

# HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOLS



## TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT POLICY

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## POLICY STATEMENT

The Hamilton County Board of Education recognizes that student transportation is a support service necessary to ensure widespread student attendance. It is the desire of the Board to operate transportation services in the most safe, efficient, and cost-effective manner.

To provide the service of transportation, the Board identifies the following major goals for transportation:

***Safety:*** All operating procedures should consider the protection and best interest of students

***Economy:*** Express routing, varying time schedules, spacing of bus stops, and other techniques for improving operating efficiency should be employed in program operations.

***Time:*** All routes should be planned to keep the time spent on a bus as short as possible

## **JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

### **BUS DRIVER**

Bus drivers for the Hamilton County Board of Education are employed to operate a school bus on a prescribed route and perform transportation-related work as required.

### **GENERAL SUMMARY**

**FUNCTION:** Transports students on a scheduled route to and from school.

**SCOPE:** Poor performance would typically result in the corrective or disciplinary involvement of Transportation Supervisor.

**DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY:** With the review of the Transportation Supervisor, driver makes decisions regarding additions and deletions of bus stops.

### **MAJOR JOB DUTIES**

- Drives a bus and transports students
- Maintains discipline of students
- Inspects and reports bus problems, maintaining cleanliness of bus
- Completes daily trip sheets
- Performs tasks as requested by supervisor that are related to a transportation function

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **TWO-WAY RADIO PROCEDURE**

In order to stay within guidelines set forth by the Federal Communications Commission and to receive maximum efficiency from our system, the following procedures should be adhered to:

**First:** When using the radio unit be sure to depress the "talk" button firmly and speak distinctly into the speaker at a reasonable distance. When listening, release "talk" button. After each communication when you are ready to listen, say "over."

**Second:** Be sure to use the proper call numbers. When calling the base station, use your assigned bus number, i.e., "38 to 501." After completing your communication, clear the system by repeating your bus number and "clear", i.e. "139 clear." (Be sure to say bus number.)

### **AM/FM RADIO OPERATION**

Your bus has been equipped with an AM/FM radio for your students' listening pleasure. In recent surveys it has been determined that the radio when properly used is an effective tool in a bus driver's performance of their duty. Headsets and headphones are not to be used by the bus driver. The volume of the music should be kept at a moderate level which still enables the driver to hear students, monitor the two-way radio, and be aware of emergency vehicles. Radio programs that dwell on politics, controversial issues, religion, or that contain vulgar language are to be avoided. During field trips, if the students' supervisor requests that the radio be changed or turned off, then the driver should comply.

### **DEALING WITH THE NEWS MEDIA**

Drivers and all other personnel are discouraged from talking to the news media regarding accidents, incidents, or other internal Transportation related topics. Statements could end up being used against the employee and HCDE in the event of subsequent criminal or civil proceedings. Questions should be referred to the Transportation Supervisor.

### **STUDENT INJURY**

In the event a student is injured while on the school bus, it is the driver's responsibility to notify the supervisor immediately.

### **TRANSPORTING LARGE OBJECTS ON THE BUS**

For safety purposes, aisles, or emergency exits will not be blocked by instruments, equipment, or other objects.

Band instruments, sports equipment, or other objects shall be permitted on the bus if they can be held on the student's lap or stored on the floor beside the student's feet.

Instruments, equipment, or other objects will not be left in the driver's area. If there is a question about a certain instrument, equipment or object, the bus driver shall make the decision as to whether or not it may be transported. However, no students will be denied transportation. If an object considered too large is brought on the bus the student will be told that the object cannot be transported in the future. The driver should use reasonable judgment in making safety decisions as to whether or not a large object should be transported on the bus.

If some question or controversy arises, the bus driver should contact the immediate supervisor.

### **RELEASE TO DEPART**

Only upon written approval of the parent/guardian and the school principal will the bus driver allow a student to disembark the bus other than at his/her regular bus stop, or to allow a student not ordinarily on their bus to be transported (e.g., a student going home with another student to spend the night.) Principals should check with Transportation on whether space on the bus permits extra riders. Bus drivers will not release students to any person, with the exception of properly identified law enforcement officials, emergency medical technicians, and School Board staff. Parents/guardians and other adults must receive authorization from the principal and Transportation Supervisor before being allowed to board the school bus with students on board. In the case of an accident see Transportation Rules and Regulations, Section D, Item 9.

