



TRANSPORTATION HANDBOOK

Revised 07/2025

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Introduction

Foreword

Provide the Franklin Community School Corporation with a consistent method of managing the transportation system from year to year.

Provide school bus drivers with the information needed to operate a school bus in the Franklin Community School Corporation.

Provide a consistent set of emergency and operating procedures for the Franklin Community School Corporation.

Inform new drivers about the method of operation of their buses in the Franklin Community School Corporation.

**MISSION STATEMENT:
PROVIDE SAFE, EFFICIENT, AND QUALITY TRANSPORTATION
FOR ALL FRANKLIN COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
STUDENTS**

Contacts

Transportation Center
750 East State Road 44
Franklin, IN 46131
Phone: 317-346-8770
Fax: 317-738-5652

Joe Hougland, Transportation Director	Office	317-346-8771
	Cell	317-557-4037
Traci Cox, Assistant Director	Office	317-346-8776
	Cell	317-840-5229
Lindsey Bales, Transportation Secretary	Office	317-346-8770
	Desk	317-346-8772
Patty Kinney, Transportation Assistant	Office	317-346-8770
	Desk	317-346-8774
Billy Arthur, Mechanic	Office	317-346-8773
	Cell:	317-739-9846

Schools:

Franklin Community High School	317-346-8100
Franklin Community Middle School	317-346-8400
Custer Baker Intermediate School	317-346-8600
Creekside Elementary School	317-346-8800
Needham Elementary School	317-346-8500
Northwood Elementary School	317-346-8900
Union Elementary School	317-346-8200
Webb Elementary School	317-346-8300

FCS Bus Drivers' Code of Conduct

1. FCS Transportation employees have a positive and professional working relationship with other transportation employees, district and school officials, students, and community members at all times.
2. FCS Transportation employees always strive to give our students, parents, community, and schools the best customer service.
3. FCS Transportation employees are always good adult role models for our students.
4. FCS Transportation employees always treat all students fairly and equally.
5. FCS Transportation employees consistently exhibit proper driving habits and provide the safest ride possible at all times.
6. FCS Transportation employees always maintain confidentiality.
7. FCS Transportation employees will not make derogatory remarks about other transportation employees, district and school officials, students, or community members while representing FCS.
8. FCS Transportation employees always maintain a proper professional attitude with all employees.
9. FCS Transportation employees follow the proper chain of command in all situations.
10. FCS Transportation employees abide by policies and regulations set forth by the Franklin Community School Corporation, the FCS School Board, the Transportation Department, and the State of Indiana.

Communication

Franklin Community Schools typically shares internal communication through the following channels:

- Automated texts or calls via ParentSquare
 - School email
 - The Transportation Department's private Facebook group for drivers and aides
- If you do not use Facebook, please check your school email daily, as email and the Facebook group are the primary ways we share updates. Please note: Any communication from this department is considered internal and **should not be shared with anyone** outside the district.

Bus Driver Safe Driving Expectations

FCS School Bus Drivers are considered the "Gold Standard" for safe driving. Drivers should always follow the posted speed limits or the maximum allowed by law for a school bus (as described later in this handbook), whichever is less. This includes school zones and on school property. In addition, do not tailgate any other vehicles, including other buses. Your route length is not a waiver to exceed speed limits or drive aggressively.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. Transportation employees must be familiar with this manual and the Support Staff Handbook.
2. Drivers shall be properly licensed in accordance with Federal and State regulations. Additionally, drivers must have an appropriate driver's license, a yellow card, and a copy of the CDL physical with them at all times.
3. Drivers must follow all Rules & Regulations set forth by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and the Indiana CDL manual.
4. Drivers are responsible for knowing, understanding, and practicing all school bus driving and CDL laws set forth by the State of Indiana.
5. Drivers are required to complete the annual state-approved safety training (ASM) and attend the beginning of the school year meeting and any other meeting required by FCS or the Director of Transportation. They must also comply with all bulletins, letters, or safety messages about driving.
6. Students are not to be released from the bus on the way to or from school, except at the school in which they are enrolled; the exception being an approved transfer point from one school bus to another.
7. The Director of Transportation must pre-authorize the use of driveways and parking lots for a turnaround or a cut-through.
8. Per the Indiana CDL manual Section 1.3, drivers must report any traffic violation within thirty (30) days of conviction.

9. Drivers/bus aides will maintain good order and discipline on the bus and work to know students' names.
10. No school bus shall move until the doors are closed and the students are seated.
11. The only occupants allowed on FCS school buses are students of FCS, faculty and staff, and chaperones with a qualified background check on file with FCS. This includes children of drivers. All others must have approval from the Director of Transportation. This screening process is in place for insurance liability purposes.
12. Drivers shall not permit any other person to drive their bus, occupy their seat, or tamper with the motor controls, except such persons who are approved by the Director of Transportation
- 13. Buses are not to arrive at their morning school destination any earlier than 10 minutes before morning release time. In the afternoons, drivers shall arrive at their afternoon schools 10 minutes before the dismissal time.**
14. Drivers will always observe speed zones and limits and adjust their speeds to conform to road and weather conditions.
- Indiana Code 9-21-5-14
 1. A person must not operate a school bus at a speed greater than:
 - a. Sixty (60) miles per hour on federal or state highways.
 - b. Forty (40) miles per hour on a county or township highway.
 - c. Twenty-five (25) miles per hour in school zones.
 2. If the posted speed limit is lower than the absolute limits set in this section or if the absolute limits do not apply, the maximum lawful speed of a bus is the posted speed limit.
 3. Any violation of Indiana Code 9-21-5-14 will result in disciplinary actions.
15. Drivers must turn off the engine (except for the pre-trip inspection), remove the keys, put the vehicle in neutral, and engage the emergency brake before leaving the bus at any time.
16. Drivers should consider traffic behind them and, if possible, allow passing at regular intervals.
17. Drivers will always drive in the right lane on multilane roads unless a left turn is needed, at which time the driver will move to the left lane shortly before the turn is required (approximately 1-2 blocks before the turn).
- 18. Drivers will only use the two-way radio for school or transportation issues.**
19. The use of alcoholic beverages and illegal substances while performing a safety sensitive function, such as driving is prohibited. Transportation staff will be randomly tested for drugs and alcohol in accordance with Federal and State laws and FCS policies and procedures.

Failure to cooperate with school officials or their agent(s) will be considered insubordination, and the driver shall be terminated as a driver subject to applicable laws. Drivers or other employees who have a positive controlled substance test result or have an alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater shall be immediately removed from his or her safety-sensitive function and subject to discipline, which may include termination of employment, an unpaid suspension, or administrative leave/paid suspension. Any driver who has a verified positive controlled substances test result, has an alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater, or refuses to submit to a test must also be evaluated by a substance abuse professional. The full policy [D300](#) can be found on the FCS website.

20. Drivers should report to his/her supervisor the use of any prescription or over-the-counter controlled substances that may affect job performance or the safety of others. Refer to policy [D300](#) for additional information.

21. Buses are not for personal use. Drivers may drive the bus to a local area between routes as long as the distance is reasonable from the last drop and the first pick up (no more than two (2) miles).

22. Drivers cannot take buses home without prior authorization from the Director of Transportation.

23. In an emergency, the driver is in charge of the bus and the passengers. It is the driver's responsibility to take charge of the situation, organize the students for their well-being, place warning triangles, administer first aid, send for additional help, ensure the safety of passengers, and take other appropriate actions including, if necessary, the evacuation of the bus in accordance with safety procedures and guidelines.

24. Windows will not be lowered below the halfway point.

25. Windows will not be used as punishment on warm or hot days. Instead, they should be lowered for the passengers' comfort.

26. It is the driver's responsibility to be on time for school and route pick-ups and to check all holiday and emergency time changes for adjustments.

27. It is the responsibility of the driver to prepare themselves, the bus, and their passengers for safe transportation for all trips.

28. If arriving at a stop early, drivers will wait at the stop until the correct bus stop time.

29. Drivers must immediately report any damage to any school corporation vehicle.

30. Drivers are responsible, to the best of their ability, for making sure bus recording devices are working properly at all times.

