

MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

POLICY #709: STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide safe transportation for students and to educate students on safety issues and the responsibilities of school bus ridership.

II. PLAN FOR STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SAFETY TRAINING

A. School Bus Safety Week

The District may designate a school bus safety week. The National School Bus Safety Week is the third week in October.

B. Student Training

1. The District shall annually provide students enrolled in grades kindergarten (K) through 10 with age-appropriate school bus safety training of the following concepts:
 - a. Transportation by school bus is a privilege, not a right;
 - b. District policies for student conduct and school bus safety;
 - c. Appropriate conduct while on the bus;
 - d. The danger zones surrounding a school bus;
 - e. Procedures for safely boarding and leaving a school bus;
 - f. Procedures for safe vehicle lane crossing; and
 - g. School bus evacuation and other emergency procedures.
 - h. Active transportation safety training including pedestrian safety and bicycle safety within statutory time frames. Accommodations will be provided as needed.
2. The District and all nonpublic schools with students transported by school bus at public expense must provide students enrolled in grades K through 3 school bus safety training twice during the school year.

3. Students taking driver's training instructional classes and other students in grades 9 and 10 must receive training in the laws and proper procedures for operating a motor vehicle in the vicinity of a school bus.
4. The District and all nonpublic schools with students transported by school bus at public expense must conduct a school bus evacuation drill at least once during the school year.
5. The District will make reasonable accommodations in training for students known to speak English as a second language and students with disabilities.
6. The District may provide kindergarten students with school bus safety training before the first day of school.
7. The District may provide student safety education for bicycling and pedestrian safety for students in grades K through 8.
8. The District shall adopt and make available for public review a curriculum for transportation safety education.
9. Nonpublic school students transported by the District will receive school bus safety training by their respective nonpublic school. The nonpublic schools may use the District's school transportation safety education curriculum. The nonpublic school must certify to the District's School Transportation Safety Director that all students enrolled in grades K through 10 have received the appropriate training.

III. CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES AND CONSEQUENCES FOR MISBEHAVIOR

- A. Riding the school bus is a privilege, not a right. The District's general student behavior rules are in effect for students on school buses.
- B. Consequences for school bus/bus stop misconduct will be imposed by the District under adopted administrative discipline procedures. In addition, all school bus/bus stop misconduct will be reported to the District's transportation safety director. Serious misconduct may be reported to local law enforcement.
 1. School Bus and Bus Stop Rules. The District's School Bus Safety Rules are to be posted on every bus. If these rules are broken, the District's discipline procedures are to be followed. Consequences are progressive and may include suspension of bus privileges. It is the school bus driver's responsibility to report unacceptable behavior to the District's Transportation Office/School Office.

2. Rules at the Bus Stop. The Superintendent, or designee, shall adopt rules for students at bus stops and on buses.
3. Consequences for school bus rules infractions or bus stop rules infractions shall be established by the Superintendent or designee.
 - a. Consequences for school bus/bus stop misconduct will apply to all regular, field trip and extra-curricular buses. Decisions regarding a student's ability to ride the bus in connection with co-curricular and extracurricular events (for example, field trips or competitions) will be in the sole discretion of the District. Parents or guardians will be notified of any suspension of bus privileges.
 - b. The principal of each building will either assume or delegate to a qualified staff member, the responsibilities of a Building Transportation Coordinator. Each principal or coordinator will process school bus misbehavior reports and assign appropriate consequences to students.
 - c. The principal or coordinator will investigate and assign consequences for each report in a manner which is defensible and which is in the interest of preserving the safety and well-being of all bus passengers. An investigation may require the participation of an adult bus monitor, the school bus driver, appropriate students, and appropriate parents.
 - d. The principal or coordinator will assign consequences which are progressively more serious whenever a student persists in behaving inappropriately. The following schedule of consequences shall apply unless a school bus driver chooses to withdraw a given report.
 - i. "Information Only" Misbehavior Report. The principal shall determine whether this report only goes into the student's file, or whether further action should be taken.
 - ii. First Misbehavior Report. The student shall receive one or a combination of the following consequences.
 - Discussion of rules and regulations.
 - Assigned seat on bus.
 - Resolve problem with driver and/or others.
 - Time out or detention at school.
 - iii. Second Misbehavior Report. The student shall receive one or a combination of the following consequences.

- Resolve problem with driver and/or others.
 - Time out or detention at school.
 - Suspend from bus for one day to one week.
- iv. Third Misbehavior Report. The student shall receive one of the following consequences.
- Suspend from bus for one day to one week.
 - Suspend from bus for one week to one month.
 - Suspend from bus for one month to three months.
 - Suspend from bus for remainder of school year.
- v. Fourth Misbehavior Report. The student shall receive one of the following consequences.
- Suspend from bus for one month to three months.
 - Suspend from bus for remainder of school year.
- vi. Fifth Misbehavior Report. The student shall receive the following consequences.
- Suspend from bus for remainder of school year.
- vii. Exception to Progression. The principal shall have the authority to bypass preliminary consequences and assign a suspension from the bus for the remainder of the school year if the misbehavior in question has caused an immediate danger to him/herself, other persons, or property.
- viii. Special Needs Students. Assignment of consequences for students who have individual education plans (I.E.P.'s) shall be administered in accordance with the I.D.E.A. statute. Principals shall immediately enlist the aid of the district's Transportation Safety Coordinator when an I.E.P. student receives a misbehavior report.

