

2022-2023 School Year

I have received a copy of the Madison County School Bus Driver Handbook. By signing this sheet, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the policies and procedures clarified in this document.

Printed Name of Bus Driver

School(s) where the driver is assigned

Signature of Bus Driver

Date

MADISON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

P O BOX 37
DANIELSVILLE, GA 30633

GRADUATING INDEPENDENT, PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS



Madison County School Bus Driver Handbook

All employees are required to submit to a criminal record check.

The Madison County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age disability, marital status, or sexual orientation in any of its employment practices, educational programs, services or activities.

Edited in 2022-2023 School Year

INTRODUCTION

Enclosed in this handbook is special information and regulations for the Madison County School Bus Drivers. It is expected that all personnel involved in student transportation read and understand this local policy manual. A copy of this handbook is made available for all bus drivers, shop personnel, school administrators, and board members. It is expected that all drivers shall keep this in his/her bus at all times.

When you accept the role of school bus driver you are undertaking a tremendous responsibility. You are the authority on that bus. You are the driver, teacher, and parent all rolled into one. The safety and well-being of the children must come first.

You serve in a most important leadership position. The manners in which you drive and care for your bus, maintain discipline, and communicate with others determine the attitude and respect the public has for our schools. Remember to always be professional.

Any additions or changes to this handbook that may occur will be supplied to all book holders for insertion into the manual.

Madison County Schools

TITLE: Bus Driver, Substitute and Full-Time

QUALIFICATIONS:

1. High School diploma preferred.
2. Valid Georgia Class “B” CDL with passenger endorsement, air Brake endorsement “S” endorsement, and verification of an acceptable seven (7) year driving record through the Department of Motor Vehicles.
3. Must successfully complete all required bus driver training.
4. Must meet all other qualifications as stated by state and local school board policy.
5. Excellent communication skills.
6. Medium Work: Lifting or otherwise moving up to 50 pounds of force occasionally, and/or up to 20 pounds of force frequently and/or to 10 pounds of force as needed to move objects. Must pass the GA Department of Education physical.
7. Such alternatives to the above qualifications as the Board may find appropriate and acceptable.

REPORTS TO: Transportation Director and Route Coordinator

SUPERVISES: None

JOB GOAL: To provide safe and efficient transportation so that students may enjoy the fullest possible advantage from the district’s curriculum and extracurricular program.

PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Maintains current knowledge of all local and state traffic laws as related to school bus transportation.
2. Obeys all local and state traffic laws as related to school bus transportation.
3. Maintains current driver’s license.
4. Maintains acceptable MVR.
5. All drivers must pass a Department of Education physical by a licensed doctor of medicine no more than sixty (60) days prior to the beginning of the student school year.
6. Follows scheduled bus transportation route.
7. Ensures students arrive at school and at their home bus stop on a scheduled time.

8. Maintains knowledge of emergency procedures and implements them if these situations occur.
9. Reads all literature on school bus safety distributed by the Department of Transportation.
10. Develops and submits all required transportation reports, such as, number of students transported, mileage, number of stops, school bus accidents, student injuries and others when requested.
11. Assists other school bus drivers when help is needed.
12. Monitors the school bus radio in order to be informed of emergency situations.
13. Secures appropriate emergency assistance if/or when the school bus should become disabled.
14. Reports any potential school bus mechanical problems that may develop while bus is in operation.
15. Maintains flexibility when asked to drive a different or additional route.
16. Maintains knowledge of different bus routes.
17. Observes other school buses while driving the route to check for potential safety problems.
18. Attends scheduled meetings and training classes.
19. Performs inspection of the assigned bus before and after transporting students to and from school and on special activities.
20. Reports all mechanical problems to bus maintenance.
21. Maintains adequate fuel in the assigned bus.
22. Inspects interior of bus after each trip for lost articles, vandalism, and sleeping students.
23. Monitors proper loading and unloading of students.
24. Communicates student rules of conduct.
25. Enforces student discipline procedures.
26. Assigns all student seating.
27. Recognizes all regular student bus passengers.
28. Make proper arrangements for students with special needs.
29. Conducts two emergency evacuation drills each year.
30. Keeps assigned bus clean, including sweeping and washing of the bus.
31. Performs other tasks as assigned consistent with the goals and objectives of this position.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

- All drivers must be of good character.
- Potential drivers must have a personal interview with the Director of Transportation.

- Generally, drivers will be selected from substitutes with the most seniority. However, previous experience, driving ability, place of residence, and other factors may influence driver route placement.
- All drivers must attend staff development and safety meetings as required.
- School bus drivers must meet all local and state requirements for driver's licensing.
- All new bus drivers must complete a minimum of thirty-six (36) hours of training as detailed by the State of Georgia Department of Education and the Department of Driver Services.
- All drivers must maintain adequate levels on local and state evaluations. Drivers will have an annual local evaluation and an annual Georgia DOE driving/bus stop evaluation.
- Drivers must be available in the event of threatening weather or disaster or other events, which requires sudden evacuation of students to home or safety.