31. Anytime the bus is in motion, with or without students on board, doors must be closed, headlights must be on, and seat belts must be worn.

32. Drivers will not use the 4-way flashers to stop traffic, allowing other buses to enter the roadway.

33. Drivers must complete a walk-through of the bus, looking for sleeping students or articles left on board, before leaving the bus at any time.

34. The act of “brake checking” is strictly prohibited.

Special Needs General Rules

Special needs drivers/aides will follow the general rules plus the following:

1. Drivers of the special needs buses are in charge and are responsible for the students and the bus at all times. Only the drivers will contact parents. Drivers and aides must work as a team and show a united front to students at all times.

2. The aide should be the only person to open the lift door and operate the lift outside the bus while the driver remains inside the bus, monitoring students and assisting with bringing the wheelchair into the bus. The door to the lift must be secured before operating the wheelchair lift.

3. When operating the lift, wheelchair locks will be used in addition to holding the chair.

4. Full attention must be given to the task of operating the lift and the student.

5. Once the wheelchair is on the bus, the driver will begin securing the wheelchair.

6. After the lift door has been closed and secured, the driver MUST complete the final check of the wheelchair, wheelchair locks, wheelchair safety belts, tie downs, and lap belt. Once completed, the wheelchair should NOT move at ALL!

7. Securing the wheelchair:

- Tie downs attach to the frame, not to components on the chair. Choose points as high as possible but below the seat. Use welded joints or hardened fasteners (hexagon bolts--these can be identified by six (6) raised slashes on the bolt head)
 - Do not cross or twist the tie downs.
 - If the wheelchair reclines, it should not be reclined more than 30 degrees.
 - Less than 200 lbs. – Two (2) tie downs on the rear of the wheelchair, two (2) tie downs on the front of the wheelchair, and a lap belt.
 - More than 200 lbs. (most electric or power chairs) – Four (4) tie downs on the rear of the wheelchair, two (2) tie downs on the front of the chair, and a lap belt.

8. Drivers/aides will not request students be dismissed early from school for any reason.

9. Special needs buses transport students who, for various reasons, are not best served on a general education bus. These students may have unique physical, emotional, or behavioral needs. Staff on these buses must show extra compassion, patience, and understanding to ensure a safe and supportive ride for every student.

10. Drivers and aides must ensure that a responsible adult is visibly present when dropping off a special needs student. If no adult is present, the driver must contact the school immediately for further instructions.

Bus Aide Responsibilities

Bus Aides will:

1. Follow the direction of the driver.
2. Check all students' seat belts, star seat straps, chest clips, and buckles.
 - a. Snug enough to slide your hand between the student and strap, but not loose enough to pinch, chest clips at armpit level.
3. Sit with the students and engage with them in school-appropriate conversation.
4. Learn the bus route and students to assist a sub driver when needed.
5. Ensure their cell phones are put away and out of sight. In an emergency, the aide may use their cell phone to contact the Transportation office.

Student Loading and Unloading

The following process will be used for loading and unloading students at a bus stop:

1. Drivers will display warning lights at least 200 feet, or as appropriate, before stopping to warn approaching traffic of the intention to stop. A driver shall only use an 8-way student light system to load or unload their passengers at a bus stop on the roadway.
2. During a student stop, the driver will cease all radio communication and solely focus on the students loading or leaving the bus.
3. The stop arm signal device will then be extended while the driver checks to ensure that the stop arm is actually extending.
4. When students must cross the road to board the bus, the driver shall control the crossing by checking that all traffic has stopped and signaling to the student(s) when it is safe to cross.
5. The student(s) shall cross in front of the bus at a distance of a minimum of ten (10) feet. The distance shall increase so that the driver can fully see the student's feet.
6. When it is necessary for students leaving the school bus to cross the road, they must keep to the right of the bus and cross in front of the bus when signaled by the driver. The driver will not move the bus until all students have safely crossed the road. This applies to single lane roads. On multiple lane roads, the driver must adjust the route to release students on the right (door) side of the bus and wait until students are a safe distance from the traveled lane before moving. The driver shall then work with the Routing Team to adjust the stop to permanently set it as a door side drop-off.
7. The stop arm shall stay extended until all students have boarded the bus and all students are properly seated.
8. After all students have boarded the bus and are properly seated, the stop arm shall be retracted, the emergency air brake will be deactivated, and the transmission shall be placed into drive. The bus shall not be moved until all mirrors are rechecked to ensure it is safe for the bus to proceed.
9. Once the student stop is completed, the driver can resume any radio communication.

10. Drivers will make a student stop at all AM stops regardless of whether they see a student present. The stop will be made with red lights, and the stop arm will be deployed. Drivers will look for students approaching the bus before leaving. If students consistently do not show up at a specific stop, talk with the Routing Team to have the stop removed.

11. If a student cannot get inside the house, or a parent is not at the stop, the driver will continue with the route and **call in to school after the stop is completed**. The driver will either:

- a. Circle back around to the stop when able.
- b. Take the student back to school.

12. No bus shall pass a bus that is loading or unloading at any time.

Seat Belts

If your bus is equipped with seat belts, all passengers are required to wear them according to school policy. As the driver, it is your responsibility to enforce this rule. Failing to do so compromises safety and makes it more difficult for your fellow drivers. Consistent seat belt use has been shown to reduce student behavior issues, making the ride safer and less distracting for everyone. (See Discipline section.) All Preschool-6th students will wear seat belts on buses equipped with them.

Backing a Bus

1. Backing should only be done when no other option is available.
2. Some routes have pre-approved back-ups or turn-arounds built into them. These can be near a student stop area. When this is the case, the following protocol should be adhered to:
 - Morning loading – Pick up students, then back up and turn around.
 - Afternoon unloading – Back up to turn around first, and then unload.
3. Backing a bus on school property is forbidden without another person observing the rear of the bus.

You must never back a school bus when students are outside the bus.

Fueling Buses

- Obtain fuel at the Corporation fuel pumps
- Each bus has its own designated key fob for fueling purposes.
- Keep a minimum of ½ tank of fuel. This includes spare buses as well.
- Never fuel a bus with students on board.
- Report any fuel spills to Transportation.

Railroad Crossings

Prior to coming to a railroad track, a bus driver should have discussed the matter of railroad tracks and the seriousness of students staying quiet while the bus driver is assessing whether to cross them. The railroad crossing represents one of the greatest hazards to a school bus and could conceivably cause a mass casualty situation.

The following is the district policy and procedure for crossing a railroad with or without students:

1. Approximately 200 ft before the rail crossing, activate hazard lights.
2. Deactivate all noise, either by using the “Noise” switch or manually switching off all heaters, fans, radio, etc.
3. If on a multiple lane road, the bus must be in the farthest right lane (required by law).
4. Come to a complete stop before the crossing gate or solid white stop line (whichever comes first) and no closer than 15 feet to the nearest tracks.
5. Open the driver's window and the passenger entry door.
6. Look and listen.... Look and listen again!
7. Close the passenger entry door.
8. Look and listen again before proceeding safely and quickly across.
9. After completely crossing the tracks, close the driver's window, deactivate the hazard lights & reactivate the sound if needed.

If the railroad crossing arms are down or lights are on, a school bus may not cross unless a law enforcement agent, an employee of the railroad company, or a school employee directs the bus to cross. Otherwise, the bus must remain at the crossing.

Damage to the Bus

Any damage to a bus must be reported to the Director of Transportation immediately. In the event of an accident, the vehicle will not be moved until authorized by a law enforcement officer.

Geographic Specific Rules

- Shall not cross traffic on U.S. 31 between Commerce Drive and Nineveh Road. Only right turns are allowed unless at a stoplight. Drivers shall use alternative routing except when assisted by a police officer or at a stoplight. See Transportation Director if you have any questions.

Internet and Social Media

All transportation employees are representatives of FCS, both on and off the job. Inappropriate or negative posts about students, parents, co-workers, supervisors, or FCS on social media may result in disciplinary action, including termination. To protect yourself and maintain professionalism, please follow these guidelines:

1. Do not post pictures of students.
2. Do not share any information about your route — including times, stops, or directions — as this is a safety and security concern.
3. Never connect with or “friend” students on social media.
4. Avoid interacting with negative posts about FCS, students, parents, co-workers, or supervisors — including commenting, liking, or reacting with emojis.
5. Refer to the FCS Responsible Use of Technology and Internet Use Policy [A300](#)

If you have any questions, contact the Director of Transportation.

