

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
QUALIFICATIONS OF A BUS DRIVER	1
DUTIES.....	3
CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT	4
REQUIREMENTS	4
PERSONAL HABITS	4
PERSONNEL POLICIES	5
ATTENDANCE INCENTIVE PLAN (AIP)	5
EVALUATIONS.....	5
DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS	5
Verbal Warning	5
Written Warning	6
Administrative Leave.....	6
Dismissal.....	6
RESIGNATION.....	8
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE	8
ABSENCES.....	8
WORK-RELATED INJURIES	9
TIMESHEETS.....	9
PAYDAY.....	9
CONTRACT TIME.....	9
REQUIRED DUTIES	9
CHAIN OF COMMAND	9
CONTROL OF STUDENTS.....	10
RADIO PROTOCOL	12
BUS PARKING	12
DISCIPLINE	12
SPECIAL EDUCATION DISCIPLINE AND RESTRICTIONS	13
SEXUAL HARASSMENT.....	14
OFFICIAL USE OF SCHOOL VEHICLES	14
SCHOOL BUS EMERGENCY DRILL	15
REGULATIONS CONCERNING PROPER USE OF THE BUS, EMERGENCY FLASHERS, WARNING LIGHTS, DOORS, AND HEADLIGHTS	15
LOADING AND UNLOADING STUDENTS.....	17
SPEED LIMITS.....	18
RAILROAD CROSSINGS	18
OBJECTS PROHIBITED ON SCHOOL BUSES.....	19
BACKING THE BUS.....	19
PASSING AND TURNING	19
FOLLOWING OTHER VEHICLES	20
CHECKING THE BUS AFTER COMPLETING A BUS RUN	20
REPORTS, SCHEDULES, AND MEETINGS	20
HOURS OF OPERATION	21
ACCIDENT PROCEDURES.....	21
BREAKDOWN PROCEDURES	22
EVACUATION OF SCHOOL BUSES	23
EVACUATION PROCEDURES	23
EMERGENCY NUMBERS.....	24
GENERAL INFORMATION	25
MAINTENANCE	25
REFUELING.....	25
CLEANING SCHOOL VEHICLES.....	25
IMPORTANT NUMBERS	25

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to assist school bus drivers, and school officials involved with pupil transportation in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. This handbook specifies guidelines, policies, procedures, and types of reports required of a driver and **information in this manual is subject to change as policies, laws, and regulations are updated.**

The rules, regulations, and policies contained herein are in accordance with the instructions in the following publications: Motor Vehicle Laws of Virginia; Regulations Governing Pupil Transportation and Minimum Standards for School Buses, 1994; 2005 National Standards for School Transportation; Commonwealth of Virginia School Code; and School Board Policies and Regulations, Westmoreland County Public Schools, Montross, Virginia. Of paramount importance and number one priority is the safety of the students being transported by Westmoreland County Public Schools.

The school bus is an important, integral, and contributing member of the educational program of the Westmoreland County Public School System. No other person employed by the School Board occupies a position requiring the close daily contact with the students, parents, school administrators and the community more than school bus drivers. The first and last person a student sees during the school day is the school bus driver. The attitude, opinions, appearance, and conduct of bus drivers toward students, motorists, schools, and the community greatly influence the attitude of the students. To the community, the "Yellow School Bus" is a visual representation of the school. The attitude and conduct of the students while on the bus also influence the opinion the general public has toward the school system.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A BUS DRIVER

No person shall drive a school bus unless that person has a CDL Class B license with the P and S endorsements, is approved by the School Board, and meets physical qualifications. Each applicant shall complete a School Bus Driver's Application for Physician's Certificate signed by an appropriate medical professional.

The applicant must be 21 years of age or older.

The applicant must submit to testing for alcohol and controlled substances, which is in compliance with the Omnibus Transportation Testing Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-143, Title V) and the amendments.

The applicant must be able to read and write, to understand verbal instructions, and to communicate with fellow employees, students, and the Transportation Supervisor.

The applicant shall furnish references signed by three (3) persons that the person is of good moral character.

The applicant shall furnish a statement or copy of records from the Department of Motor Vehicles showing that he or she has not been convicted of a charge of driving under the influence of intoxicating liquors or drugs within the preceding five (5) years; has not been convicted of a felony; has not been assigned to any alcohol rehabilitation program, within the past twelve (12) months has not been convicted of two (2) or more moving traffic violations. The applicant must be an experienced driver with no convictions of reckless driving.

The applicant must have a reasonable amount of experience in driving motor vehicles and must pass a special examination indicating the ability to operate a school vehicle without endangering the safety of student passengers and motorists using the highways. If a bus driver is convicted of reckless driving in any vehicle once employed, he/she will be recommended for dismissal. Drivers who are convicted of any moving violation while operating a school vehicle will have to attend an in-service on defensive driving techniques. A second conviction will mean automatic recommendation for dismissal.