LEAVE FOR BUS DRIVERS 1. Sick Leave

It shall be the policy of the Madison County Board of Education to provide sick leave for its school bus drivers in accordance with state law. Each bus driver is eligible to receive sick leave with full pay computed on the basis of one and one-fourth working days for each completed school month of service, cumulative up to 130 days.

Sick leave may be taken for absences due to personal illness, injury, or other temporary disability or necessitated by exposure to contagious disease in which the health of others would be endangered by his/her attendance, or for illness or death in the bus driver's immediate family.

For absences in excess of sick leave and personal/professional leave, deductions shall be made for 1/180 of the yearly salary for each day.

Every effort should be made by the employee to schedule appointments between school bus routes.

The Board of Education reserves the right to request a certificate from a physician, acceptable to the board, relative to the bus driver's illness and the advisability of resuming their duties.

The Superintendent or his designee shall prepare and maintain a sick leave ledger, which will contain a sheet for each eligible employee. This sheet will record the days of sick leave earned, the accumulation from year to year, the sick leave used, and the balance of sick leave credit for each employee.

2. Personal Leave

During any school year a bus driver may utilize up to a maximum of three days of accumulated personal leave for the purpose of absenting himself/herself from his/her duties for personal reasons if the Transportation Director or his/her authorized designee gives prior approval. This request must be made in writing three (3) days in advance. The Transportation Director or his/her authorized designee may deny request for personal leave on school days which bus driver presence is essential for effective school operation.

A drivers' personal leave may be cancelled after it has been approved, if and only if, other driver's become unexpectedly ill and there are not enough personnel to drive routes.

Any leave requested on the first two weeks of school or the last two weeks of school will require a Doctors note or a call to the Director if extenuating circumstances exist. Leave during this time is highly discouraged and may be denied. 5/18/22

3. Maternity Leave

A maternity leave of absence shall be granted pregnant employees in accordance with board policy.

4. Jury Duty

If an employee is summoned to serve on local, state, or federal jury, he/she shall be paid as if he/she were working at their regular job. Jury duty leave must be requested in writing three (3) days in advance and must be accompanied by the subpoena.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Employees earn 1.25 sick days per month. The employee may use 3 of their sick day's as personal leave each year. If you do not use the 3 personal days they will remain in your leave bucket to be used as sick time.

3 Days used as personal leave will not reflect on your Annual Employee Evaluation. Annual Evaluation will be based on the below scale:

0-3 days = very Good
3.25-7 days = good
7.25-10 days = needs improvement
10.25 or more = unacceptable

Tardy to bus route:

3 days Tardy = Called into Directors office/Verbal Warning

5 Days Tardy = Letter of Warning in your file

6 or more in one school year will result in a letter in your permanent file in HR.

If an employee has an extended Illness or a family member has an extended Illness this will be taken into consideration and will be handled on a case-by-case basis. (Revised 6/12/18)

PERSONNEL INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

Resignations: All employees of the Board of Education must submit a written letter of resignation, giving two (2) weeks' notice of anticipated departure. The time limit for effecting a resignation may be waived by mutual agreement of the employer and the employee.

Resignations/Retirement: All Bus drivers/employees who are covered by PSERS who are ready to resign or retire and have 15 years of service shall be rewarded for their dedication and dependability. Employees who have worked for 15 years and accumulated over 50 days' sick leave, will be paid \$20.00 dollars per day for every day over 50 days' sick leave. (add. 10-10-2010)

Physical examinations: It shall be mandatory that all drivers pass a physical examination by a licensed physician in order to qualify as a bus driver. This must occur no more than sixty (60) days prior to the beginning of the school year for students. The board reserves the right to require additional physicals or vision testing when deemed necessary.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Disciplinary action may be taken for any recognizable offenses against the employer/employee relationship. Causes for adverse action run the gamut of offenses against this relationship, including inadequate performance of duties as outlined in this manual and improper conduct on or off the job.

Personnel Progressive Discipline: 1. Verbal warning. 2. Written warning. 3. Written reprimand to be placed in personnel file. 4. Suspension. 5. Suspension/dismissal. ** This represents minor incidents where as more severe incidents would not necessary follow the above order.

Terminations: Any employee may be dismissed by the Board of Education for reasons of moral turpitude, inefficiency, or other just cause. In all cases there shall be a conference with the employee to present the facts in the case. A right of appeal through channels is every employee's right.

FAILURE TO FOLLOW THE RULES AND REGULATIONS IN THIS MANUAL COULD RESULT IN A REQUEST TO THE SUPERINTENDENT TO TERNMINATE YOUR EMPLOYMENT WITH THE MADISON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION.

1. Conviction of a felony or serious misdemeanor.
2. Incompetent, negligence or inefficient performance of duties of the position held.
3. Carelessness, negligence or improper uses of Board of Education property including but not limited to the following:
 - A. Failure to keep your assigned vehicle clean of trash, dirt, and writing on inside of vehicle.
 - B. Failure to report damage of vehicle via wreck or vandalism.
 - C. Using buses for private use is prohibited.
 - D. Permitting major vandalism to occur during your presence and failure to report the incident to the proper school officials.
4. Insubordination, which creates a serious breach of discipline.
5. Offensive conduct or language toward the public or Madison County Board of Education or its employees.
6. Misuse of sick leave, excessive tardiness or absenteeism without good cause.
7. Fraud in securing employment.
8. Physical or mental incapacity to perform job duties.
9. Misappropriation of Board of Education funds or equipment.
10. Misuse of Board of Education employment for personal profit or to grant special privileges.