Two-Way Radio

Bus radios are to be used for necessary communications only. Before using, keep in mind the following requirements:

1. Schools are to be referred to by the school name.
2. Radios are not for personal use, disagreements, or funny comments.
3. Radio use must be limited to necessary communication only. Do not communicate items that can wait until after route time and can be discussed in person.
4. The following items should NOT be communicated over the radio:
 - a. Tree limbs that need cutting
 - b. Sensitive student information (i.e. student family members in the hospital, medical conditions of students or their family members)
 - c. Angry or condescending remarks about another driver's mistake.
5. All radio communications MUST be pleasant and friendly, regardless of the situation.
6. Before using the radio, always think about what you need to communicate. Keep the following in mind:
 - a. **Listen first.** Others may already be talking. Interrupting can delay communication for everyone.
 - b. **Maintain professionalism and confidentiality.** All school radios are two-way and can be heard by others. Speak respectfully and follow the FCS Code of Conduct.
 - c. **Be clear and brief.** Keep your messages concise and complete to ensure effective communication.
7. Radio use process:
 - a. Key the microphone for a second or two prior to speaking.
 - b. Announce your assigned bus number, followed by who you are calling (e.g., 96 to Northwood).
 - o If you are on a field trip, then use the number of the bus you are driving
 - o If you are a user who is not a bus driver, you would use your designated reference to identify yourself (i.e., 17 to 96)
 - c. Once someone has begun a conversation, all other users shall not use the radio until that conversation is completed. The only exception shall be in an emergency requiring immediate attention.
 - d. When the entire conversation has been completed, the user who started the the conversation shall terminate the radio call by announcing their designation and saying "clear." This lets all users know the channel is now open for other users to communicate.

Radio Designations

The following designations are to be used when communicating on the transportation radio:

Schools – Name of School (no numbers)

Route Bus Drivers – Assigned Bus (Route) Number (even if driving a spare bus)

Field Trip Drivers – Number of Bus Being Driven

Transportation Staff:

Joe Hougland - #11

Traci Cox - #12

Chanze Arthur - #14

Billy Arthur - #15

Patty Kinney - #16

Lindsay Bales - #17

Cell Phones

- Cell phones may be carried with you on the bus; however, they should be put away so as not to distract you while operating the bus or performing your duties as a bus aide.
- All hands-free devices must be removed and cannot be worn while driving or with students. You may use your cell phone if your bus is empty and parked in a safe location.
- Cell phones or any other electronic messaging device used in any capacity with students on the bus are prohibited. If an aide is on the bus, the aide may use a cell phone only in an emergency to contact the Transportation office.
- TEXTING WHILE DRIVING IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED!
- There may be a time when dispatch will ask you to call when you have a moment. If this is requested of you during your route, find a safe and secure location to stop and park your bus before you make the call. DO NOT CALL WHILE DRIVING!

Dress Code

Drivers and aides should wear appropriate attire year-round to support health, safety, and a positive public image. Please follow the dress code below:

1. Dress professionally. Your appearance should reflect maturity and authority. Shorts and skirts must be fingertip length or longer. Short shorts or short skirts are not allowed.
2. Tops must cover the midsection. No bare midriffs, tank tops, halter tops, or spaghetti straps.
3. **Wear secure footwear. Shoes must have back straps. Flip-flops and strapless sandals are not permitted.**
4. Avoid inappropriate messages. Clothing may not display references to tobacco, alcohol, sex, or any offensive content.
5. Undergarments are required at all times during work hours.

Smoking

The School Board prohibits using tobacco in any form and using e-cigarettes or “vaping” in any building owned or leased by the School Corporation, on Corporation property (this includes inside of a personal vehicle on Corporation property), or in Corporation owned or operated vehicles. Refer to Policy [A250](#)

Medical

CDL Physical

Physicals are performed at Auton Chiropractic, which is registered with the FMCSA to administer CDL physicals in Indiana. If performed by an FCS-approved physician, the school corporation covers pre-employment and concurrent CDL physical costs while the employee is employed and actively working at FCS.

Return to Duty

Any driver with a medical condition or injury that would prevent the driver from driving a school bus must have written documentation from an Indiana licensed physician that would clear the driver to drive a school bus before being allowed to return to duty. This would include any medical situation that occurs and is resolved while not on duty status (e.g. summer break). It is the driver's responsibility to inform the Director of Transportation of any medical situation that prevents the driver from driving and to contact Human Resources to discuss potential FMLA leave (if applicable).

CDL Licensing

CDL License

The cost of the CDL license and/or any part thereof to maintain the school bus endorsement and certification is the responsibility of the driver and is not reimbursed by the corporation.

Skills Test

The cost of the required skills test to obtain a CDL license is the trainee's responsibility.

Paid Training

While training is unpaid, the sign-on bonus is designed to help offset the cost of obtaining your CDL and the time you invest in training. This bonus reflects our commitment to supporting new drivers as they begin their careers with us.

Sign On Bonus

A sign-on bonus of \$500 will be paid to any Indiana licensed school bus driver who becomes employed by FCS. A \$500 sign on bonus will also be paid to any FCS trained, newly licensed school bus driver. In both instances, the bonus will be paid after 30 days of actual driving.

Attendance

Transportation is an integral part of the school system and attendance is crucial to the efficient operation of the department and the district. Most importantly, our students and parents depend on our timely service. We recognize that some absences cannot be avoided; however, every attempt should be made to make appointments, doctor and otherwise, during non-driving hours.

1. It is your responsibility to know how much time off you have. See the director or secretary if you have any questions regarding your time off.

2. All Transportation personnel MUST contact the Director **and** Assistant Director anytime he/she will be absent. Employees are expected to call in their own absences.
 - a. Morning absences must be called into the director/assistant director up to 9:00 pm the night before or as early as 5:00 – 5:45 am the day of. Please refrain from calling or texting after 9:00 pm or before 5:00 am. BE SURE YOU GET A RESPONSE FROM THE DIRECTOR/ASSISTANT DIRECTOR IN ANY CASE.
 - b. Afternoon absences must be called in NO LATER than 12 pm.

Personal Days

Personal days are to be used for unforeseen obligations and situations not covered by sick leave or bereavement leave.

- Each FT person is given two (2) personal days each year. PT is awarded 1 day.
- Personal days not used will roll into sick days.
- All personal days must be pre-approved.
- Personal leave may not be requested the day before or following a school holiday, without special permission from the Director of Transportation.

Sick Days

Employees may use sick days for the following purposes: personal illness, doctor/dental appointments, and illness in the immediate family. (Immediate family will be defined as husband, wife, son, daughter, mother, father, or a relative living in the home).

- Full time drivers and aides receive 7 sick days per year. Part time receives 3.5 days per year.
- Sick days are not vacation days. The corporation affords these days to employees so financial hardships can be avoided should an unforeseen medical situation arise that keeps them from physically working.
- Sick and personal days are prorated for new employees once the 60-day probationary period is complete.
- You must present a doctor's note before returning to work after three consecutive days off.
- Sick days will accumulate from year to year. See the Support Staff Handbook for additional information.

eLearning Days for Contracted Employees

The following will be observed on eLearning days.

1. If the eLearning Day is *unscheduled* and therefore paid as part of the driver's contract, that day must be addressed before the next pay date. You may choose to use a personal day, take a day without pay (dock day) if you do not have a personal day available, or submit a plan to make up the hours prior to the next payroll date.
2. If no action is taken prior to the payroll deadline for the next pay, a personal day (or dock day if no personal days are available) will automatically be submitted. A sick day submitted on an eLearning Day will require a doctor's note.

3. If an eLearning Day only affects some schools, your services may still be needed on another route. **Always check with the Transportation Director before making any alternative plans.**
4. If a corporation-wide eLearning Day is already planned for on the school calendar, the driver's contract will reflect that, and no make-up will be needed.