The applicant must have received classroom, demonstration, and behind-the-wheel instruction in accordance with the minimum provisions of the Virginia School Bus Driver Training Curriculum Guide. The applicant must have **completed a minimum of 24 classroom hours and 24 hours of behind-the-wheel training. A minimum of 10 hours of the 24 hours behind the wheel shall involve the operation of a bus with pupils on board while under the direct supervision of a designated bus driver trainer. All drivers shall receive training in the transportation of students with special needs.**

The applicant must be able to pass a Virginia Commercial Driver's License examination test given by the Division of Motor Vehicles examiner. The Virginia Commercial Driver's License, Class (B) with endorsement PS is required of all new drivers.

DUTIES

1. To comply with Motor Vehicle Laws and Regulations of the State Board of Education.
2. To operate the bus over the assigned route and make no changes unless duly authorized.
3. To wear the driver's safety belt.
4. To maintain current up-to-date stop schedule(s) on the bus.
5. To stop in the **right-hand lane** of the highway for receiving or discharging pupils at designated stops only at points where the bus can be seen for a safe distance from both directions. On divided highways stops shall be so arranged that pupils will be taken on and discharged on the side of such highways as will eliminate the necessity of crossing the highway. **Elementary school students should have an adult or older sibling within view of the bus stop. If no one is present, the school and transportation office must be notified immediately.**
6. To exercise every possible care for the safety and comfort of the pupils en-route and to permit no pupil to ride on the outside of the bus or with head, hands, or arms out of the windows.
7. To complete and record daily pre-trip inspections of the bus and report any needed repairs in writing.
8. To govern the speed of the bus according to the limits established by law for school buses while transporting pupils.
9. Turn on emergency flashers, come to a full stop on approaching a railroad crossing, to look and listen carefully in order to positively determine when it is safe to cross the track.
10. To maintain discipline and report all cases of disobedience to school principal.
11. In case of breakdown, place flags and flares on the highway according to law, and notify the school authorities. Keep the pupils in the bus until it is repaired unless conditions justify evacuation or transferal to another bus.
12. To refrain, when on duty, from use of alcohol or illegal drugs, tobacco, profane and unclean language, and to see that the pupils conduct themselves likewise.

13. To make all reports, attend meetings, and training sessions required by school authorities. Safety meetings will be held monthly throughout the school year.
14. To be accountable for flares, first-aid kits, and fire extinguishers.
15. To prevent any object being placed in the bus that will restrict passageway to entrance or emergency door, and to keep bottles or other loose objects off the floor.
16. To ensure that no students are left unattended on the bus.
17. To comply with all regulations outlined in the Westmoreland County Public Schools School Bus and Car Drivers Handbook.
18. To be alert and exercise good judgment concerning emergencies, disabled vehicles, and irregular special request by parents or riders.
19. To perform other duties as assigned by the Transportation Supervisor or designee.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

REQUIREMENTS

Each year the bus driver is required to have successfully completed a physical examination of a scope prescribed by the Virginia Board of Education with the advice of the Medical Society of Virginia in order to operate a school bus.

All drivers and assistants are recommended to hold a valid card in Standard First Aid and have a valid CPR Certificate. All drivers must submit to random controlled substance and alcohol testing. Drivers must also submit to having their driving record checked at the discretion of the Transportation Department.

PERSONAL HABITS

A driver shall not use or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while on duty or within 12 hours of being on duty. If drugs that may impair driving ability are prescribed, the driver shall refrain from driving a school vehicle. Smoking is prohibited while on duty on any School Board property, which includes buses and cars.

A driver shall be neatly dressed in regular or conservative types of street clothes and wear low-heeled, non-skid shoes. Shoes should be of the type that fastens securely around the heel. Shoes such as platform, wooden soled, or flip-flops are not acceptable because they present a potential safety risk. **A driver may be asked to return home to change clothes if he/she is found to be dressed inappropriately and will not be paid for that run.**

PERSONNEL POLICIES

ATTENDANCE INCENTIVE PLAN (AIP)

All contracted drivers and aides are eligible for the Attendance Incentive Plan (AIP). In this plan, for each nine weeks that a driver does not use a sick day, he or she will receive a \$100.00 bonus. If a driver maintains this status throughout the year, a \$100.00 gift card from a local retailer will also be given. Under AIP, a driver **may** use personal days; however, no sick days may be used. While the AIP encourages people to be at work, do not drive your route if you are too ill to do so.

EVALUATIONS

At least once per year the performance of each bus driver and assistant shall be evaluated by the Transportation Supervisor with input from the principal(s). The results of the evaluation shall be discussed with the driver and included in the driver's personnel file. Observations may be completed at anytime during the year as evidence for the end of the year evaluation. Bus drivers and assistants' observations may be completed by any administrator.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Verbal Warning: A school transportation driver or assistant may be given a verbal warning by the Transportation Supervisor for a violation of the rules. A record of this warning shall be kept in the driver's or assistant's personnel file in the Personnel Department, with a copy sent to the driver or assistant. **Continued violation of the rules will result in further disciplinary action, which may include a recommendation for dismissal from employment.**

Written Warning: A school transportation driver or assistant may be given a written warning for a violation of the rules. The Transportation Supervisor will confer with the driver or assistant about the written warning to stress that continued violations will result in further disciplinary action. The written warning, with a copy to the driver or assistant, will be made part of the driver or assistant's personnel file in the Personnel Department.