### **SCHOOL BUS LOADING AND UNLOADING**

- Principals are responsible for the safe loading/unloading of buses while on their campus.
- Elementary bus duty persons should lead children to the door of the bus, remaining there until all are loaded; check around the bus and signal the driver to leave when all is clear.
- For elementary schools it is recommended that a minimum of one (1) bus duty person be provided for each bus to ensure students' safety while loading and unloading. Upon the arrival of the bus, the bus duty person will stand at the bus door observing students as they unload and enter the building. When all are unloaded, he/she will check around the bus and signal the driver to leave when all is clear.
- For secondary schools it is recommended that a minimum of one (1) bus duty person be provided for each five (5) buses to ensure their safety while loading and unloading.
- Where possible, students who walk home should be provided an exit from the school building separate from the exits used for bus loading and unloading.
- The bus duty person(s) should secure the school bus loading zone, ensuring that students are not present in loading and unloading zones as buses are arriving or leaving.
- Principals, or their representatives, should secure areas where students are to load/unload. Unauthorized vehicles parked in loading areas when buses are to arrive will be moved or towed at principal's request.
- Principals will submit loading/unloading plan to the system's Transportation Supervisor ten (10) days prior to the first day of school. This shall have a rough sketch showing bus loading and unloading areas, car loading and unloading areas, and a narrative detailing the level and quantity of supervision planned.
- It is recommended that principals assign a staff member to remain at the school office for 30 minutes after school dismissal. This person will handle student discipline and provide student information in the event of a bus accident.

### **ACCIDENT PROCEDURES**

If an accident occurs during the morning run, the driver will notify Transportation. Transportation will notify the principal that the bus has been involved in an accident and will arrive late. If there are injuries, Transportation will give the name(s) to the principal, who notifies those parents.

If an accident occurs during the afternoon run, Transportation notifies the principal if there are injuries, and the principal contacts parents of injured students. If school is closed at the time of the accident, the local dispatch area will notify the parents of injured students. If an accident occurs in the afternoon and there are no injuries, parents are typically not notified. When students are transported to the hospital, the principal or designee (whenever possible) should also accompany the transported student(s).

### **Driver's Responsibility**

In the event of an accident, these procedures will be followed:

1. Determine if students are in danger if they remain on the bus and evacuate if necessary.
2. Determine if any child is injured.
  - a. If injuries occur, administer first aid; notify Transportation and express the need for an ambulance.
  - b. If injuries did not occur, notify Transportation.
3. Check student passenger list on bus to identify all students on the bus.
4. If the parents/guardians ask to take their children off the bus, have them complete an authorization form.
5. Driver will submit to alcohol/drug screening immediately after the accident when children are injured, accidents were preventable, or unusual circumstances exist. Driver taking a drug/alcohol screening will be placed on administrative leave with pay until the results of the tests are completed and evaluated. If a driver refuses to submit to an alcohol/drug screening immediately after an accident, it will be considered insubordination and result in termination.

### **Investigator's Responsibility**

Upon receiving notification of an accident, these procedures will be followed:

1. When notification is received, notify the Police Department. If injuries are reported, request an ambulance.
2. Notify principal.
3. Notify Attorney if damage and/or injuries are reported.

4. Complete local, state, and HCDE accident forms and submit to Transportation within 24 hours.
5. Before departing accident scene, notify the Transportation Supervisor or the Deputy Superintendent.
6. If injuries have occurred, notify and provide the school with a list of students' names, injuries, and hospital to which they were taken. Typically, if one student requires medical attention due to physical injuries sustained from an accident and is required to be transported to a hospital, it is standard practice to transport all the other students to a hospital for evaluation also.
7. Secure alcohol/drug screening of driver immediately after the accident.
8. If the school is closed, it will become the responsibility of the Transportation Department to notify parents of injuries, condition, and to which hospital the child/children were taken.
9. If the school has closed for the day, the principal will be notified at home.