C. Other Discipline

Based on the severity of a student's conduct, more serious consequences may be imposed at any time. Depending on the nature of the offense, consequences such as suspension or expulsion from school also may result from school bus/bus stop misconduct.

D. Records

Records of school bus/bus stop misconduct will be forwarded to the individual school building for appropriate determination of consequences and will be retained in the same manner as other student discipline records. Reports of student misbehavior on a school bus or in a bus-loading or unloading area that causes an immediate and substantial danger to the student or surrounding persons or property will be provided by the District to the Department of Public Safety in accordance with state and federal law.

E. Vandalism/Bus Damage

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

F. Notice

School bus and bus stop rules and consequences for violations of these rules will be reviewed with students annually and copies of these rules will be made available to students. School bus rules are to be posted on each school bus.

G. Criminal Conduct

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

IV. PARENT AND GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

A. Parent and Guardian Notification

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

B. Parents/Guardians Responsibilities for Transportation Safety

The Superintendent, or designee, shall annually inform all parents, guardians whose children utilize District-provided buses or designated bus stops with the specific and general expectations for students and parents.

V. SCHOOL BUS DRIVER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The contract vendor shall annually assure the District in writing that school bus

drivers have a valid Class A, B, or C Minnesota driver's license with a school bus endorsement. A person possessing a valid driver's license, without a school bus endorsement, may drive a vehicle with a seating capacity of 10 or fewer persons used as a school bus, but not outwardly equipped or identified as a school bus.

- B. The contract vendor shall annually assure the District in writing that they are conducting mandatory drug and alcohol testing of all contractor bus drivers and bus driver applicants in accordance with state and federal law and District policy.

VI. SCHOOL BUS DRIVER TRAINING

A. Training

The contract vendor shall assure the District in writing that all new school bus drivers be provided with pre-service training, including in-vehicle (actual driving) instruction before transporting students and shall meet the competency testing specified in the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Model School Bus Driver Training Manual. All contractor bus drivers shall receive in-service training annually. The contract vendor shall assure the District in writing that an annual individual school bus driver "evaluation certification" form is retained on file for each contractor driver as contained in the Model School Bus Driver Training Manual.

B. Evaluation

The contract vendor shall assure the District in writing that all school bus drivers with a Class D license be evaluated annually and all other bus drivers be assessed periodically by the bus service provider.

VII. OPERATING RULES AND PROCEDURES

A. General Operating Rules

1. The District shall assure that all school buses be operated in accordance with state traffic and school bus safety laws and the procedures contained in the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Model School Bus Driver Training Manual.
2. Only students assigned to the school bus by the District shall be transported. The number of students or other authorized passengers transported in a school bus shall not be more than the legal capacity for the bus. No person shall be allowed to stand when the bus is in motion.
3. The parent/guardian may designate, pursuant to District policy, a day care facility, respite care facility, the residence of a relative or the residence of a person chosen by the parent or guardian as the address of the student for

transportation purposes. The address must be in the attendance area of the assigned school and meet all other eligibility requirements.

4. Bus drivers must eliminate or minimize, the idling of school bus engines and exposure of children to diesel exhaust fumes.
5. Bus drivers must endeavor to park and load school buses at a sufficient distance from school air-intake systems to avoid diesel fumes from being drawn into the systems.

VIII. SCHOOL DISTRICT EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

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

IX. CONTRACT VENDOR VEHICLE MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

- A. All vehicles shall be maintained in safe operating conditions through a systematic preventive maintenance and inspection program adopted or approved by the

District.

B. All vehicles shall be state inspected in accordance with legal requirements.

X. TRANSPORTATION SAFETY DIRECTOR

The contractor shall employ a Transportation Safety Director who functions as the Transportation Safety Director for both the contractor and the District. The Transportation Safety Director shall have day-to-day responsibility for pupil transportation safety, including transportation of nonpublic school children when provided by the District. The School Transportation Safety Director will assure that this policy is periodically reviewed to ensure that it conforms to law. The Transportation Safety Director shall certify annually to the District in writing that each school bus driver meets the school bus driver training competencies required by Minn. Stat. § 171.321, Subd. 4. The Transportation Safety Director also shall annually verify to the District in writing the validity of the driver's license of each employee who regularly transports students for the District in a Type A, B, C, or D school bus or Type III vehicle with the National Driver's Register or the Department of Public Safety. The Transportation Safety Director also shall confirm annually to the District that students have received school bus safety training in accordance with state law. The name, address and telephone number of the Transportation Safety Director are on file in the District office. Any questions regarding student transportation or this policy may be addressed to the Supervisor of Student Accounting & Transportation.

XI. PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Board may establish a Pupil Transportation Safety Committee. The chair of the Pupil Transportation Safety Committee is the District's Supervisor of Student Accounting & Transportation. The school board shall appoint the other members of the Pupil Transportation Safety Committee. Membership may include parents, school bus drivers, representatives of school bus companies, local law enforcement officials, other District staff, and representatives from other units of local government.

Cross References:

Policy 307: Access and Dissemination (Compliance with Minnesota Data Practices Act)

Policy 506: Student Discipline and Code of Conduct

Policy 707: Student Transportation Policy

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