Administrative Leave: A school transportation driver or assistant may be placed on administrative leave for a specific length of time for a violation of the rules. The Transportation Supervisor will confer with the driver or assistant as to the length and reason for the leave. Also, the driver or assistant will be informed that continued violations will result in further disciplinary action. A notice of administrative leave, with a copy to the driver or assistant, will be made a part of the driver or assistant's personnel file in the Personnel Department.

Dismissal: A driver or assistant is subject to dismissal under the provisions of School Board Policy. By School Board policy, a driver or assistant may be dismissed by the School Board for a violation of the policies or rules.

Grounds for Probation, Suspension, or Dismissal

- a. Insubordination to duly constituted authority – probation, suspension, or recommendation for dismissal.
- b. Refusing to submit to random controlled substance and alcohol testing within two (2) hours of being called is recommendation of dismissal. **Note: Failure to report for a random controlled substance and alcohol testing is considered a positive result. Any positive result requires a recommendation for dismissal.**
- c. Using a school vehicle for other than official school business – probation, suspension, or recommendation for dismissal.
- d. Being convicted of reckless driving, whether in a school vehicle or a private vehicle – recommendation for dismissal.
- e. Having two moving violations within one (1) year, whether driving a school vehicle or a private vehicle – recommendation for dismissal.
- f. Failing to properly report an accident to the Transportation Supervisor or to the Police Department – probation, suspension, or recommendation for dismissal.

- g. Leaving the scene of an accident before being told to do so by the Transportation Supervisor or appropriate authority – probation, suspension, or recommendation for dismissal.
- h. Driving a school bus or any vehicle while under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs – recommendation for dismissal.
- i. Having a preventable accident as determined by the Accident Review Committee – probation, suspension, or recommendation for dismissal. Backing accidents are preventable. If backing is required on the bus route, the first accident would result in probation plus training. The second backing accident would result in suspension or recommendation for dismissal. If a driver has an accident while backing in violation of policy the driver shall be suspended or recommended for dismissal. Remember check the blind spot when backing up.
- j. Failing to attend meetings called by school authorities; to submit written reports, including stop schedules, accurately and on time; and **to have scheduled maintenance service performed on the date assigned** – probation, suspension, or recommendation for dismissal.
- k. Leaving the school bus unattended while children/students are on board – probation, suspended, or recommendation for dismissal. Except when there is an emergency situation, for example, placing triangles when there is a break down.
- l. Unauthorized or misuse of sick leave. The Transportation Supervisor may request school bus drivers or assistants to present verification of illness by signed statement of a physician to substantiate illness – probation, suspension, or recommendation for dismissal.
- m. Other acts of behavior, which are disruptive, or in any way present a threat to the health and safety of others – probation, suspension, or recommendation for dismissal.
- n. Leaving a student on the bus after parking the bus – recommendation for dismissal.
- o. Failure to maintain a current and correct route schedule on the bus at all times – probation, suspension, or recommendation for dismissal.
- p. Crossing any railroad track without strictly adhering to the proper procedures will result in a recommendation for dismissal.

- q. Failure to personally perform and properly document a pre-trip inspection will result in recommendation for dismissal.
- r. Altering speed control devices on a bus. Recommendation for dismissal.
- s. As of July 1, 2008, state law in Virginia makes it illegal for a school bus driver to use any type of cell phone while operating a school bus. Use of a cell phone while driving a school bus may result in suspension or dismissal.

RESIGNATION

All employees shall submit a written statement explaining the reason for resignation to the Transportation Supervisor at least two weeks before the final working day. The written statement will be forwarded to the Personnel Department.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A formal procedure for handling complaints of school vehicle drivers and assistants has been established. Every effort must be made on the part of school drivers, assistants, and administrators to utilize the procedure in resolving problems on the job. A grievance is a difference or a dispute between a non-supervisor employee and a local School Board or its supervisory representatives with respect to the applicant of the provisions of the Board's policies, rules, and regulations, as they affect the work activity of the employee. A grievance will be processed as quickly as possible. There are certain maximum time limits at each level that must be observed. Every effort will be made to resolve the grievance at the lowest level.

ABSENCES

All transportation employees shall notify the Transportation Supervisor of impending personal or sick leave absences as soon as possible. Please avoid having family members or others make the call in lieu of yourself. **A message left on the answering machine is not an acceptable form of notification; please speak directly with the Transportation Supervisor.** Notice of absence is required as soon as possible to the Transportation Supervisor at least by **5:30 a.m.** on the day of the absence.

All absences, for any reason, will need an approved Request for Leave from completed prior to the leave. If the absence is due to illness, the Request for Leave form must be completed and submitted the first day returning to work.

WORK-RELATED INJURIES

It is the responsibility of every employee to become familiar with the proper reporting procedures for work-related injuries. If a work-related injury occurs, report the injury immediately to the Transportation Supervisor.