Children of Transportation Staff

With prior approval from the Transportation Director, transportation department employees may bring their school-age children to the Transportation Center in the morning to wait for their school bus to depart. This option is intended as a convenience when no other arrangements are available. Students must remain in the designated area, behave respectfully, and avoid disrupting operations. Any behavior that interferes with the functioning of the Transportation Department may result in this privilege being revoked.

Procedure for Taking Time Off

All time off must be requested and approved **in advance** by the Transportation Director or Assistant Director using the following process.

1. Submit a Time Off Request Form. Do **not** enter time off in Skyward until the form has been submitted *and* approved.
2. Once you receive the approved Time Off Request Form, please enter a Time Off Request in Skyward Employee Access. Directions for how to do this can be found [here](#).
3. Make certain all route sheets are up to date for your sub driver.
4. Leadership days need to be used by December 31st.

Annual Evaluations

At least once a year, your supervisor will review with you a written evaluation of your performance. If you are a new employee, your supervisor may review your progress more often. You will receive a copy of your written evaluation, and the original will be forwarded to Human Resources and placed in your personnel file. Employees may be eligible for a wage increase and other incentives based on their performance evaluation.

Seniority Date

Seniority is established when a driver signs a contract for a route with FCS. The Transportation Department uses seniority to determine route assignments when openings occur. If a driver resigns and later returns to FCS, they will be placed at the bottom of the seniority list, regardless of the length of time between resignation and rehire.

Obtaining a Route

While seniority is a factor in route selection, it does not guarantee assignment to a contracted route. The Director also considers an employee's overall performance and conduct. Key qualities include:

- Safe driving practices
- Effective student management
- Positive working relationships with coworkers
- Consistent adherence to rules and regulations
- Professionalism
- Good judgment and independent thinking
- Confidence and reliability

FILLING A VACANT BONA FIDE POSITION

Drivers who wish to be considered for a bona fide position must meet specific expectations. To qualify, you must regularly work 30+ hours per week and be willing to accept additional trip assignments, including day, night, and weekend trips. While you are not expected to take every trip, frequent refusals may disqualify you from being considered for or remaining in a bona fide position.

Only bona fide drivers can apply for medical insurance through FCS, though enrollment is not mandatory.

Requirements for Bona Fide Consideration:

- a.) You must be a full-time driver.
- b.) Selection is based on order of request—first come, first served. The Transportation Director maintains a list of interested drivers. To be added, submit a written request expressing your interest. You may check your position on the bona fide interest list anytime by contacting the Transportation Director.
- c.) Attendance, punctuality, and dependability are key factors in the selection process.
- d.) You must demonstrate consistent availability to meet the extra time requirements.
- e.) A positive, current employee evaluation is required.

Hiring Procedures for Summer School Bus Drivers

The seniority of summer school bus drivers will be separate and independent of regular school-year drivers. Seniority is defined as “continuous” driving of summer school sessions annually. Seniority will be considered continuous if a driver is not needed in a given year but is needed at a future time.

- a.) Routes will be assigned each summer to drivers with the most summer school seniority.
- b.) If there are additional vacancies, they will be filled in accordance with seniority among regular school year drivers who desire a summer route.
- c.) If no regular school year drivers desire the vacant summer route, it will be offered to the substitute driver who desires a summer route.
- d.) If no regular school year driver or substitute driver desires the vacant summer school route, then other qualified applicants will be considered.

In any and all situations not explicitly covered in this policy, the decision regarding the placement of drivers shall be the responsibility of the Transportation Director.

Bus Driver Contracts

Driver contracts are entered into in good faith, with the expectation that the driver can meet the contract requirements for the full school year. Contracts are posted electronically in each driver's Skyward account and must be signed promptly. Paper copies are not provided but may be printed by the employee if desired.

Contracted drivers are paid over twenty-six (26) pay periods per year (every two weeks).

Important Notes:

- If a driver cannot meet the terms of the contract, they will be reclassified as a non-contracted hourly employee, and pay will not continue through the summer.
- Accumulating enough absences to result in dock (unpaid) status is considered a breach of contract. This may result in losing both the contract and bona fide driver status.
 - Exceptions may apply if the driver is covered under FMLA, as arranged through Human Resources.

Part-Time Driver Contracts

A part-time driver is a driver who drives only in the morning or afternoon. Part-time drivers do not receive insurance benefits.

Timeclock and Timesheets

All transportation staff utilize Skyward to clock in/out and submit their timesheets. Skyward is offered both as a smartphone app and a wall-mounted unit at the transportation building. You are given 15 minutes prior to your route to clock in. Other instances that may require you to clock in early would be to fuel or clean your bus. If you have any questions, see the Transportation Director.

Trips

A trip is any run other than your route, except those listed under the midday section below. Trips include school field trips, athletic trips, choir and band trips, and others. They can also consist of more than one group of students and more than one location. The pay for trips is \$15.00 an hour and will pay for a minimum of two (2) hours. If any trip took less than two hours, you would be paid for at least two hours; however, you should be prepared to work the entire two hours if needed.

We try to utilize our newer buses for trips when possible due to warranty coverage, which helps prevent costly breakdowns and saves on repair expenses. Drivers should comply with the bus assignments for their trips, and only change buses with the approval of the Director/Assistant Director or appropriate office staff. If you use another bus for any purpose, be sure to clean up that bus and refuel it as a courtesy to your fellow drivers.

Field Trips – General

1. The Transportation Department will assign buses for field trips.
2. If two or more buses go on a field trip, they must travel together unless going to different locations.
3. Field trip pay must be submitted during the pay period in which the trip was taken, following the same submission schedule as regular route pay.
4. Upon return from a field trip, the driver must ensure the bus is cleaned, fueled, and properly secured and parked. Any discrepancies or mechanical problems should be reported and bus block heaters should be plugged in if the temperature dictates.
5. Any exceptions to these policies and procedures must have the written approval of the Director of Transportation.

Driver Responsibilities

- a. Pre/post trip inspection of the bus.
- b. As needed, inform the students and sponsor of their responsibilities (bus and safety rules apply).
- c. Provide/exchange cell phone numbers with sponsors.
- d. The bus driver's responsibility is to drive the bus to and from the trip safely and ensure the safety of all passengers.
- e. The driver may assist in loading/unloading the bus. The driver must ensure all cargo doors are secured after loading.
- f. Pickup and drop off at the designated area.
- g. Drivers should be close to the bus during loading and unloading or when passengers are on board.
- h. On arrival at the designated area, everyone must exit the bus. The bus driver is the last one off the bus.
 - Verify that all passengers have exited and that the bus is empty before leaving the bus.

Sponsor Responsibilities

- a. The sponsor should ensure appropriate conduct of all students and chaperones while on the bus and at the event.
 - Sponsors will inform chaperones to spread out while on the bus.
- b. No one can return to the bus without sponsor permission and accompanied by a chaperone.
- c. Ensure everyone exits the bus on arrival at all destinations.
- d. Conduct a head count before departure of a trip, before departure at any stop during the trip, and upon return of a trip.
- e. Lead sponsor shall check the cleanliness and condition of the bus upon completion of the trip.

OVERNIGHT AND LONG DAY TRIPS:

Overnight Trips: Unless specified in a trip request, a driver:

- a. Will have overnight lodging paid by the school, club, or organization scheduling the trip.
- b. Will be paid for the time that they are on duty. Once you are back at your hotel in the evening you are to clock out. Clock back in when you are needed the next morning unless an unexpected issue where your services are required during the night.
- c. Will be expected to be available as needed by the trip sponsor/coach. This means providing the sponsor/coach with a phone number where the driver can be reached.
- d. Will abide by the DOE recommendation of 15 hours max on duty.
- e. Will abide by the DOE recommendation of 10 hours driving limit.
- f. Will not be expected to drive between midnight and 5 AM unless an emergency occurs.

Long Day Trips:

- a. Drivers will be expected to remain with the bus unless otherwise specified in the trip ticket.
- b. Drivers will be paid for the time that they are on the bus and at the trip destination. If they leave the area, they must provide the sponsor/coach with a phone number where the driver can be reached.
- c. Will abide by the DOE recommendation of 15 hours max on duty.
- d. Will abide by the DOE recommendation of 10 hours driving limit.
- e. Will not be expected to drive between midnight and 5 AM unless an emergency occurs.