11. Violations of Board of Education policies, rules, personnel rules and regulations, or departmental rules.
12. Criminal, dishonest, immoral, or notoriously disgraceful conduct or other prejudicial acts toward the Board of Education.
13. An accumulation of violations or infractions which indicate an employee's inability or unwillingness to conform to appropriate standards of performance or conduct.
14. Reporting to duty or being on duty under the influence of intoxicants or illegal drugs or prescribed drugs that affect your driving abilities. Unauthorized possession of intoxicants or drugs while on duty as an employee of the Transportation Department and as a bus driver. If you are convicted while on or off duty for driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, or have over the designated number of points on your driving record allowed by the State of Georgia, or your license is revoked for any reason other than personal insurance revocation, your employment as a bus driver will be terminated immediately. Any traffic citation or felony or serious misdemeanor you receive in your personal or Board of Education vehicle must be reported to the Transportation Department before you drive your school bus. Driving a school bus without a valid driver's license will result in immediate dismissal.
15. Using Board of Education school buses for employee private business.
16. Cell phones: While operating a school bus no person/driver will talk/or text on a cell phone unless the bus is completely stopped at a safe location and the driver is out of the driver's compartment/seat. If any driver violates this rule, either suspension or termination will be recommended to the Madison County School Superintendent.

Georgia Code 40-6-165e states the driver of a school bus shall not use or operate a cellular telephone while the bus is in motion.

DRIVER ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS

1. School buses will not be used for personal transportation under any circumstances. Any violations will result in suspension and/or termination.
2. Small children (non-students of the school system) are not allowed on school buses unless extenuating circumstances arise and prior approval from the Transportation Director has been made.

MAINTENANCE INSPECTIONS

- All school buses will be inspected monthly by shop personnel as to mechanical, electrical, and safety conditions. This inspection will be on a scheduled basis and all drivers will be informed as to the schedule. The bus must be left at the garage facility when due for inspection.
- Any driver having knowledge of possible defects or conditions, which could hamper the effectiveness, efficiency, or safety of any bus must report this immediately to the Shop Foreman.
- Drivers should complete a pre-trip & post-trip inspection form daily (morning route and afternoon route). The form should be kept on the school bus until the end of the month. The pre-trip form should include a total number of students and total mileage from the first stop to the last school.

BUS OPERATION INFORMATION

- Bus Inspection Schedule – Regular monthly inspections are required. Mechanics are assigned to maintain your vehicle. NO EXCUSES. A record of pre/post trip must be kept on the bus at all times. Please certify on the pre-trip inspection form that you have accomplished the inspection, as state law requires. These forms are to be given to the Transportation Director on monthly bases. (revised 6/12/18)
- Running buses with flat tires is a violation of safety procedures. The required five-minute walk around inspection should be sufficient to detect tire problems.

- Cut seats and broken windows – Bus must be inspected by pre/post trip before and after each run. The interior of the bus must be inspected between each run. (revised 6/12/18)
 - a) Inspect immediately after unloading each load.
 - b) Assign students to seats. **Boys side, girls side.** Except when given other instructions due to a pandemic. 9/14/20
 - c) Report to the Transportation Director any problem that may occur the day it happens. Follow up in writing within a 48-hour period or Monday if occurrence is on Friday (PM route).
 - d) Inform students that student’s parents must pay any vandalism to buses.
- Complete physical examination forms covering the current year must be in before you can drive a bus. NO EXCEPTIONS.
- Buses can only be driven on routes, field trips, and to the Bus Shop for fueling, safety inspection dates, oil change dates, in the event maintenance is necessary, and when instructed to do so by the Director of Transportation.
- Run routes at times indicated – do not adjust without Transportation Director’s approval and only after students and parents are notified.
 - a) All routes must be audited and any problems should be reported to the Transportation Director. Report any unsafe stops, overloading, and/or safety violations to the Transportation Director.
 - b) Any overloading must be reported immediately after the occurrence.
 - c) A written copy of your route must be turned into the Transportation Director by September 1. The written copy must include the time of your first pick up in the morning.
- Bus stops should not be changed without the Transportation Director’s knowledge and approval. Don’t let parents make changes for you.
- Vehicle insurance is carried by the Board of Education to protect the Board of Education while the vehicle is on official Board of Education business.
- The door must be closed at all times when the bus is moving.
- Fire extinguishers first aid kits, and emergency reflectors must be on the school bus at all times. Your pre-trip inspection will check this. Fire extinguishers must be refilled after any use.
- Drivers shall not smoke on buses. It is recommended not to eat or drink on buses unless extenuating circumstances (example, heat). You are expected to follow the same rules as the children.
- It is not legal to pay substitutes out of your pocket. All services provided by the Board must be duly documented and paid for by the Board of Education.