TIMESHEETS

Timesheets are due by the stated due date on the timesheet. **All timesheets not turned in on or before the due date will result in paychecks being issued the following month.**

PAYDAY

Payday is on the last business day of the month.

CONTRACT TIME

All contracts are based upon the individual route or run. Drivers will receive an hourly rate for field trips.

REQUIRED DUTIES

Required duties include pre-tripping bus, cleaning, fueling, completion and submission of all paperwork.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

All school bus drivers are responsible to the school Principal for safe transportation of pupils assigned to Westmoreland County Public Schools.

All school bus drivers are directly responsible to the Transportation Supervisor and Assistant Transportation Supervisor for care and safe operation of school buses and cars.

If an issue should arise that is not resolved to the satisfaction of the driver by either the Principal or Transportation Supervisor, the driver will contact the Executive Officer for Organizational Management.

CONTROL OF STUDENTS

The driver and assistant must maintain control of the students so that their conduct does not impede the safe operation of the bus. The driver is in direct charge when transporting students. The safety of students must be given first consideration. The behavior of any student(s) that jeopardizes the safety of others or the driver's ability to operate the vehicle safely must be reported to the school and dealt with promptly. The following are general guidelines to follow:

- a. Students are not allowed to move around on the bus while the bus is in motion.
- b. Students must remain to the rear of the driver's seat or barriers.
- c. Students are not allowed to open and close the door or stand in the step well.
- d. Students should not extend their head, arms, feet or hands out of the windows.
- e. School buses will be driven in compliance with the rules and regulations of the Virginia State Department of Education, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the Westmoreland County School Board.
- f. The main entrance door must be fully closed while the vehicle is in operation.
- g. The driver and assistant should maintain, at all times, an attitude of concern and helpfulness toward their passengers. When discipline is necessary it must be consistent, firm, and fair. Good leadership shown by the driver and assistant is better than threats and/or the use of force. When a student becomes unruly, discuss the problem with the principal. Describe the problem fully on the Bus Discipline Report Form. This report will give the bus driver a written record, which documents his/her actions. These forms are also used to document discipline problems on summer school routes, vocational routes, activity routes, and field trips.
- h. The driver is responsible to report to the principal any misconduct of students at a bus stop or on the way to and from the school and shall be guided by the principal's advice and direction. The driver

should make every attempt to resolve the matter with verbal warnings, adjusting seat assignments, or one-on-one discussion with the student(s). When it becomes necessary for the driver to correct the students, the driver shall stop at the nearest and safest place and restore order before proceeding. **In no case shall the driver put a student off the bus between home and school as a disciplinary measure.**

- i. Should there be an incident of "**EXTREME**" unruliness, stop at the nearest school and request assistance from the principal. If the driver is not near a school and control cannot be regained, the driver should find a safe area to pull off and radio or call the School Board Office, (804) 493-8018, and/or communicate directly with the Sheriff's office, (804) 493-8066.
- j. The driver should never leave the bus unattended while students are on board.
- k. The driver should never use physical force on a student to maintain discipline, except for self-protection. The bus driver's example of dignified behavior can do much to prevent bad behavior on the bus.
- l. **The bus driver should show that he/she cares for the school vehicle and the passengers by providing a clean and sanitary vehicle with good ventilation.**
- m. No unauthorized person may drive or operate equipment on a school vehicle.
- n. When making a stop the driver shall activate the bus traffic warning lights, come to a complete stop, and open the door to activate the stop arm and crossing control arm. If there are no students in sight, then proceed. Please discuss with the principal any excessive abuse by students not being at the bus stop.

NOTE: It is not appropriate to resort to honking the horn or yelling at a student to entice the student to be prompt. If it is clear the student's actions are intentional to delay the bus, document the behavior on the Bus Conduct Report.

- o. Parent concerns should be discussed in the school principal's office and not at the bus stops. If a parent persists, the driver should be polite and inform the parent that he/she is carrying out the rules and regulations set by the Department of Motor Vehicles, the State Board of Education, and the Westmoreland County School Board. Refer the parent to the principal or the Transportation Supervisor for consideration of the problem. The parent should not be

permitted to board the bus. If a parent boards the bus, promptly inform the parent he or she is in violation of Virginia state law and school board policy, then ask the parent to leave.

- p. Parents or family members may not ride in school vehicles unless the Transportation Supervisor grants special permission.
- q. School vehicles follow assigned routes. **NO CHANGES** will be made to the routes without authorization from the Transportation Supervisor.
- r. If it is necessary to confiscate an item from a student, the item must be turned into the principal's office immediately after the next morning run is completed.
- s. Students may not ride different buses without a signed bus note from the school office. Under **no circumstances** should a student be allowed to ride your bus without proper documentation.
- t. Elementary aged students who do not have a parent or designated guardian at the bus stop must be returned to school.

RADIO PROTOCOL

The radios on the buses are for official business only. They should not be used to discuss personal issues, sports scores, or any other unofficial business. Please refer to your badge for codes to use in emergency situations.