Field Trip Assignment:

The goal is to give drivers a choice of trips they receive with as much forewarning as possible and to minimize the number of trips turned back in (unless sickness or an emergency).

- If a driver, bonafide or not, has a child or grandchild who is a part of that particular field trip or sport, they get the first option to take that trip. This must be requested, on paper, at the back to school meeting. If this request is for a sport, a non-bona fide driver must still remain under 30 hours per week.
- The assignment process is as follows:
 - Periodically, available trips will be placed in the bona fide drivers' mailboxes. This could be once a week or once a month, depending on the number of trips available.

- o Bona fide drivers then number the trips in order of preference (1 thru ?)
- o Requests must be turned back in no later than the end of the following day.
- o Bona fide drivers will be awarded trips based on seniority. We will go down the seniority list until all trips are taken.
- o If the trip is a sport, and there are 5 trips, that driver will be skipped for the next 5 rotations on the list.
- o If there is a late entered trip or a trip becomes available due to a driver canceling due to illness or emergency, we will go back to where we left off on the list and the trip will be offered to the next driver
- o Weekly hours across the pool of bona fide drivers must be relatively equal. If needed, the director or assistant director may assist with scheduling and/or make adjustments to trip assignments to help balance hours

Mid-days

A midday consists of preschool and/ or students who have different arrival/dismissal times throughout the day as part of their normal school day. Multiple students and locations can constitute one (1) midday if they are within the same hour. The pay for mid-days is a minimum of one (1) hour and is paid at the driver's or bus aide's hourly wage. This would mean that if a mid-day run takes less than one hour, you would be paid for one hour, regardless; however, you should be prepared to work the entire hour. Every effort will be made by office staff to be as efficient as possible and be a good steward of taxpayer dollars by utilizing the least number of drivers and buses during the course of the day.

Routes and Route Assignments

All drivers must drive the routes as designed/approved by the Director/Assistant Director of Transportation and the school board. The driver can modify the route for efficiency with approval from the Routing Team. The transportation office must update these changes in the computer system. If a route is changed such that the pick up or drop off time is greater than five (5) minutes from the schedule, a call will be made notifying parents of the change.-Unauthorized stops are strictly forbidden. An unauthorized stop is defined as a permanent stop that is not in the computer routing system. Drivers cannot create new stops without authorization from the Routing Team. Drivers will make a student stop at all AM stops, regardless of whether they see a student present or not. The stop will be made with red lights, and the stop arm will be deployed. Drivers will look for students approaching the bus before leaving. Drivers CANNOT change route direction and/or route pick-up times without the approval from the Director of Transportation.

Open Route Selections

Any bus route that becomes vacant during the school year or before the start of the school year is considered an open route.

When a route becomes open, it will be posted for three (3) working days. The route will be posted via social media and driver e-mail and will allow any driver to view the posting. Any regular or substitute driver interested in applying for the open route may do so in writing and must do so by the indicated deadline. Open routes can be filled anytime during the school year.

Student Roster

Drivers will be provided a roster at the start of the school year. Drivers should update the roster by hand (adding any new students and crossing out students who do not ride). The roster will need to be turned in by the end of August. When the roster is set, each driver can be given attendance sheets for their routes. It is important that we always know who is on our buses. Drivers need to keep an accurate and up-to-date roster of students on their buses at all times. In the event of an accident, a driver is required to know who was on their bus and where they were seated.

Driver Responsibilities with Any Assigned Buses

When a bus is assigned to you, you are responsible for its proper upkeep, cleanliness, and reporting any defects the bus may have.

Daily Responsibilities

1. Properly adjust mirrors
2. Make certain you have at least ½ tank of fuel before leaving for a route
3. Dash and windows are clear of any items
4. All heaters are cleared of obstructions
5. Do a proper pre-trip and post-trip check
6. Route map is current and a copy is always left on the bus
 - Remove any outdated copies
7. Windows and roof hatches are closed at the end of the day
8. Trash receptacle is emptied if needed
9. Service Door is secured when leaving
10. Keys should be on the board when bus is not in use

Weekly or As Needed Responsibilities

1. Sweep the bus and wipe down the dash area
2. Wash the bus
3. Remove trash from between seats
4. Remove any gum from floor

5. Mop floor as needed
6. Check oil and antifreeze

End of School Year Responsibilities

Before the bus can be signed off and turned back in, the following must be done before and/or on the last school day.

1. Remove all non-essential bus items and personal items.
2. Return any unused items such as paper towel, tissues, aerosols, disposable chucks, etc. to the building.
3. Empty trash can.
4. Put any student information into a shred container.
5. Bus fueled to at least ½ tank.
6. All name tags must be removed from bulkheads
7. Clean out your mailbox.

Employee Discipline

Employee discipline is a confidential matter between the employee and the Transportation Director. It is not open for discussion with anyone outside those directly involved.

Employee Conflicts

If you have a concern or conflict with a fellow employee that cannot be resolved through direct conversation, submit the issue in writing to the Transportation Director. This allows for a proper and respectful resolution process. Discussing this information with others is not an appropriate or productive way to address concerns.

Bus Assignments and New Buses

- All buses will be assigned to a route based on the needs of the corporation.
- If a driver is removed from a route or gives up his/her route, the bus will remain with the route it is assigned unless the Transportation Director approves otherwise. This procedure has been put into place to reduce the confusion for students, parents, and schools.
- New buses will replace the oldest buses with the highest mileage or in poor shape.
- The Transportation Director may rotate the bus fleet or several buses in the fleet, as needed, to maintain equal and balanced mileage.
- Drivers who do not drive field trips may have their assigned bus used for trips by another driver.

Accidents

In the event of an accident, the driver shall first be responsible to the passengers. It is therefore very important to remain calm.

Follow the procedures listed below:

1. Activate warning flashers and set the parking brake. DO NOT MOVE THE VEHICLE UNLESS YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO RELOCATE BY SCHOOL OFFICIALS, LAW ENFORCEMENT, OR FIRE, OR UNLESS MOVING THE VEHICLE IS THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID ADDITIONAL HARM (blind hill, curve, etc.).
2. Immediately radio dispatch with the following information so they can notify necessary authorities and administrators.
 - a. Location of the bus
 - b. Immediate situation
 - c. Any student injuries.
 - d. If another bus is needed
3. If you are able to render basic first-aid to stop bleeding, restore breathing, and protect against shock, do so.
4. There should be a blank seating chart in your crash packet on each bus. When safe to do so, began filling out the seating chart with where any students were seated at the time of the accident.
5. A driver is not to exit the bus unless there are no students onboard. Under no circumstances shall students leave the bus unless safety has warranted evacuation. Even then, students must remain with the scene until authorized to leave by emergency personnel.
6. Be alert for the possibility of fire.
7. If safety warrants, use the three (3) reflective triangle warning devices located in the red box on each bus (secure bus and remove the key if students are on board)
 - a. Reflector Placement:
 1. Place one reflector at the side of the bus on the roadway side – safe distance from bus and oncoming traffic.
 2. Place a second reflector approximately 40 paces or 120 ft. to the rear of the bus.Placement distance should be greater if the bus is on a hill or curve. Not to exceed three hundred feet.
 3. Place the third reflector 40 paces or 100 ft. to the front of the bus, again using greater distances if visibility is limited due to a hill or curve.
8. Do not discuss the facts of the accident with other motorists, witnesses, or others present at the scene; however, answer questions from investigating officers and school officials. Exhibit patience, evaluate questions, and issue clear and concise answers.
9. In case of an emergency, whereby the driver cannot speak, students should follow the driver's previous instructions regarding how to contact the Transportation Center.
10. The driver must complete an accident report with the Director of Transportation including all pertinent information regarding the accident before the end of current shift.

Bus Evacuation Drills

- Bus evacuation drills will be conducted twice annually in the school parking lots.
- All students will exit emergency doors during bus evacuation drills.
- Drivers are completely responsible for the proper conduct of bus evacuation drills.

As per the Indiana Code 575 IAC 1-10-2 Bus evacuation drills Sec. 2.