- Seat belts, safety devices, speedometers, emergency door buzzer, and air brake buzzer shall be working on all buses. Be sure you know how to adjust your seat and adjust to your requirement before driving the bus.
- Buses must be cleaned out daily. **NO EXCEPTIONS!** Be sure to bring a clean bus when inspection is due. Bring bus in at time indicated. Any change of designated inspection or oil change times must be approved by the Director of Transportation. All windows must be closed over-night and when we have bad weather.
- Observe speed laws.
Drivers are required to report any suspected vehicle defectiveness immediately to the Bus Shop.
- **DO NOT RIDE BRAKES!** It causes excessive brake shoe, drum and/or caliper wear. Do not use transmission and/or clutch to hold vehicle on hills, at a stop sign, or in traffic.
- Use transmission lever to shift down to appropriate level instead of driving vehicle in the wrong gear.
- All brakes will be thoroughly inspected during the inspection and you will be notified if you need brake repair. Your pre-trip inspection will tell you if your parking brake is in proper working order. Do not park on hill or incline unless you turn the wheels into the curb or toward a ditch.

Anti-Idling Policy

The bus engine should be turned off as soon as possible after arriving at the school's loading and unloading areas. The school bus should not be restarted until it is ready to depart. Idling time during early morning warm up should be limited to what the bus manufacturer recommends [generally no more than five minutes].

CLEANLINESS OF SCHOOL BUS

- The bus driver shall keep his/her bus in a clean and sanitary condition. It is the driver's personal responsibility to sweep out his/her bus daily. After each route, buses are to be inspected for graffiti, torn seats, etc.
- The Transportation Director will inspect each school bus on a quarterly basis during the school year.
- The bus driver is responsible for turning in the bus at the end of each year clean. Coaches of athletics shall keep the bus in a clean condition while on field trips.

INFORMATION AND REGULATIONS FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

REPORTS

- Drivers are requested to report any mechanical problems to the Shop Foreman as soon as possible in writing after detection. Route problems are to be reported to the Routing Coordinator and/or Director of Transportation. Discipline or other student problems are to be reported to the school administrators immediately, as described in the student discipline section of this manual then followed up with a discipline referral using doc-e-fill. (revised 6/12/18)
- It shall be mandatory for each driver to report to the Director of Transportation if and when the number of students being transported is in excess of the seating capacity.

MEETINGS

- It is mandatory for each driver to attend all county meetings for school bus drivers. The Georgia State Board of Education requires all school bus drivers to participate in Driver Training Programs provided by the State Department of Education. These and other necessary meetings will be announced in advance to all drivers.

THE BUS DRIVER AND THE LAW/REQUIREMENTS

****Remember all laws of the road applies plus many rules that are especially designed for the bus driver****

- The law makes no concessions for a SUBSTITUTE DRIVER.
 - State law prescribes license requirements and annual physical requirements.
 - Always complete a pre-trip inspection before the AM and PM route.
 - Proper use of seat belts is required for ALL DRIVERS. (revised 6/12/18)
 - Always remember to utilize proper signal lights, stop arms, and headlights. Lights and signs are not to be used to give the driver advantage over other traffic.
 - Children must always cross the road in front of the bus and not at the rear.
 - School buses must make a complete stop at all Railroad Crossings.
 - When in convoy, always follow the 4-second rule adding more distance for speed and inclement weather. (revised 6/12/18)
 - A full stop must be executed before opening the door.
 - No student may be on board the bus while fueling.
- Only the driver is authorized to operate the service door. No students are allowed in the step well or driver compartment.
- Coasting is prohibited at all times.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

- Each driver shall be personally responsible for checking and knowing that each safety signal and lights are in working order on his/her bus. Failure of any part on the signal system shall be reported immediately to the school bus shop. Drivers are responsible for completing the daily pre-trip inspection form and turning them in at the end of each month. Pre-trip forms must include mileage and number of students as requested on the form.

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- Each driver is responsible for the operation of his/her bus including all safety features such as brakes, light, horn, windshield wipers, tires, and any other device where a defect may cause an accident. It is the driver's responsibility to check these items daily and make a report to the bus shop when repairs are needed.
- It is the driver's responsibility to cooperate with the bus shop in order to keep his/her bus mechanically safe at all times. The bus shop has the authority to pull any bus out of service at any time they feel that the bus is not safe for transporting students. Drivers are requested to adhere to bus shop schedules and carry their bus in at the proper time for service and inspection.

SEAT BELTS

- Georgia State Law requires drivers to properly use seat belts at all times when operating a school bus. (Revised 6/12/18)

FIRST AID EQUIPMENT

- Each school bus is equipped with a First Aid Cabinet and First Aid supplies as required by the State Department of Education regulations. These supplies are for emergency use only. It is the driver's responsibility to report any first aid supply needs to the bus shop. All inspections will include an inspection of first aid supplies.
- It is the driver's responsibility to know what first aid supplies he/she has available and to read the instructions concerning proper use of the materials.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

- Each bus is equipped with a fire extinguisher. It is the driver's responsibility to see that his/her fire extinguisher is in proper working order at all times. All bus inspections will include an inspection of the fire extinguisher.

