

Policy-8124

Non-Instructional Operations

Duties of School Bus Drivers

The Board of Trustees adopts this policy to define the duties of all bus drivers transporting students of this district, whether on a regular route, field trip, or activity trip. This policy applies to all regular and substitute bus drivers, whether employed by the district or on contract.

1. The driver shall ensure the safe condition of the school bus by conducting an initial and thorough daily pre-trip/post-trip/child check school bus inspection. Such inspections shall at a minimum ensure that all safety equipment is in working order, i.e. brakes, tires, all lighting systems, steering and horn. During post-trip inspections, importance should be placed upon locating any sleeping students, articles left on the bus, and all defects. The driver will immediately report any equipment which is not in proper working condition.
2. The driver will regularly check the first-aid kit to see that it contains all required items and replace missing items.
3. The driver shall not allow any passenger to operate the bus.
4. Only properly enrolled students, eligible for transportation, and aides may ride the bus on a regular route. When special circumstances exist and space is available, the superintendent or designee may allow non-students to ride the bus. The driver will not allow non-students to board the bus, unless presented with prior written permission by the superintendent or designee. Teachers and other persons who have been officially appointed as chaperones may be allowed on the bus for field and activity trips.
5. The driver has complete responsibility, and final authority, for the operation of the bus and care of the student passengers. The driver is responsible for the proper discipline of students on the bus and will exercise discipline in compliance with the district's discipline policies. The driver will not remove any student from the bus for discipline reasons except at the student's school or the student's regular bus stop. The driver will report *to the transportation supervisor* any student whose behavior may endanger the operation of the bus, uses obscene language, or damages the bus.
6. The driver shall wear a properly positioned lap belt/shoulder harness at all times when operating a school bus.

7. The driver will load and unload students only from the right-hand side of the road and at a position from which the driver has clear vision of at least one hundred (100) yards in both directions, whenever possible, and a position that is at least forty (40) feet from intersections, whenever possible. The driver will count the number of students exiting the bus at each stop and will ascertain the students' whereabouts prior to moving the bus. When loading or unloading students on a roadway having more than three (3) lanes, the driver will load or unload only those students who live on the right-hand side, except at locations having easily accessible traffic control signals.
8. Prior to crossing any railroad track, or entering or crossing any arterial highway, the driver will come to a full stop. If any railroad crossing, intersection, or access is obscured by trees, buildings, or other object, or wind, storm, fog, or any other restriction to visibility, the school bus driver will open any window or door that permits him/her to determine when it is safe to proceed.
9. The driver will require each passenger to be seated in a regular passenger seat. No passengers will be allowed to stand while the bus is in motion.
10. The driver will not operate the bus at any time in excess of its maximum occupancy as determined by the manufacturer. Occupancy will not exceed three (3) persons per seat at any time.
11. The driver will not back up to turn the bus around on a public roadway, unless the Board makes a finding that there is no alternative to backing buses on certain roads. If the Board so finds, the Board, by official action, may allow backing of school buses on certain public roadways.
12. The driver will give consideration to engine idling during extended wait times. At a minimum, buses shall not idle for more than three (3) to five (5) consecutive minutes. Emergency, student safety, and maintenance exceptions are authorized.
13. The driver will not permit weapons, or look-alike weapons, of any kind, smoking, tobacco products, electronic smoking devices, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs or controlled substances, *breakable containers, skateboards, scooters, rollerblades, skis/poles, snowboards*, luggage, *sports/band equipment, coolers*, cigarette lighters, matches, *shop projects*, flammable or explosive materials (such as gasoline), or animals (with the exception of service animals), or anything else that could jeopardize the safety of the persons involved, on the bus. Any items carried on the bus must be small enough to be held on the lap of the student. Aisles and emergency exits in the bus must be kept clear at all times. Any item that is brought on board must be safely stowed and secured away from any aisle or emergency exit.

14. The driver will not, under any circumstances, exceed a rate of speed of sixty-five (65) miles per hour or a lesser posted speed limit.
15. The driver shall not use a hand-held mobile telephone while driving the school bus, except when necessary to communicate with law enforcement officials or other emergency service providers during an emergency. For the purpose of this requirement, "driving" means operating the school bus on a highway, including while temporarily stationary because of traffic, a traffic control device, or other momentary delays. Driving does not include operating the school bus when the driver has moved the bus to the side of, or off of, a highway and has halted in a location where the vehicle can safely remain stationary.
16. The driver will report to his or her immediate supervisor the license number of any vehicle that violates any law endangering students.
17. The driver will immediately report all traffic accidents in which the bus is involved to the local school authorities and the appropriate law enforcement agency in accordance with Title 49, Chapter 13, Idaho Code. The superintendent or designee will report all accidents to the State Department of Education. The driver or his or her supervisor will complete a School Bus Accident Report form and submit it to the State Department of Education within fifteen (15) days of the accident.
18. The driver will report to *the transportation supervisor* any condition on or bordering the route which constitutes a hazard to the safety of the students being transported.
19. The driver will not leave an occupied bus. In case of emergency, the driver will request assistance via two-way communication (e.g. radio) whenever possible. If such communication is not possible, the driver should send a bus aide or at least two (2) responsible students for assistance, ask a passing motorist to communicate the need for assistance to the local law enforcement authorities or school district administrative office, or wait for help.
20. Whenever it is necessary for the school bus driver to leave an unoccupied bus or leave the driver's seat of an occupied bus, he or she will shut off the motor, curb the wheels where appropriate, set the brakes, and remove the ignition key.
21. The driver will comply, as much as possible, with the time schedule established for the route.
22. A driver shall maintain route books, and other records as may be required by the board or State Department of Education.

23. School bus drivers shall remain vigilant and report suspicious behavior or conditions which could become harmful to students or be indicative of impending acts of terror. Student transportation operations will be included in the district's crisis planning and related training will be provided to school bus drivers related to district crisis plans and homeland security awareness.

23. The driver shall instruct students on bus safety features and conduct a supervised, practical evacuation drill once during each semester. Before departure on each activity trip, the driver shall instruct students on the location of all emergency exits and demonstrate their operation. Instruction should include a general review of safe riding practices, rules and procedures.

IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY

While acting within the course and scope of his or her duties, a school bus driver will not be civilly or criminally liable for reasonably acting to aid a rider on the bus whom the school bus driver reasonably believes to be in imminent danger of harm or injury.

Policy History:

Adopted: June 2019

Legal Reference:

Idaho Code Sections

33-1508 – Operation of School Buses

33-1509 – School Bus Drivers – Definition – Qualification – Duties – Liability

Title 49, Chapter 13 – Motor Vehicle Accidents

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Federal Regulations

45 CFR Part 1310 (Federal Highway Safety Guidelines)

49 CFR Parts 383, 392 (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Regulations)