(a) A school bus driver operating a school bus shall at least once a semester conduct a school bus passenger evacuation drill.

(b) All school bus passenger evacuation drills shall meet the following minimum standards:

(1) Be completed in two (2) minutes or less.

(2) Be conducted within forty-five (45) school days of the beginning date of each semester.

(3) Use only emergency exit doors or the service door for the passenger evacuation drill.

(4) Drivers must be present at all passenger evacuation drills.

(c) At the completion of each school year, the bus passenger evacuation drills for each School Corporation or private school shall have included the following:

(1) The use of all emergency exit doors and the service door.

(2) One (1) drill with the school bus driver not directing the passenger evacuation drill.

(3) Each student receives appropriate instruction for the passenger evacuation drill.

(d) Documentation of the bus passenger evacuation drill shall be reported to the designated school corporation or private school representative.

(e) Documentation of the bus passenger evacuation drill for each School Corporation or private school shall be reported to the department of education by June 30 of each year.

(f) Any student exempted from physical participation in a passenger evacuation drill shall have documentation on file at the school

Bus Evacuation Drill Procedures

At the start of each school year all drivers shall instruct and assign at least 5 students to assist in emergencies, proper use of the 2-way radio, and evacuation drills.

Evacuation Drills shall be conducted as follows:

A. The Bus Driver:

- Apply the emergency brake.
- Turn off ignition; turn on 4-way flashers.
- Put in neutral
- Discuss why drills are necessary and that during actual an emergency that splitting the load could use doors, windows, or roof hatches.
- Show riders where to find the fire extinguishers and first-aid kit.
- Instruct responsible students how to use the 2-way radio, in case of a real emergency.

- Show riders how to open the rear door.
- Signal helpers to open rear door; and
- Supervise and assist in the exit of the riders.

B. During Drill:

- Go to the rear or side of the school bus and open the door.
- Use your helpers selected to stand with their back to the door.
- Instruct students to leave the bus.
- Assist students in exiting from the bus
- Do not re-enter the bus until ALL students have exited the rear of the bus.
- Re-enter only when instructed to do so.

Instruction for helpers in the event of the driver's injury is required. The following are the instructions for helper training:

- If the FRONT ENTRANCE DOOR can be used, one of the two optional helpers will open the door, while the second helper assists the student off the bus at least 100 feet away from the front of the bus, away and off the traveled portion of the roadway, remaining there until assistance arrives. Depending on the vehicles involved, the nature of the accident may require a greater distance than 100 feet.
- If the REAR EMERGENCY DOOR is the only door in use, the helpers will open the door. One will remain to assist the passengers from the bus; the other will lead the students off the bus and at least 100 feet away from the rear of the bus and off the roadway, and remain there until assistance arrives. Under no circumstances should the helpers act without the driver's consent unless the driver is physically unable to give instructions. The helpers are expected to aid other students and should be trained to use caution in carrying out their duties.

C. Orthopedically Handicapped Children Evacuation

Where orthopedically handicapped children are transported in the special needs bus, the procedures to follow are:

- Ambulatory students should exit under their own power to the most accessible open door.
- The driver and attendant should open doors that can be opened and carry or lift out the non-ambulatory students as fast as possible.

D. School Buses with Hydraulic Lift

- Ambulatory students should exit under their own power to the most accessible open door.
- The driver's assistant should open all doors capable of being opened, lower the lift, and assist the driver in carrying or lifting the non-ambulatory students to safety as soon as possible.

- Children in wheelchairs should be lowered on ramps placed at the side door, when possible. If the lift is damaged, students may be lifted with the fire blanket located at the rear of the bus by the emergency door.

Severe Weather Procedures

- If severe weather threatens at school dismissal time, retaining students in safe areas at school or other nearby buildings until the threat has diminished will be considered.
- Investigate and become familiar with all roads adjoining regular routes in the event of a need for alternate travel or shelter locations. Drivers **MUST KNOW** what action to take if severe weather strikes at any point on their route.
- Determine any buildings, homes with basements, ditches, hills, culverts, or other places along routes where students might be evacuated and provided safety.
- Discuss with students the procedures you expect to be followed under tornado emergencies.
- NEVER try to outrun a tornado. No one can predict the path, and tornadoes can skip from one area to another.
- If a school bus is caught in the open when a tornado is approaching, the children should be evacuated from the bus and escorted to a nearby ditch, ravine, building, home basement, or place that might provide more protection than the bus. If using a ditch or ravine, make sure there is no water in the selected ditch or ravine. Students should be made to lie face down, with their hands overhead. Students should be far enough away so the bus will not topple on them.
- Remember - thunderstorms have many elements. Heavy rains can cause flash floods. Never attempt to drive through high water areas and remember that strong winds and hail can be dangerous.
- Attempt to listen to a radio for an “all clear” before leaving a sheltered area.
- Check for injuries and seek medical first aid, if necessary.
- After the emergency, be extremely cautious and alert for weakened structures, trees, downed power lines, and other storm damage that may impede travel or constitute a hazard for students.

Equipment and Supplies

First Aid Kits—Any time an item is removed from one of the packages in the First Aid Kit, the entire package must be replaced. An extra supply of frequently used items (band-aids, disinfectant wipes, etc.) should be kept on the bus to alleviate the unnecessary use of first aid items.

Any driver needing supplies for the bus shall request those supplies from the office or maintenance personnel if the supplies in question are not part of the consumable supplies readily available to all drivers (tissues, window cleaning fluid, graffiti remover, etc.).

Pre–Trip Inspection (Should take 15-20 mins)

All drivers are expected to perform the appropriate pre-trip inspection prior to beginning the morning, or the afternoon if you are only driving for the afternoon. All drivers are to start their own buses, as performing this function is an important part of evaluating the vehicle's mechanical condition. All malfunctions/damage are to be reported as soon as possible to the mechanics on the appropriate form. Unsafe conditions that would render the bus unfit for transporting students must be reported and corrected before starting student pick-up; if the problem cannot be corrected in time a spare bus will be used.

Conduct the following walk around inspection daily prior to the first route or trip of the day:

- Check all lights inside and outside.
- Check that windows are clean inside and outside.
- Check all seats for cuts/damage. Ensure that all seats are securely fastened.
- Check windshield wipers.
- Check the horn.
- Adjust the mirrors as appropriate.
- Check the stop arm.
- Check brakes.
- Check heaters.
- Check defrosters.
- Check for tire wear/damage.
- Check that storage compartment doors are securely fastened.
- Check for all safety equipment
- Check all emergency exits.
- Make sure the two-way radio is on and that the volume level is appropriate.

Note: Anytime there is a break of more than two (2) hours between routes or trips and a daily pre-trip has already been done, the following items shall be checked at a minimum prior to the next route or trip.

- All emergency exits
- All exterior lights to include stop arm system
- All emergency equipment
- All tires
- Air Brake

Out of Service Items

The following list of items means that a bus cannot be driven to pick up or drop off students on a route if that item is not functioning properly. With the exception of the stop arm, all other items mean a bus cannot be driven with students on it.

Exterior:

- Stop Arm

- If any total light is not working
- If any light does not strobe
- If stop arm doesn't extend or retract by itself
- Both headlights not working
- All brake lights must be working
- All turn signals must be working
- Any cracked or broken glass
- Air pressure issues
- Missing fuel cap
- Mirrors that cannot be adjusted properly
- Grease leaking on the tires
- Any lug nut missing
- Any windshield wiper not working

Interior:

- Emergency buzzers
- Jump seat operates improperly
- Passenger door will not open or close properly
- Emergency doors or windows will not open or close properly
- Roof hatch handle missing
- Passenger entrance handle loose or missing
- Floor trim sticking up
- Any heater leaks in the interior
- Exhaust fumes
- Seats not attached to the floor
- Driver's seat belt
 - Doesn't extend
 - Doesn't retract
 - Doesn't latch
 - Torn or frayed

Post Trip

All drivers are required to conduct a post trip inspection when your route or school activity trip is finished.

Conduct the following inspection, looking for the following:

- Sleeping students
- Articles left on the bus
- Damage or vandalism.
- Close all open windows and roof hatch.
- Mechanical/operational problems with the bus, with special attention to items unique to school buses: mirror systems, flashing warning lamps, and stop signal arms.