LICENSE

- Each driver must have a valid license as required by state law and local policy. Failure to maintain proper licensing will result in termination of employment. Renewal of the license is the sole responsibility of the driver. The Madison County Board of Education must have a current copy of your license.

USE OF LIGHTS

□ The following state law is applicable to school bus operation in Madison County, (Georgia Code 68-1667):

“It shall be unlawful for any person to operate a school bus which is transporting children unless the head lamps are illuminated.”

Body lights should be used at all times when the bus is in operation. Weather conditions should be taken into consideration and speed reduced according to visibility.

SPEED LAWS AND REGULATIONS

- Each driver, while in the performance of his/her duty as a school bus driver, shall be responsible for the observance of all traffic laws and regulations of the Department of Public Safety governing the operation of school buses in the State of Georgia.
- No school bus driver shall drive a school bus on a street or highway at a speed that is not reasonable or prudent under the conditions. Drivers must have regard for actual or potential hazards that may exist. Violations of this policy shall be considered sufficient evidence for termination of employment.
- The bus driver shall be solely and personally responsible for any penalties resulting from violations of traffic laws or regulations.

TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

- Violations of school bus laws or local requirements must be reported to the Director of Transportation immediately.

Drivers must notify his/her employer within 10 days of a conviction for any traffic violation except parking. This is true without regard to the type of vehicle being driven at the time.

ROUTES AND SCHEDULES

- All drivers must accept the fact that, as a bus driver, their first line of duty is that of driving the buses to fit the school schedules. With this fact in mind, drivers are expected to work out their schedules, which will put the students at the school in time to begin the school day on time, but not before school supervision is available.

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- Bus drivers will not change bus routes unless approved or directed by the Transportation Director. Temporary changes due to road construction, etc., are permitted; however, the Transportation Director must be notified.
- Bus routes shall be arranged so as to utilize the service of all buses to meet the minimum time and mileage requirements of the uniform minimum standards of the State Department of Education.
- Roadway Not Passable Due to Obstruction/Inclement Weather: If a bus driver is on his/her route and a road is obstructed or impassable it is the driver's responsibility to notify the student's parent/legal guardian of said circumstance. If the driver cannot reach a parent, he/she is to notify bus shop dispatch with name of student, name of parent/legal guardian along with telephone numbers. If you are in a dead spot and cell phone or radio does not work, you are to follow the above procedures as soon as you are in an area of radio or cell phone service. (add. 1-18-2011) Reminder- Cell phones are only permitted once the driver has safely secured the bus and is out of the driver's compartment/seat. (revised 6/27/16)

BUS ASSIGNMENTS

- Each student must ride his/her assigned bus. A student will not be allowed to switch buses. Each driver will have the responsibility of checking his/her passengers and reporting any student attempting to violate this regulation. Each driver is required to have a list of student information sheets with emergency contact numbers.
- A bus driver has the authority to assign seats to any or all students riding his/her bus

BUS STOPS

- Bus stops shall be determined on the basis of safety conditions along the road and the density of pupil population.
- Only one stop will be made to drop off or pick up students who live less than one-tenth of a mile apart; unless extenuating circumstances exist.
- Bus stops shall not be located at intersections, on blind curves, steep grades, near the crest of hills, or at other places of potential hazard. Bus stops shall be determined on the basis of safety.
- When making a stop to let off students, bus drivers will not open the door until all traffic in sight has obeyed the signals.

- It is the driver's responsibility to open and close the bus doors. Students will not be allowed to open bus doors at any time.
- School buses shall be brought to a full stop before being driven onto any highway or other public road of this state.
- At such places where students must cross highways after getting off school buses, they must pass in front of the bus.
- Drivers shall activate all signs and lights required when making stops for unloading and loading students.
- No driver shall open the front door while the bus is in motion. The only exception to this rule would be while crossing a railroad, then an open door would aid the vision and hearing of the driver in both directions of the railroad. In no instance will a student be permitted to get off or on any bus while such vehicle is in motion.
- In loading students on the bus, drivers shall not start the bus until all students being loaded are seated. Drivers will see that this is done as quickly as possible. Students who are being un-loaded shall remain in their seats until the bus has been brought to a full stop.
- No child is to be allowed off the bus at any place other than the school designated stop except with written consent from the school officials. A note from parents or guardians will be acceptable if approved by a school official.
- No driver shall blow the bus horn while approaching or waiting at a bus stop.

ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

It is vital that every precaution be exercised in order to prevent an accident from occurring. However, the actions of the driver following an accident can do much to determine the final outcome. By remaining calm and collected, the driver will be more effective in deciding the proper course of action to follow. The procedures that follow should be utilized if an accident does occur.

Stop immediately.