### **Principal's Responsibility**

1. Each school principal will provide a list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers for children riding each route, and the principal will update the list as changes occur. This list will be left in the bus at all times.
2. When the principal or representative is at school and is notified of an accident with injuries, he/she will notify the parents of the injured students.
3. If a student who was a passenger on a bus at the time of an accident does not claim injury at that time but later claims to have been injured, it will be the principal's responsibility to complete a student accident form and forward the form to the Transportation Supervisor and Risk Management.

### **FUELS AND EXPLOSIVES**

No explosive or combustible materials may be transported on a public school bus at any time. This includes gasoline, diesel fuel, dynamite caps, bullets, gun powder, or any other material of this nature.

Only authorized law enforcement officials may have weapons of any kind on a public school bus.

No student may be on a school bus when it is being fueled.

### **EMPLOYEES' CHILDREN RIDING ON SCHOOL BUSES**

- Employees may transport their children or grandchildren to and from school on scheduled bus routes, if the school they attend is part of the route.
- If at any time an employee's child becomes a discipline problem or a safety factor, he/she will be denied transportation on his parent's bus.
- No child will be allowed on a school bus for child care purposes during the driver's established route times, or when the bus is being driven to the garage
- Children will not be allowed at safety meetings, training classes, or orientation meetings for child care purposes.

### **ASSIGNED SEATS FOR STUDENTS ON SCHOOL BUSES**

The maintenance of a current, written bus-seating chart (by the bus driver) is a tool to be used on buses where there are frequent disruptions. This is a tool recommended for all bus drivers and/or assistants to use, but it is only mandatory for problem routes.

If a driver believes that he/she does not need to utilize a seating chart he/she should notify the dispatcher before the end of the second week of class. If problems arise later in the school year, then the driver will be required to maintain a seating chart.

The procedure for instituting a seating chart is as follows:

- Drivers/Assistant will assign a seat on the school bus for each student transported.
- A master seating chart will be maintained by the driver for each route the driver has. Forms will be provided by Transportation to compile this master seating chart. The school principal will be provided a copy of this chart.

- A copy of the master seating chart must be turned into the Transportation Department by the beginning of the third week of school. If there are any changes made to this seating chart, it must be updated and resubmitted.

Seating arrangements should follow these general guidelines:

- Students with disciplinary problems will be seated toward the front where the driver can see and control them.
- Youngest students toward the front; oldest toward the rear.
- Where possible, identify and seat two (2) responsible and dependable students near the rear exit door.

Students must sit in their assigned seats. In addition to providing control and discipline, each student will know where his/her seat is, and the driver will be able to more easily identify who may have cut/torn/punched holes in the seat, caused a disturbance, etc.

## **HANDLING OF BODY FLUIDS**

### *Cleaning spills on a hard surface:*

1. Use antibacterial cleaner to wash hands thoroughly before and after cleaning spills.
2. Disposable gloves are worn during cleaning.
3. After wiping spill, disinfect area by pouring 10% Clorox solution (one part Clorox to ten parts water) around perimeter then inward to center.
4. Solution to remain on area for 20 minutes before rinsing off with water.
5. Ideally, spill is cleaned utilizing disposable materials.
6. When a mop must be utilized, disinfect with 10% bleach solution after use.
7. Discard disposable materials in a plastic, sealable bag.

### *Cleaning spills from rugs/carpet:*

1. Use antibacterial cleaner to wash hands thoroughly before and after cleaning spills.
2. Disposable gloves are worn during cleaning.
3. After applying sanitary absorbent agent, let dry, vacuum.
4. Dispose sanitary absorbent agent in a sealable, plastic bag.
5. If necessary, mechanically remove with dust pan and broom or apply rug shampoo (a germicidal detergent) with a brush and re-vacuum.
6. Rinse broom, mop, dust pan, and brush in a 10% Clorox solution.

## **HEAD LICE**

- The latest Health Department guidance concerning actions to take when having to transport the student back home after he/she has been identified as having "head lice" is to seat the student(s) on the front seat by themselves and transport home. The use of sprays on the bus is not effective; therefore, it will not be necessary to fumigate the buses for head lice.
- Normally, every effort will be made by the school to have the parent/guardian transport the student home; however, when the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, transport the student on the bus as outlined above.

