always move the bus into the parking position slowly. After the bus comes to a complete stop, place the transmission in neutral for automatics, low or reverse for standards, park for minivans, and remove the keys. If children are leaving the bus at this stop, you should supervise the unloading from the driver's seat. Always insist on an orderly exit from the vehicle.

If applicable-all buses must have their proper code or route number on the side of the bus so students will know which bus to board. If you are driving a spare bus, be sure you have the proper route number or color code.

MAINTAIN A SAFE FOLLOWING DISTANCE:

A safe rule of thumb is to stay at least four (4) seconds behind the vehicle in front of you. If roads are wet or slippery, you must increase your separation because it will take longer to stop.

PARKING:

Do not rub the right tires up against the curb when parking. Tires are not to be used to find the curb.

PERSONAL INJURY:

Employee accidents or injuries must be reported to a supervisor immediately.

CELL PHONE PROTOCOL:

It is absolutely essential to safety and efficient operations to maintain proper cell phone discipline. You must make sure your cell phone is charged at all times. You must keep the cell phone on at all times while driving the school bus. Keep your messages as brief as possible while clearly conveying the information that you are providing. Always be courteous and polite.

SEATING OF STUDENTS:

You must never put a school bus into motion until all students are seated. Students must remain in their seats until the bus stops and the door is opened. Students are never allowed to stand while the bus is in motion.

TOWING OR PUSHING VEHICLES:

You are not permitted under any circumstances to tow or push another vehicle. You must not permit your bus to be towed or pushed by another vehicle unless directed to do so by an authorized maintenance employee.

VISION OF THE DRIVER:

The driver shall not allow any person to occupy such a position in a school bus, which will interfere with the vision of the driver. No large objects will be placed or stacked higher than the seat back. The driver's hair or hat must not interfere with his/her vision.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Transportation services are provided to the Head Start program by the West Orange Cove-Consolidated ISD. School buses are utilized for home to school trips and field trips.