1. Activate the four-way flashers.
2. Turn the engine off and back on for radio communication unless danger of fire.
3. Set the parking brake.
4. Remain calm and reassure the students, check for injuries.
5. Protect the scene from traffic and people so that evidence is not destroyed.
6. Under normal circumstances, the vehicle involved should not be moved until law officers so direct.
7. Be alert to a fire or the possibility of a fire. Check for ruptured fuel tank and fuel lines, electrical fire, and smoke.
8. Check for injured students. If there are injuries, give attention first to the most seriously injured. Do not move injured persons unless absolutely necessary.
9. Keep students on the bus unless there is a possibility of a fire, another collision, or danger of drowning.
10. Account for all students.
11. Check for injuries in the other vehicle(s).
12. Notify the appropriate persons and agencies which shall include:
 - Medical emergency units
 - Law enforcement agencies
 - Transportation Director
13. Do not discuss the facts of the accident with the general public.
14. The driver of any vehicle involved in an accident shall give name, address, and registration number of the vehicle and shall upon request, and if it is available, exhibit his/her operator's license to the person struck or the driver or occupant of or person attending any vehicle collided with.
15. Do not place blame for the accident or make an admission of liability.
16. Provide information on the accident only to the investigating officers and school officials. This information should include a list of all students' names, ages, and addresses if available, and information about the school bus, such as insurance, make, model number, and owner.
17. If witnesses are present other than your students, get names, addresses, and license numbers.
18. Continue transportation of students when authorized to do so. They should be transported by the present bus if released, or by another bus.
19. Drivers are required to report all accidents to the Transportation Director. All required forms must be completed in accordance to state law and local policy.

BREAKDOWNS

In the event of a breakdown by any bus on a route, the driver will not permit the students to get off the bus. The driver should notify the bus shop, giving the following information: driver's bus number, location of the bus, and the nature of the problem.

RAILROAD CROSSINGS

The following procedures shall be followed at all railroad crossings:

1. When the railroad pre-warning sign appears, slow down and test brake.
2. Activate the four-way yellow hazard lights (approximately 100 feet before the crossing).
3. Tap brakes to illuminate the brake lights.
4. Choose an escape route in the event of brake failure.
5. Stop smoothly at a distance of at least 15 feet but not more than 50 feet from the nearest rail. (Remember – a second stop may be required).
6. Place the transmission in such a gear selection that will permit you to cross the tracks without shifting gears or stalling.
7. Open the service door, driver's window, and turn off noisy equipment.
8. Look and listen for an approaching train. Never depend on a mechanical device of warning alone.
9. If a clear view cannot be obtained, the driver should pull up nearer the tracks and repeat the procedure.

If you have determined that the tracks are clear:

- Close the service door.
- Cross the tracks without shifting of gears.
- Deactivate the four-way yellow hazard flasher lights.
- Continue on the route.

If the tracks are not clear:

- Set the parking brakes.
- Shut off engine if desirable.
- Do not let students off the bus except in case of emergency.

Authority of the Bus Driver

Effective Referral Use:

- Referrals should be used for serious problems. Referrals are legal documents that become part of the child's educational record and should not be filled out **lightly**.
- Most of the time, referrals should be used only after the driver has already tried to contact the parent and correct misbehavior. (In severe incidents such as violence or outright defiance of a safety rule, incidents must be reported at once.) (revised 6/27/16)
- "Less is more" – school officials tend to take referrals more seriously when they're used selectively. Except in extreme cases, referrals should be limited to two or three children at a time.
- Accuracy is essential. Referrals should never be based on "hear-say." Mistakes on a referral undermine credibility.
- Legibility and neatness do matter. It should be clear to anyone reading the referral that the person writing it took it seriously.
- "Editorial comments" on referrals should be avoided. e.g., "Why do we have to transport Johnny anyway?"
- Behavior problems should be described in enough detail that administrators and parents really understand what happened.
- The safety reason for the referral should always be explained. Using the "S-word" ("safety") is effective. For example, "I warned Johnny to sit down, but he refused. It's unsafe. He will be hurt if the bus has to stop suddenly."
- Cursing or sexual language should be reported verbatim. It may be distasteful, but administrators and parents need to know exactly what the child said.

Documentation Can:

Protect transportation team members from Liability, which could result; if serious behavior problems are not reported.

The driver's responsibility is to instruct the students concerning the rules of conduct, enforce those rules, and document behavior which is disobedient, disruptive, or dangerous. **Written documentation** is needed within 24 hours by the school administrator for action to be taken when students fail to cooperate. Thus, the school bus driver should stay in close contact with the principal and parents when problems occur.

Severe Bus Fight or Discipline Incidents on the Afternoon Route

There is the possibility that a bus driver can have a serious fight or discipline incident on the bus during the afternoon route. Remember, we are only talking about very serious fights or incidents.

Step One: The bus driver immediately contacts the transportation director.

Step Two: The driver briefly describes the incident and gives the transportation director the names of students. (Drivers should remember that others can hear the radio transmission and comments should be brief and discreet.)

Step Three: Transportation director informs the driver to have a write-up for the next morning.

Step Four: The decision is made to give the student(s) a letter asking their parent to transport them to the appropriate school the next morning.