BUS PARKING

School vehicles will only be parked at approved locations to ensure appropriate security for school vehicles. A written request will be submitted to the Transportation Supervisor for any location **OTHER** than school property. Each parking location will be reviewed annually by the Transportation Supervisor and recommended to the Superintendent for approval. Changes in parking location that occur due to routing, change in assignment, or driver relocation may alter the parking location.

DISCIPLINE

The principal or designee of each school is responsible to take disciplinary action with any student that violates the rules of conduct set forth by the School Board. An acceptable classroom standard of conduct is expected of

bus passengers. There shall be no smoking, yelling, screaming, swearing, fighting, or taking advantage of smaller students by other persons who are larger and/or older. Students are not permitted to extend hands, arms, or heads from the bus windows. Students are prohibited from carrying oversized items that would block an aisle, cause a loss of passenger space, obstruct the driver's view, or create a safety hazard.

Serious disciplinary problems involving injury to students or the bus driver; disruptions, which involve parents, other motorists, or others not authorized to ride on school buses, should be reported immediately to the school principal and the Transportation Supervisor.

Requests for seat belts restraints or positioning devices for an unruly student must be coordinated with the principal of the school attended by the student. In case of improper conduct, the driver should remember the following:

- a. Drivers should be sure of the facts and report the student or students to the principal or the person assigned for that day. Bus Conduct Report forms are available for this purpose and shall be used. All copies are to be completed and given to the school principal who will investigate, note action, and distribute the copies.
- b. Drivers shall not use physical restraint, name calling, or harassment to discipline students. A driver may use reasonable physical restraint in breaking up a fight or in self-defense.

SPECIAL EDUCATION DISCIPLINE AND RESTRICTIONS

The general rules and procedures for discipline outlined in this handbook also apply to special needs students. However, every effort must be made to accommodate their needs and provide for their safe transportation. The following guidelines to follow:

- a. Bus drivers will not transport or administer medications. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure medications get to the appropriate person qualified to administer them as directed. The bus drivers cannot take the risk of mixing medications or administering wrong dosages, etc.
- b. Only approved first-aid techniques and procedures will be used in the case of emergencies.
- c. The bus driver transports the child to and from school only. A bus driver **DOES NOT** take or pick up the student inside the home or perform any other requests. It is the responsibility of the parents to get the student to and from the bus for

transport. The bus driver ensures the safe loading and transportation for the student.

- d. Parents must coordinate an alternate drop-off point through Special Education Services and Transportation.
- e. Parents must ensure safe entry and exit points for school vehicles that must enter their property to load and unload their children. The driver is responsible for notifying the Transportation Supervisor immediately if unsafe situations exist.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the Westmoreland County School Board to maintain a working and learning environment that is free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is deemed unacceptable conduct in the employment and educational environment and will not be tolerated. It shall be a violation of School Board policy for any student, employee, or agent of the school division to harass another student, employee, or agent of the division through conduct or communications of a sexual nature.

It is the responsibility of all drivers and bus assistants to report instances of sexual harassment experienced or observed to appropriate school officials. The School Board policy on sexual harassment is available at the Transportation office. Please contact the Transportation Supervisor with any questions you might have on sexual harassment.

OFFICIAL USE OF SCHOOL VEHICLES

School buses will be used to transport students to and from school, and school sponsored events only. School buses will not be used for any purpose other than student transportation, unless authorized by the Superintendent. The following are examples of unauthorized uses of school vehicles that could result in suspension or recommendation of dismissal:

- a. Using a school vehicle to run personal errands. A driver is **not** allowed to use a school vehicle to go by the local store, bank, laundry, post office, drug store, or doctor's office, etc. This policy applies during normal school hours, after school hours, weekends, and holidays.
- b. Using a school vehicle to transport children (the driver's or others) to other schools outside the district. A driver may transport his/her own children only when they have been assigned to be transported to a school for a specific program.

Transporting a child not enrolled in a program in Westmoreland County Public Schools is in violation of School Board policy.

- c. It is **not** permissible to take a school vehicle to a friend's or relative's home to visit while waiting for the next run.
- d. A driver may **not** use a school vehicle to transport a spouse to and from work.

NOTE: If there are any questions as to whether the use of a school vehicle is permissible, call the Transportation Supervisor "**BEFORE**" using the vehicle to avoid any unnecessary misunderstandings.

SCHOOL BUS EMERGENCY DRILL

8 VAC 20-70-110. Pupil rider safety instruction.

Pupil rider safety instruction shall be included in the school curriculum, including demonstration and practices of safety procedures.

1. At the Pre-K – 1 grade levels, initial safety training shall occur during the first week of school and additional training on a periodic basis during the year.
2. Emergency exit drills shall be practiced by all pupil riders at least twice a year, the first occurring during the first 30 instructional days **and the second in the second semester. Summer session evacuation drills should be performed as needed.**
3. A copy of this bus rider safety rules shall be sent to parents at the beginning of the school year. The information shall include a request that parents and/or guardians of their designee accompany their young children to and from the bus stop.