## **STUDENT MEDICATION** **(For Informational Purposes)**

No school official or teacher will routinely dispense prescription medication to students except in unique situations in which a child's health is dependent upon long-term medication (Ritalin, etc.) or emergency medication (Benadryl, etc.). If, under these circumstances, a child is required to take oral medication during school hours and the parent cannot be at school to administer the medication, only the principal or the principal's designee will administer the medication in compliance with the regulations that follow.

Medications in the original prescription bottle must be brought to the elementary school by a parent or guardian. Written instructions signed by the parent are required and will include:

- Child's name
- Name of medication
- Name of physician
- Time to be administered
- Dosage
- Possible side effects, if known, and
- Termination date for administering the medication

Secondary school students are permitted to bring prescription medication to school provided it is delivered to the clinic or school office at the beginning of the school day. Secondary students may self-administer medication provided the conditions listed above are met. Discontinued or unused medications must be picked up by the parent/guardian by the end of each semester. All unclaimed medications shall be destroyed by a school official.

## **PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCY EVACUATION OF SCHOOL BUSES**

### **Reasons for Emergency Evacuation**

- **Fire or danger of fire** — if any portion of a school bus is on fire, the bus must be stopped and evacuated immediately. Passengers should move to a point 100 feet or more from the bus and remain there until the bus driver has determined that no danger remains. In the event that a school bus is unable to move and is close to existing fire or highly combustible materials, the "danger of fire" must be assumed and all passengers evacuated.

- **Unsafe location** — In the event that a school bus is stopped in an unsafe location and is unable to proceed, the driver must determine immediately whether it is safer for passengers to remain on the bus or to evacuate.
- **Driver must evacuate** a school bus if its final stopping position:
  - Is in the path of any train or on or closely adjacent to any railroad tracks;
  - Could change and increase the danger. For example, if a bus stalled near a body of water or bluff where it could still move and go into the water or over an embankment, it must be evacuated.
  - Is such that there is danger of collision. Under normal traffic conditions, the bus should be visible for a distance of 300 feet or more. A bus positioned over a hill or around a curve where such visibility does not exist should be evacuated.

### Important Factors in School Bus Evacuation

- The safety of children is of utmost importance and must be given first consideration.
- Prior to evacuation, the bus emergency brakes should be set, ignition turned off, and the transmission placed in an appropriate gear.
- The driver should supervise the evacuation to guarantee smoothness of evacuation procedures.
- Evacuations should be conducted with "deliberate speed." A time interval of 1 -1/2 to 2 seconds per passenger has proven to be the safest and most efficient.
- To ensure a safe exit, passengers must have their hands free. They should leave lunch boxes, books, and other personal belongings on the bus.

### Three Common Types of School Bus Emergency Evacuations

1. Evacuations utilizing **the front or service door** should be conducted using the same techniques as a routine unloading. The driver will choose whether to evacuate the bus one side at a time or on a staggered-seat basis.
2. Evacuations utilizing only the **rear exit door** have some distinctive features.

- a. The bus driver should walk back through the bus to the rear exit, open the rear emergency door, exit, and assist passengers in exiting the bus in a safe and orderly manner. The driver will make sure the passengers go to a safe location after exiting the bus.
  - b. Passengers should remain in their seats until directed by the driver to leave the bus. The driver may choose whether to evacuate the bus one side at a time or on a staggered-seat basis.
  - c. The driver should advise all passengers to have their hands free and coats buttoned. Each passenger should be two steps away from the bus before the next person exits. Taller passengers should be reminded to duck their heads in order to exit safely.
3. Evacuations involving both **the front service door and the rear exit** will be rare. If this type of evacuation is conducted, the driver must direct students to the proper exit. (It might be well to utilize paint or pressure tape to mark the mid-point of each bus.)
  4. For transit buses with an **intermediate side door** (on the driver's side), this doorway will only be utilized in the rarest of circumstances where either it is critical to have all exits open at once or where it is deemed to unload children out the driver's side.

The bus driver should check after evacuation to make sure all students have left the bus. The driver should carry the first aid kit from the bus in situations involving injury or potential injury.