Step Five: Transportation contacts the school to make them aware of this incident and to be prepared for the next morning.

Step Six: The school contacts the parents of the combatants and follows up with the decision for the student to NOT ride the bus. The parent is also reminded about the appropriate time to bring student to the school. (Fights often do not settle issues, and other problems can quickly surface again the next morning. Even if one student is clearly the victim, riding the bus the next morning may not be wise.)

Step Seven: The school prepares to interview students in the morning.

Bus Behavior

- Riding on a school bus is a privilege, not a right, and students can be suspended or restricted from riding buses if misbehavior interferes with the safety of riders, drivers, and traffic.
- Students will be at their designated bus stop five minutes before arrival of the bus and will remain 12 feet back from the road until instructed by the driver to load the bus. Students will follow all safety instructions given by the driver.
- No parent or guardian may board any bus or interfere with the safe delivery of students; instead they should address concerns to the Transportation Department or school administrators.
- Each driver has complete charge of the students riding his/her bus. Each driver has the right to designate a seat for each student on the bus.
- Students are to keep all parts of their body inside the bus at all times.
- Students are to remain seated at all times.
- The use of tobacco or alcohol is prohibited on the school buses.
- Students must conduct themselves in an orderly manner and refrain from loud conduct which distracts the driver and creates an unsafe situation.
- Profane or obscene language is prohibited.
- Students will not throw anything in or out of the bus.
- Students and parents are financially responsible for damages done through carelessness or intended action.
- Large, cumbersome objects that can't be placed securely in the lap of student or breakable items (glass, jars, etc.) should not be brought on the bus. Balloons are not allowed on the bus.
- Band instruments must be stored in the student's lap, upright between the knees, or in the floor behind the student's feet
- Eating and drinking are prohibited on the buses.
- Bus drivers may allow students to use electronic musical devices with ear buds as an intervention, but these devices will be confiscated and banned on the bus when they cause a disruption, conflict, or theft issue. **Ear buds must be taken out before student's load or unload the bus.**
- Students shall be prohibited from using any electronic devices during the operation of a school bus including cell phones, or any other electronic device that may interfere with communication or the driver's operation of the school bus.
- Students will not sit on a lap of another, have an arm around another student, or conduct himself/herself in any objectionable manner. All students are to sit boys on one side and girls on the other side. (revised 6/12/18)
- Students are directly prohibited by Georgia law from committing any acts of physical violence, bullying, physical assault or battery, verbal assault, disrespectful conduct, and vulgar language toward the bus driver or other persons, and other unruly behavior while riding a school bus.
- Students are prohibited from using mirrors, lasers, flash cameras, or any other lights or reflective devices during the operation of the school bus.
- Students shall not use "physical violence" against any bus driver or bus aide. State law requires that a student who commits physical violence against a bus driver or bus aide shall be expelled from the public school for the remainder of the student's eligibility or by the tribunal unless the Board of Education uses discretion in providing an alternative discipline.
- No student will be allowed to enter or leave his/her assigned bus at any place other than his/her regular stop or school unless the student has WRITTEN PERMISSION from a parent or guardian approved by the principal or designee of the student's school.
- If a student is found to have engaged in bullying as defined by subsection (a) of the Code Section 20-2751.4 or in physical assault or battery of another person on the school bus, Madison County Board Policy requires a meeting of the parent or guardian of the student and appropriate school district official to form a school bus behavior contract for the student. Such contract shall provide for progressive age-appropriate discipline, penalties, and restrictions for student misconduct on the bus. Contract provisions may include but shall not be limited to assigned seating, ongoing parental involvement, and/or suspension from riding the bus. The subsection is not to be construed to limit the instances when a school code of conduct or the Madison County Board of Education may require use of a student bus behavior contract.
- For fighting or other serious discipline incidences on a bus, the Transportation Supervisor will contact the school. School administration will then contact the parents of students involved in these and told that these students will not be allowed to ride a bus the next school day. The parents will bring the students in to meet with school administration who will determine the appropriate punishment.
- All other policies in the Student Code of Conduct also apply when a student is on a bus, waiting at a bus stop, getting on or getting off a bus.

Bus Behavior (continued)

- Students who ride bus transportation are under surveillance cameras during their rides. Videos are often used to substantiate bus referrals.
- **A Student Who Is Suspended from Riding a Bus May Not Ride Any Madison County School Bus for The Duration of the Suspension.**

MADISON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child, _____, was involved in a serious bus incident this afternoon on my bus. I will report this incident to the administration of the school where your child attends. Please transport your child to school in the morning so that no further incidents will occur during the morning route. In most cases, the parents usually want to discuss the incident with an administrator. If you will report to school at 8:00 a.m. in the morning, this should prevent you and your child from having to wait for any extended period of time in most cases.