REGULATIONS CONCERNING PROPER USE OF THE BUS, EMERGENCY FLASHERS, WARNING LIGHTS, DOORS, AND HEADLIGHTS

One of the greatest single factors in prevention of injury to students riding in school buses is the proper use of warning lights. The following are general guidelines for the use of warning and emergency lights and general safety precautions:

- a. The door must be closed when the bus is in motion, whether or not students are on board.

- b. The warning lights shall be in operation for a distance of not less than one hundred (100) feet before the bus stops if the lawful speed limit is less than thirty-five (35) mph; for a distance of at least two hundred (200) feet before the bus stops if the lawful speed limit is thirty-five (35) mph or higher. The warning sign and crossing control arm shall be extended only when the bus is stopped to load or discharge students.
- c. School buses are equipped with flashing white lights (strobe lights) which shall operate when the bus transports student during periods of reduced visibility caused by conditions other than darkness. The strobe lights may also be lighted at other times while the bus is transporting passengers.
- d. The red traffic warning lights are to be used by a driver approaching or following another bus that is loading or unloading. When following or approaching another bus that is backing, activate the four-way hazard lights.
- e. The school bus driver shall open and close the entrance door, and keep it securely closed while the bus is in motion. The proper use of these devices and the responsibility for safety shall not be delegated to any other person.
- f. Headlights on all student-carrying vehicles are to be used at all times.
- g. The driver must be in the bus while loading or unloading students.
- h. Safety belts must be worn by the driver.
- i. No object shall be placed in the bus that will restrict the passage to the entrance and/or emergency doors and windows.
- j. A school bus shall not be placed in motion unless all passengers are seated.
- k. The driver of an activity or extra-curricular trip shall advise the students and sponsors of the location of all emergency equipment prior to the beginning of any such trip. The driver must notify the Transportation Supervisor in the case of a breakdown. Drivers are to keep the students on the bus, unless it is unsafe to remain aboard, until it is repaired or until the students are transferred to another bus. Drivers are responsible to take all necessary precautions to alert oncoming

traffic. Drivers must take the key out of the ignition and put out triangular reflectors.

- I. When loading or discharging students on the highway, stops shall be made in the right-hand lane (not the turning lane) and shall be made only at designated points where the bus can be seen for a safe distance from both directions. While stopped, the driver shall keep the school bus warning devices in operation to warn approaching traffic to stop and allow students to cross the highway safely.
- m. In cases where the driver must leave the seat, the bus will be secured by turning the engine off, setting the brake, and removing the key from the ignition.

LOADING AND UNLOADING STUDENTS

When loading or unloading students on a highway, stops shall be made only at designated points where the bus can clearly be seen for a safe distance from both directions. While stopped, the driver shall keep the school bus warning devices in operation to warn approaching traffic to stop and allow students to cross the highway safely. Students who must cross the road shall be required to cross in front of the bus. They shall be required to walk to a point ten (10) feet or more in front of the bus, stop before reaching a position in line with the left side of the bus, and wait for a signal from the bus driver before starting across the highway.

The time of greatest danger to school passengers is when they leave the bus and cross the street. More fatalities occur in the "Death Zone" around the bus than actual on-board moving bus accidents. This is due primarily to motorists passing stopped school buses in the process of loading and unloading. Drivers should be aware of this and take precautions using all mirrors to ensure all traffic has stopped before allowing students to cross the street. **DRIVERS MUST ENSURE STUDENTS HAVE CLEARED THE DOOR ENTRANCES AND PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE HANDRAILS IN THE STEPWELLS.**

The warning lights on school buses are designated by the State of Virginia as just that – Traffic Warning Lights – and are to be used only to warn the traveling public that the bus is going to stop to pick up students or discharge students. These lights are not to be used to allow the driver to make a left turn across traffic lanes. **While loading or unloading students at a school, or any place, the traffic warning lights should remain blinking.** All buses will adhere to this law.

Emergency flashers (four-way hazard lights) should be used in case of an emergency, railroad crossing, or in emergency stops and not in connection with traffic warning lights or in the loading or unloading of students.

A driver shall never pass another bus that has its traffic control lights operating. Buses arriving late at school must wait at the loading area until students are on their buses and clear of that area.

SPEED LIMITS

The speed limit shall be governed by the signs erected by the state highway departments, and by driving conditions existing at the time. The driver should never exceed the speed limits set forth in the State Department of Education Regulations. A school bus may travel at forty five miles per hour when not loading or unloading students. When loading or unloading the maximum speed limit is thirty five miles per hour. A school bus, with or without passengers, may travel up to 60 mph on an interstate where the posted speed limit is more than 55 mph. All posted speed limits must be obeyed, especially in residential areas.

RAILROAD CROSSINGS

Use the following procedure from the Virginia School Bus Driver's Manual:

- a. Tap the break lightly as you approach a railroad crossing to warn other drivers the bus is about to stop.
- b. Turn on four-way hazard lights.
- c. Come to a complete stop fifteen (15) to fifty (50) feet from the nearest rail.
- d. Open the entrance door and driver's window.
- e. Turn off the warning lights unless loading or unloading passengers.
- f. Listen and look carefully in both directions.
- g. When it is safe to cross, close the entrance door and turn off the four-way hazard lights.
- h. Cross the railroad tracks in a gear which allows you to cross the rails completely without changing gears.