Any problems or special situations should be reported immediately to your supervisor or school authorities.

Bus Idling

Bus warm-up:

1. 50+ degrees: No idling time
2. 40-49 degrees: 10 minutes idling time
3. 30-39 degrees: 15 minutes idling time
4. 20-29 degrees: 20 minutes idling time
5. Below 20 degrees: Up to 30 minutes idling time or until front windows are defrosted and all safety equipment is operable.

Loading/Unloading at Schools:

All drivers arriving at schools to load or unload students who are going to remain at the school will turn off their engines and leave them off until the buses are ready to depart. When students and/or administrators are in the bus lot, bus engines should be turned off and not started again until the bus has been released. This also applies to field trips and arrival and departure from those locations.

Auxiliary Equipment and/or Extreme Temperatures:

When extreme temperatures require the idling of the bus to maintain a reasonable level of comfort inside the bus, the above sections may not apply. It is the driver's responsibility to use reasonable judgment in extreme temperature situations with an emphasis on fuel conservation. This section also applies to auxiliary equipment (i.e., lift equipment for loading and unloading students with disabilities). It is the driver's responsibility to maintain the temperature of the bus with lift equipment at an appropriate temperature for the needs of the students on the bus. However, limiting extended idling times is still encouraged.

Student Expectations

Students must follow all rules set forth in their respective school's handbook while riding the bus.

- Students must remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- Students are to refrain from extending arms, other parts of the body, or any objects out/through the bus window.
- Students must be able to hold all their belongings on their lap.
- While waiting for the bus, students shall stand back away from the road until the bus is completely stopped and the driver has opened the entry door. When students must wait on the opposite side of the road, they shall wait until the bus

stops and the driver checks both the oncoming and following traffic. The driver will signal before students cross the road.

- Students must avoid pushing, crowding, and shoving when entering or departing the bus.
- Students are to refrain from loud, boisterous talking or laughing, talking to the driver while the bus is in motion, using profane language, and engaging in indecent conduct.
- Students shall have assigned seats on regular routes designated by the bus driver.
- Students must be at their designated bus stop at least five (5) minutes before the designated bus stop time. Should a driver not see students at or approaching the stop area, he/she will make the stop anyway and then continue on the route after waiting an appropriate time.
- Students should help keep the bus clean, sanitary, and orderly.
- No food, gum/candy, or drink shall be consumed by the student on the bus.

Managing students is essential to providing a safe and successful transportation experience. The bus driver plays a key role in setting the tone, establishing respect, and enforcing expectations. Below are some suggestions to help you be successful.

Driver Conduct

- Build a respectful and professional relationship with students.
- Demonstrate maturity, responsibility, and self-control at all times.
- Use common sense and a calm demeanor.

Consistency Across Drivers

- Follow district-wide rules and procedures to ensure consistency.
- Treat each student as an individual. Avoid punishing the group for one student's behavior.
- Enforce expectations consistently—students notice unequal treatment quickly, which can lead to discipline issues.

Discipline = Safety

- The primary reason for student discipline is safety.
- Avoid distractions caused by misbehavior—do not try to drive and discipline simultaneously.
- If necessary, pull the bus over safely or wait until reaching a bus stop or school before addressing a situation.

Clear, Consistent Expectations

The tone set during the first two weeks of school often determines behavior for the rest of the year. Drivers should:

- Establish clear expectations from day one.
- Review and reinforce the following three basic safety rules daily:

1. Sit down
2. Keep hands to yourself
3. Talk quietly

Correcting Student Behavior

- Take time during the first few days of school to ensure all students understand the rules and expectations.
- Whenever possible, speak to students privately to address behavior.
 - Avoid correcting students in front of others to minimize embarrassment or defiance.

By working together and maintaining consistent standards, we create a safe and respectful environment for everyone on the bus.

Seat Belt Expectations

If an FCS bus is equipped with seat belts, the students/ riders are expected to wear them. This applies to field trips as well. If a bus is under 10,000 GVW, seat belts are required by law. All other buses are covered under school policy. Currently, the majority of seat belt buses handle K-6 routes.

The process for drivers is as follows:

- When picking up students in the mornings, remind students to put their seat belts on, but you are not expected to get out of your seat to verify.
- When you arrive at your school, you can allow students to unbuckle but they are to stay in their seats with a noise level no greater than a two.
- On the afternoon route, teachers at the building have been asked to get on your bus to assist students in getting buckled in. After a learning period, this should not be necessary. Again, remind your students to buckle up. Don't be surprised if, on occasion, the building asks you to circle back and someone gets on to check seat belts.
- As you travel about, if you notice students having too much freedom, that is a good sign that they are not wearing their seat belt. You can give them a verbal warning (only one), the next time should be a write-up and a parent call from you. The next instance, the building will issue a one-day bus suspension, and the suspension time will increase in length from there.
- In creating a bus referral for the seat belt warning, choose "Driver Referral" as the referral type. This is the only time you would choose this, as this warning does not require any action from the building. Be sure to call the parent to make them aware of the warning BEFORE you send in the warning, as the referral will ask you about the parent call.

Parent Communication Regarding Student Behavior

Addressing student behavior effectively requires a team approach involving the driver, parents, and school administration. Positive and timely communication with families can

help correct issues early and support a safe bus environment. Below are guidelines for calling parents

- Start with Positives
 - Begin the conversation by sharing something positive about the student. Then, respectfully explain the concern and request the parent's support in addressing the behavior.
- Keep It Supportive
 - Unless the behavior involves a serious infraction (e.g., fighting or vandalism), reassure the parent that the student is not being formally written up—yet. Emphasize that you are calling to seek their help before the behavior escalates.
- Be Proactive
 - Call early, while the issue is still minor. Don't wait for a major incident to reach out.
- Follow Up
 - Let the parent know you will follow up on progress. If the behavior improves, share that. If not, explain the next steps, including a written referral or administrative action.

Effective communication builds trust and helps create a safer, more cooperative bus environment for everyone. If the behavior does not improve after parent communication and appropriate interventions, further disciplinary steps may be necessary. By this point, though, parents should be well-informed and prepared for the next level of action.

Assigned Seats

Seating charts are a valuable tool for promoting safety and managing behavior on the school bus. They are especially useful when addressing concerns such as vandalism, accidents, or discipline issues. Students must remain in their assigned seats for the entire duration of the ride. Once seated, they are not permitted to switch seats or move closer to the front for any reason, including as a reward for good behavior. Allowing seat changes can lead to constant requests and inconsistent expectations. Additionally, the back seats of the bus are the least secure and should be filled only after all other seats are occupied. Consistent enforcement of the seating chart helps ensure a safe, orderly, and predictable environment for all students. **Assigned seats for all students are required by the third (3rd) week of school.**

Bus Stop

Loading and unloading students is among the most critical and potentially hazardous parts of school bus transportation. For this reason, students must be taught proper safety procedures. Students must never attempt to retrieve dropped items from under or in front of the bus. This is the leading cause of student fatalities in school bus-related accidents. If an item is dropped, the student should notify the driver, who will retrieve it

once the bus is fully stopped, turned off, and the parking brake is set.

Drivers must also be alert for potential hazards during unloading. Clothing, backpack straps, or drawstrings can become caught in handrails or doors as students exit the bus. Students should be cautious when wearing loose or dangling clothing or accessories. All students must follow safe and consistent unloading procedures to prevent injury and ensure a smooth transition, whether arriving at school in the morning or at their afternoon bus stop.

Students should understand that when necessary to cross the street to enter or exit the school bus, they are always to cross the street in front of the bus. Students should be directed to walk approximately 10 feet in front of the bus when crossing to avoid walking in the driver's blind spot immediately ahead of the front bumper. In addition, students should not assume that approaching traffic will stop per the bus stop arm. Students should wait until the traffic comes to a complete stop and they are signaled by the driver before crossing.

Students may be released only to their designated bus stop. A student may only be released at an alternate stop with approval from the school or transportation office staff.