Emergency Evacuation Drills will be conducted. The schedule for these drills will be coordinated by the Transportation Department.

Drivers will conduct one bus evacuation per year for each bus run. It is the intent that the evacuation will be held each year before the last week in October or as scheduled by the Transportation Supervisor.

### **PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING PREVENTABLE/ NON-PREVENTABLE ACCIDENTS**

These guidelines are meant only as a rough guide and are not meant to be all inclusive. Each situation should be analyzed by taking into account any unique conditions present. It should also be noted that although a

driver may not have been cited or fined for an accident or occurrence, this does not mean that the accident or occurrence was non-preventable. Determining guilt or innocence is a legal matter. Determining whether an accident was preventable or non-preventable is an administrative procedure that may use higher standards and guidelines than required by law.

#### **A. Struck in Rear by Other Vehicle**

*Non-Preventable if*

- Driver's vehicle was legally and properly parked.
- Driver was proceeding in his/her own lane of traffic at a safe and lawful speed.
- Driver was stopped in traffic due to existing conditions or was stopped in compliance with traffic sign or signals or at the direction of a police officer or other person legitimately controlling traffic.
- Driver was in proper lane waiting to make a turn.

*Preventable if:*

- Driver was passing slower traffic near an intersection and had to make a sudden stop.
- Driver made a sudden stop to park, load, or unload.
- Vehicle was improperly parked.
- Driver rolled back into vehicle behind while starting up.

#### **B. Struck While Parked**

*Non-Preventable if:*

- Driver was properly parked in a location where parking was permitted.
- Vehicle was protected by emergency warning devices as setting out or retrieving signals. These provisions shall apply to the use of turn signals as emergency warning lights under federal regulations.

#### **C. Accidents at Intersections**

*Preventable if:*

- Driver failed to control speed so that he/she could stop within available sight distance.
- Driver failed to check cross-traffic and wait for it to clear before entering intersection.
- Driver pulled out from side street in the face of oncoming traffic.
- Driver collided with person, vehicle, or object while making right or left turn.

- Driver collided with vehicle making turn in front of him/her.

#### **D. Striking Other Vehicle in Rear**

*Preventable if:*

- Driver failed to maintain safe following distance and/or have his/her vehicle under control.
- Driver failed to keep alert to traffic conditions and could not slow down.
- Driver failed to ascertain whether vehicle ahead was moving slowly, stopped, or slowing down for any reason.
- Driver misjudged rate of overtaking.
- Driver came too close before pulling out to pass.
- Driver failed to wait for car ahead to move into clear before starting up.
- Driver failed to leave sufficient room for passing vehicle to get safely back in the line.

#### **E. Sideswipe Collisions**

*Preventable if:*

- Driver was not entirely in his/her proper lane of travel.
- Driver did not pull to his/her right and slow down and stop for vehicle encroaching on his/her lane of travel when such action could have been taken without additional danger.

#### **F. Backing Accidents**

*Preventable if:*

- Driver backed when backing could have been avoided by better planning of his/her route.
- Driver backed into traffic stream when such action could have been avoided.
- Driver failed to get out and check proposed path of backward travel.
- Driver depended solely on mirrors when it was practical and prudent to look back.
- Driver failed to get out of cab periodically and recheck conditions when backing a long distance.
- Driver failed to sound horn when backing.
- Driver failed to check behind vehicle parked at curb before attempting to leave parking space.
- Driver relied solely on a guide to help him/her back.
- Driver backed from blind side when he/she could have made a sight side approach.

#### **G. Accidents Involving Rail Operated Vehicles**

*Preventable if:*

- Driver attempted to cross tracks directly ahead of train.
- Driver ran into side of train.
- Driver stopped, parked on or parked too close to tracks.

#### **H. Accidents While Passing**

*Preventable if:*

- Driver passed while view of road was obstructed by hill, curve, vegetation, traffic, adverse weather conditions, etc.
- Driver attempted to pass in the face of closely approaching traffic.
- Driver failed to signal change of lanes.
- Driver pulled out in front of other traffic overtaking from the rear.
- Driver cut in short returning to the lane.