OBJECTS PROHIBITED ON SCHOOL BUSES

The driver must make sure that bottles, boxes, musical instruments, or other loose objects are not on the floor or in the aisle of the bus. **THIS IS STATE LAW.** Only objects that can be held safely in the student's lap may be transported. Items that cannot be safely held in the pupil's lap or are large enough to interfere with the comfort of other students must be transported in some other way. Items such as book bags, school projects, musical instruments, etc., are not allowed in any emergency exit. No trash containers are to obstruct any entrance, exit, or aisle. No glass bottles or glass objects are allowed on any school bus.

BACKING THE BUS

It is not recommended that students be used to help drivers while backing. The driver must not back the bus unless there is no other safe way to move the vehicle. Driving around the block is preferable to backing. If it is necessary to back the bus, the driver should activate four-way hazard lights and sound the horn before backing, and constantly check all mirrors while backing. Always back from a main road into a side road.

In turning around at the end of a run where there is a student pick-up point, the driver should pick-up students before backing and should watch out for late-comers at all times. In discharging students at any turn-around point the driver should have students remain inside the bus until the turn has been made and then discharge them so that the bus drivers away from the students.

PASSING AND TURNING

The driver shall not pass another bus or run side by side with another bus on any highway at anytime. If the route requires a left turn, the driver must be sure to merge into the left lane in plenty of time to make the maneuver safely.

FOLLOWING OTHER VEHICLES

Tailgating is one of the most frequent causes of accidents. The driver shall not follow a vehicle closer than three (3) bus lengths. It should be remembered that it is the driver's fault when he/she runs into the rear of another vehicle. Virginia law requires that buses driving outside cities and towns must keep a distance of at least two hundred (200) feet when following other buses and trucks.

CHECKING THE BUS AFTER COMPLETING A BUS RUN

After unloading students at the assigned schools and following the completion of the AM and PM runs, the driver must make a physical check to determine if any vandalism has occurred and to be sure that no students are allowed to remain on the bus for any period of time or for any reason. **A child left on the bus at the completion of a run will result in terminations of the driver and assistant.**

REPORTS, SCHEDULES, AND MEETINGS

The state of Virginia requires all drivers to perform daily pre-trip inspections. Driver must prepare a Daily Pre-Trip Inspection Form with the beginning and ending mileage for the month entered on the top of the form. The driver makes daily entries on the form indicating that all items have been checked. Any discrepancies must be reported to the Transportation Department. The completed report is to be kept in the bus notebook. If there are mechanical problems a repair order must be filled out.

Each driver is responsible for performing his/her own daily pre-trip inspection correctly. Failure to correctly perform the pre-trip inspection is a serious breach in safety protocol, any driver found in violation of this requirement will be recommended for dismissal.

It is every driver's responsibility to keep accurate stop schedules on the bus throughout the school year. Falsifying stop schedules or failing to maintain accurate stop schedules is caused for disciplinary measures.

Every effort should be made to maintain scheduled stops within five (5) minutes of the specified times.

HOURS OF OPERATION

REGULAR SCHOOL DAY 2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR

7:50 Busses Unload
Breakfast
8:15 Classes Begin
3:00 School Ends Busses Load
3:15 Busses Depart
3:15 After School Programs Begin
5:15 After School Programs End

The bus must be at the school no more than five (5) minutes earlier than the time specified by the routing department. If the bus cannot be on time the Transportation Supervisor should be notified. It is then the responsibility of the Transportation Office to notify the school of late arrivals.

NOTE: The accuracy of stop schedules is CRUCIAL to maintain the integrity of the routing system, and to provide substitute driver's accurate information in the event of a driver's absence.

ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

In case of an accident involving the bus, the safety of the students comes first. Determine if any students are injured; once determined, use the following guidelines:

- a. Contact the Transportation Supervisor.
- b. Do not move the vehicle until directed by the State Police or school officials.
- c. Check bus for injured students.
- d. Protect the accident scene by setting out flares or reflectors.
- e. Do not leave students unattended. Send a responsible student or passing motorist to notify the authorities.
- f. Have students remain on the bus unless there is extensive damage, danger or further harm, or fire.
- g. If another vehicle is involved, obtain the following: driver's name, address, phone number, insurance company name, and policy number; vehicle's license plate number and state; and

name, address, and phone number of witnesses or other drivers involved in the incident.

- h. Cooperate fully with the police conducting the investigation.
- i. If statements at the scene are necessary, only give the officer your statement-do not admit guilt.
- j. Write down, in your own words, what happened at the scene and take it to the Transportation Supervisor. See the Transportation Supervisor within twenty-four (24) hours to complete the required accident reports.
- k. List the names of all students on the bus at the time of the accident.
- l. If parent(s) arrive to pick up students, contact the school. Ask for photo ID. If the school administrator confirms the parent(s), then make a list of students who leave with the parent(s). Parent(s) are only allowed to take their own son/daughter.
- m. Give the other party your name, bus number, and license number if it is requested. Refer all other questions to the Transportation Supervisor.
- n. List parts damaged on the other vehicle.
- o. All accidents are to be immediately reported to the Supervisor of Transportation.