I will provide the administration with a report. Please note that the administration will want to meet with your child to discuss today's incident. Please contact the school if you have any questions about these procedures. Thanks,

Bus Driver

Madison County High School (706) 795-2197

Madison County Middle School (706) 783-2400

MADISON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Bus Discipline Referral

Date of Request

Month	Day	Year
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School

Choose One

Bus Number

Bus Driver

Student Name

Offense

Specify Other

Choose One

Previous action taken

Choose One

Specify Other

Date of parent contact

Details of

Incident

Month	Day	Year
-------	-----	------

Choose One

Did you personally witness the incident? Name of Witness 1

Name of Witness 2

Name of Witness 3

Corrective action taken by administrator

DISCIPLINE AND PROBLEMS

- Any special request made of the driver by parents or children should be directed to the Transportation Director.
- All drivers will assign students seats during the first week of school, and will provide school and Transportation Department a copy and any revision throughout the year.
- It is the bus driver's responsibility to maintain proper discipline on the bus. Drivers should report misconduct by completing a bus referral in ESS. (10/12/21) This will be sent to the Director who will send it to administrators. Discipline problems should be handled without delay.
- Drivers should feel free to discuss with school authorities and transportation director of any problems that may arise. We are here to help.
- Discipline problems occurring on the morning route should be submitted to the school administrators at the completion of the morning route. In cases of severe discipline problems on the afternoon route, the driver shall notify the school administrators immediately and the school authorities will notify the parents of action taken.

TIPS ON MAINTAINING DISCIPLINE

- Remember that a sense of humor is extremely valuable.
- Never give an order you do not mean to enforce.
- Do not ask students to do anything they cannot do.
- The response of the child is in the action. Give your command to stimulate action, not to check it. Say, "do this" rather than, "don't do that." Suggest an action, which can be successfully obeyed.
- Give a child time for reaction.

- Have a reason for what you ask a child to do, and when possible take time to give the reason, so that he/she can see the point.
- Be honest in what you say and do. A child's faith in you is a great help.
- Commend good qualities and actions.
- Try to be constructive – not repressive in all dealings with children.
- Never strike a child. It may seem to be the easiest way, but it only aggravates the problem.
- Do not judge misconduct on how it annoys you.
- Do not take your personal feelings and prejudices out on the children.
- Maintain poise at all times. Do not lose your temper.
- Look for the good qualities. All children have them.
- Do not “pick” on every little thing a child does. Sometimes it is wiser to overlook some things.
- Bear in mind that misbehavior is usually the result of an underlying issue. (revised 6/12/18)
- Listen for suggestions and complaints from the children.
- Follow-up all cases which have been disciplined. Be certain that you still have the respect and confidence of the child.
- Be sincere in your work.
- Set a good example yourself.
- Intelligence in handling youth consists of thinking faster than they do. If they can out-think you, you are not using your maturity and experience to your advantage. You should see possibilities before they become results. This is the secret of leadership.
- Defiance to established procedures comes from failure in some adults to keep the situation in hand. If there is danger of a direct break, the child should never be forced. It is far wiser

to give some simple directions that will be mechanically obeyed and pick up the reins of control in a quiet way.

- Never hold a child up to public ridicule. It is the surest way of creating a discipline problem.
- Be fair; it isn't punishment, but injustice that make a child rebel against you.
- Anticipate trouble before it starts.
- Be friendly. Always show an interest in what they are doing.
- Talking with a rider privately often clears up the trouble.
- A rider who is causing trouble can be reseated, preferably in the front.
- If a rider continues to be disobedient, he/she should be reported to the administration. The administration will then handle the problem and may prohibit that pupil from riding on the bus.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL BUS DRIVER

The school bus driver is the one person mainly responsible for good discipline on a school bus. The bus riders like to have a driver whom they can respect. A good bus driver should have the following characteristics:

- The driver should be respected in the community.
- The driver should always keep himself or herself neat and clean.
- The driver should always be clean in their speech.
- The driver should always be friendly.
- The driver should always be courteous.
- The driver should always cooperate with the administration and fellow bus drivers.
- The driver should always keep the bus clean.
- The driver should strive to always be on time.

Radio Procedures

It is imperative that any radio communications be for emergencies or operational essential traffic only. The radio is not for use to conduct personal matters. Efforts should be in line with maintaining radio silence until a declared event occurs. The following information is to ensure all personnel are aware of the proper radio usage expectations.

An Emergency is:

- A bus breakdown
- A bus involved in a crash
- A medical emergency
- Police assistance needs
- Severe Weather

Emergency Radio Information

1. Are there any students onboard the bus?
2. If there are students on board, how many?
3. What is the location of the bus?
4. Name of the closest intersection, landmark or closest address.
5. Injuries? Do you need medical assistance?
6. Is the bus drivable?

Inappropriate use of the radio system will be monitored and discouraged by dispatchers when identified. Such inappropriate events will be documented; time and violator. Do not attempt to talk simultaneously while others are using the 2-way radio; Do not “walkover” others on radio. To gain access for air time a request for clearance from the dispatcher must be granted.

Proper Footwear

All footwear must have a nonskid, rubber sole with a strap on the back of the shoe.
(Effective 10/16/17).

Dress Code- Follow the Board policy. Remember when it is hot outside, we transport children!
Shorts should not be shorter than the tips of your fingers when your arms are at your side.
When you sit, they are shorter! (Revised 5/2/2019)