Guidelines to be used in unloading the bus:

- Stay seated until the bus comes to a FULL STOP. The driver will tell you when to exit.
- Line up and let those closest to the front of the bus exit first.
- Always use the handrail when using the steps to protect from slips and trips. Watch your step. DON'T JUMP.
- Move away from the bus door quickly and walk a safe distance from the bus as directed by the driver. Stay clear of rear wheels.

Bus Referrals

Keeping track of behavior problems helps us take the right steps to fix them. If we ignore bad behavior, it becomes harder to address and leads to more frustration. Reporting issues quickly and accurately makes sure we deal with student behavior properly, creating a safer and more respectful environment on the bus.

Here are a few simple rules to follow:

- When filling out a bus referral, state only the facts, not your opinion.
- You have the authority to give a verbal warning or to change seat assignments.
- Discipline should be progressive. Start with the warning, changing the seat assignment, and then a bus referral that would go to the principal for discipline.
- Stay in communication! Communicate your rules to your students, discuss the behavior with the student's parents, discuss the behavior with the school authorities, and communicate with the Director/Assistant Director.

- Seek help! A professional will always look to his/her supervisor and/or principal for assistance.

Steps for Entering a Bus Referral

You have warned the student and have been very clear with the rules. You have reached out for parental help. The student still refuses to comply. It's time to fill out a bus referral.

1. Fill out a referral stating only the facts and not opinion.
2. Once submitted, transportation office staff will review and forward on to the school.
 - a. Make sure you have called a parent. The first time they learn of their student's behaviors on the bus should not be from the referral.
3. Be prompt when filling out the referral. This should happen the same day, if possible.

Video Policy

There may be times when it is necessary to review video footage from your bus. As a driver, you can view recordings only from the bus you operate and only during routes on which you were the driver. Under no circumstances may a driver view footage involving another driver or students on a different bus. If you are unsure about the details of an incident, reviewing your video can help verify the facts and support accurate reporting and follow-up.

Franklin Community Schools Bus Discipline Matrix - K-12					
Expectations	1 st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Tier1.1. Students will sit in the seat assigned to them by the driver.	V	W	S1/C	S1/S 2	S3
Tier1.2. Students will keep feet and bookbags out of the aisle.	V	W	S1/C	S1/S 2	S3
Tier1.3. Students will not bring items on the bus that are not school related, could be deemed dangerous (glass containers, animals, etc.), or items that are too large (approximately 39").	V	W	S1/C	S1/S 2	S3
Tier1.4. Students will not open bus windows more than half way at any time.	V	W	S1/C	S1/S 2	S3
Tier1.5. Students will not brush their hair or use hygiene products such as hair spray, perfume, nail polish, make-up, etc. while on the bus.	V	W	S1/C	S1/S 2	S3
Tier1.6. Students are allowed to talk quietly. (voice level 2)	V	W	S1/C	S1/S 2	S3

Tier1.7. Students must board and leave the bus at the student's regular bus stop location.	V	W	S1/C	S1/S 2	S3
Tier1.8. Students may bring water to drink on the bus, but otherwise will not eat or drink while on the bus (this includes candy/gum/soda,etc).	V	W	S1/C	S1/S 2	S3
Tier1.9. Students will not leave trash on their seat or on the floor.	V	W	S1/C	S1/S 2	S3
Tier2.1. Students will obey the driver's instructions when crossing the road, boarding, during transport, and when leaving the bus.	W	S1	S3	S5	E
Tier2.2. Students will wear a seatbelt properly at all times without exception.	W	S1	S3	S5	E
Tier2.3. On a bus without seat belts, students will remain seated and have their back to seat back, their bottom to seat bottom with feet on the floor and hands to themselves for the duration of the ride.	W	S1	S3	S5	E
Tier2.4. Students are not allowed to leave the bus without the driver's permission.	W	S1	S3		
Tier2.5. At railroad crossings or upon instruction from the driver, students will be silent (voice level 0).	W	S1	S3	S5	E
Tier2.6. Students will be respectful and will not use profanity (including gestures).	W	S1	S3	S5	E
Tier2.7. Students will keep boundaries. They will not touch each other, including wrestling, horse play, pushing, and/or tripping.	W	S1	S3	S5	E
Tier2.8. Students will keep all body parts in the bus including not hanging out the window or putting limbs out the window.	W	S1	S3	S5	E
Tier2.9. Students will keep objects in their place. They will not throw items on the bus or off the bus.	W	S1	S3	S5	E
Tier2.10. Students will be kind. They will not use malintent or maladaptive behaviors on the bus.	W	S1	S3	S5	E
Tier2.11. Students will make sure that cell phones are silent while riding on the school bus. Students will not record video or take pictures while on the school bus without driver permission. The student may use devices such as mobile phones or tablets as long as it is not a distraction to the driver or is being used in a way that is deemed inappropriate according to the FCS Acceptable Use Policy.	W	S1	S3	S5	E
Tier2.12. Students will leave objects that do not belong to them in their place. They will not tamper or vandalize bus equipment. They will not be destructive or destroy property.	W	S1	S3	S5	E
Tier2.13. Students will not smoke or vape on the bus. These incidents may be referred to an SRO for investigation and possible ticket.	W	S1/ T	S3/T	S5/T	E/T
Tier3.1 Students will be respectful and will not use aggressive, profane or threatening language towards other students or the driver (including gestures).	S3	S5	E	-	-
Tier3.2 Students will not harass, threaten or bully another person.	S3	S5	E	-	-
Tier3.3 Students will keep boundaries. They will not provoke, encourage, or participate in a fight.	S3	S5	E	-	-
Tier3.4 Students will keep all body parts to themselves. They will not spit, hit, kick, or strike another person.	S5	E	-	-	-
Tier 4.1 Students must not bring a weapon of any kind onto the bus.	E	-	-	-	-

Tier 4.2 Students must not assault another student or bus staff.	E	-	-	-	-
Consequences					
V - Verbal Warning (by driver)					
W - Warning issued by bus driver must be accompanied by a parent call.					
C - In-school consequences such as detention.					
S1 - 1-day Bus Suspension					
S2 - 2-day Bus Suspension					
S3 - 3-day Bus Suspension and bus behavior contract w/ incentives					
S-5 - 5-day Bus Suspension					
E - Bus Expulsion, possible criminal charges					
T - Ticket issued.					

The only law/regulation addressing student discipline in the state of Indiana is the 10 day restriction on removals for students with IEPs before there must be a causal case conference; everything else is district policy.

K-12 BUS POLICY - The State of Indiana requires that districts provide bus transportation privileges for eligible enrolled students within the district's boundaries. Within State requirements, local Boards of Education are authorized to establish policies and procedures to insure the safe and orderly transportation of their students. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines through which the rights and safety of passengers, drivers, and aides are protected. All policies found in the Franklin Community School District Student Code of Conduct apply to every student boarding, riding, or exiting buses. Inappropriate student conduct creates a dangerous distraction to the driver and is insensitive to the rights of all individuals on the bus. In the event of serious or repeated violations, suspension of a student's bus privileges will occur. Parents shall be notified before a bus suspension takes effect, except in emergency situations necessary to protect the safety of individuals, property, or the integrity of the educational process. In such cases, the necessary notice will follow as soon as possible. During the suspension of bus privileges, it shall be the parents' responsibility to provide the student's transportation to and from school. Failure to attend school, due to the loss of bus privileges, is considered an unexcused absence.

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This handbook presents information which every transportation staff member needs to know, however, it is not intended to take the place of the FCS Support Staff Handbook.

Acknowledgement of Handbook

**THIS PAGE MUST BE SIGNED AND RETURNED TO THE
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT**

I, the undersigned employee, have received a copy of the School Bus Driver Handbook and Support Staff Employee Handbook for Franklin Community Schools. I understand it is my responsibility to read these guidelines and to conduct myself in accordance with them at all times. I further understand that it is only a general guide and that the provisions and/or terms may be changed and/or terminated at any time during my employment with Franklin Community Schools. I clearly understand that this employee handbook does not create nor constitute a contract of employment.

The complete list of bylaws & policies as well as the most recent version of this handbook may be found on the corporation website. I understand it is my responsibility to review these online documents.

Print Name and Date

Employee Signature

Position