BREAKDOWN PROCEDURES

The driver must ensure that the bus or car is in top condition **"BEFORE"** transporting students. In the event the driver notes a problem during pre-trip inspection or experiences a malfunction during the route, contact the Transportation Office for instructions. The driver **SHOULD NOT** take it upon himself/herself to proceed with faulty equipment.

In case of a breakdown, use the following guidelines:

- a. Secure vehicle and set parking break.
- b. Turn on emergency four-way hazard lights.
- c. Radio the Transportation Office or call (804) 493-9491 ext 1239/ (804)-493-0527 ext 1238/ Cell (804) 450-3633.
- d. Set out triangles.

- e. Have students remain on the bus until other transportation arrives, unless there is danger or harm to passengers.

EVACUATION OF SCHOOL BUSES

A pre-planned procedure should be known by all the bus riders in case of an emergency. To help familiarize riders with evacuation procedures and to comply with state law, emergency drills are required to be conducted at least twice a year. In addition, training should include pre-planning in the event the driver is incapacitated.

There are several ways to evacuate the bus. The route for evacuation will be determined by the nature of the emergency. Since the emergency dictates the route, riders should be familiar with each of the following:

- a. All riders leave through the side door.
- b. All riders leave through the rear door.
- c. Riders in the front half of the bus leave through the side door and those in the rear portion leave through the emergency door.
- d. Riders exit through the side door alone, or the side door in combination with the above.

NOTE: Some buses are equipped with emergency exit windows and roof hatches. If your bus has these special emergency exits, their location and use must be fully explained to the riders.

EVACUATION PROCEDURES

In an actual emergency, or drill, the following procedures should be followed:

- a. Secure the bus:
 - i. Stop the bus.
 - ii. Set the parking brake.
 - iii. Place manual transmission in low gear;
 - iv. place automatic transmission in park.
 - v. Turn off ignition and remove the key.
 - vi. Activate the four-way hazard warning flashers.
- b. The driver should stand, open the side door (if this is a side door evacuation), and get the attention of the students.

- c. The driver should give the command: "Emergency drill or actual emergency; remain seated; side door evacuation." The command should reflect whatever route of evacuation the driver has selected.
- d. The driver should stand between the first two seats to be evacuated (seats closest to the evacuation door), face the door, and direct the students to the exits seat by seat, starting on the right and alternating on the left. Passengers should be instructed to walk, not run, and to leave books and pocketbooks on the seat.
- e. Students helpers (parental permission should be secured for students helpers) should help the passengers as they leave the bus (this is a special concern with rear evacuation), and guide students to the appropriate place to stand. The passengers should stand in a group at least one hundred (100) feet from the bus to be out of danger.
- f. After the last passenger has exited, the driver should carefully check to make sure no one is left on the bus.
- g. The driver should then stand with the students and, if this is an actual emergency, provide further instructions. If this is a drill, the driver should tell the students they did a good job or let them know where they need to improve. The driver should dismiss the students or re-load and continue the run.

NOTE: Rear evacuation procedures shall not be practiced by anyone who is pregnant or has an injury that would prohibit them from performing the practice safely.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

- RESCUE SQUAD 911
- SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT 911
 - NON-EMERGENCY 493-8066
- VIRGINIA STATE POLICE 333-3800
- BUS GARAGE 493-9491 or 493-0527
 - TRANSPORTATION SUPERVISOR CELL (804) 450-3633
- SCHOOL BOARD OFFICE 493-8018

GENERAL INFORMATION

MAINTENANCE

A driver is responsible for seeing that his/her vehicle receives proper maintenance and regular inspection as required by law and regulations. All equipment must be kept in good operational order or the vehicle must go to the garage for repair. Check the state inspection sticker located on the windshield to make sure it is valid.

The shop sets up regular schedules for service and inspection dates. These appointments must be kept, as they are mandatory by state law. In extreme cases where the service appointment cannot be kept, the driver must notify the shop of the reason for not being able to keep the scheduled service date. This is the driver's responsibility. **The first scheduled appointment missed will result in probation and the second will result in termination.**

REFUELING

It is the responsibility of the driver to keep the bus or car fueled. It is also the responsibility of the field trip driver to fuel the bus or car before any trips. **Refueling shall not be done during the route.**

CLEANING SCHOOL VEHICLES

It is the responsibility of the driver or substitute driver to keep the vehicles clean at all times. While it is not always possible to wash the outside of the vehicle, the inside must be kept clean and free of debris. If the driver takes pride in the vehicle, the students will be helpful by not throwing trash on the floor. Paper, pencils, and other objects should be kept off the heaters as they may cause damage if they fall into the fan motors.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

- Transportation Office 493-9491/493-0527
- Transportation Supervisor
 - Cell 804-450-3633
- Assistant Transportation Supervisor
 - Cell 804-214-1911
- School Board Office 493-8018