#### **I. Accidents While Being Passed**

*Preventable if:*

- Driver failed to stay in his/her own lane and hold speed or reduce it to permit safe passing.

#### **J. Accidents While Entering Traffic Stream**

*Preventable if:*

- Driver failed to signal when pulling out from curb.
- Driver failed to check traffic before pulling out from curb.
- Driver failed to look back to check traffic if he/she was in a position where mirrors did not show traffic conditions.
- Driver attempted to pull out in a manner which forced other vehicles to change speed or direction.
- Driver failed to make full stop before entering from side street, alley, or driveway.
- Driver failed to make full stop before crossing sidewalk.
- Driver failed to yield right of way to approaching traffic.

#### **K. Pedestrian Traffic**

*Preventable if:*

- Driver did not reduce speed in area of heavy pedestrian traffic.
- Driver was not prepared to stop.
- Driver failed to yield right of way to pedestrian.

#### **L. Mechanical Defects Accident**

*Preventable if:*

- Defect was of a type which driver should have detected during a pre-trip inspection or early into driving of vehicle.

### **M. All Types of Accidents**

*Preventable if:*

- Driver was not operating at a speed consistent with existing conditions of road, weather, or traffic.

### **ABSENTEEISM**

Except for personal leave, absenteeism will be rated for evaluation purposes as follows: (for the absence of personal use by the employee only)

Excellent	0	days out
Above Average	1-3	days out
Average	4-6	days out
Below Average (Probation)	7-9	days out
Poor	10+	days out

## RADIO CODES

When discussing the following incidents over the radio, the following codes will be utilized. Please mention any assistance that you think is needed. If any additional information is required, the dispatcher will request it.

<u>CODE</u>	<u>INCIDENT</u>
Code 1	Accident—With Injuries
Code 2	Accident—No Apparent Injuries
Code 3	Fire on Bus
Code 4	Fight on Bus
Code 5	Alcohol/Drug Substance Found
Code 6	Returning to School
Code 7	Mechanical Breakdown
Code 9	Knife on Bus
Code 10	Gun on Bus

## MISCELLANEOUS

The following are miscellaneous items that will be provided by the Transportation supervisory staff:

- Board policy books and Transportation handbooks will be placed at all Transportation buildings.
- Telephone lines for driver use in emergencies (two minute limit) will be provided at Transportation buildings.
- Training classes will be available to existing drivers as time and buses become available for all bus classifications.
- Drivers will be given prior notice of changes (hours cut, etc.) as soon as possible.
- Copies of traffic reports to police of drivers that run bus stop signs will be furnished to bus drivers.
- Any personal and/or private information will be sealed and distributed with payroll checks if necessary. All attempts will be made to keep personal information private.

## **TRANSPORTATION RULES AND REGULATIONS**

The Rules and Regulations printed on the following pages are necessary in order to assure a smooth, efficient operation within the Transportation Department and are not meant to be all-inclusive. It is expected that all employees will follow these Rules and Regulations. The information contained in Section C (General Information) as well as all traffic rules and Federal and State Regulations shall be considered an extension of these Rules and Regulations. Additional rules and regulations, verbal or written, will be added as needed.

Supervisory personnel are charged with the responsibility of seeing that all of these rules and regulations are followed. In the event that an employee does not follow a rule or regulation, disciplinary measures will depend on the seriousness of the offense, as well as taking into account previous infractions or warnings. Disciplinary measures may include a verbal warning, a written reprimand, suspension, a recommendation for dismissal, or other measures as deemed necessary.

### **GENERAL**

- The failure to carry out directives, either written or verbal, given by a Transportation manager, etc. or dispatcher is insubordination. Insubordination is defined as refusal to obey an order which a supervisor is entitled to give and have obeyed. Insubordination may result in termination after the first offense. Also included in this category is willful neglect of known duties and responsibilities.
- Unlawful possession, use, or distribution of non-prescription drugs or intoxicants, except those prescribed by a licensed physician, is prohibited while on duty. Prescription drugs that cause drowsiness or impair reflexes must not be taken prior to driving a school bus. The illegal use of drugs, the use of alcohol, or attending work under the influence of alcohol or drugs during work hours on Board of Education property will not be tolerated and are grounds for termination.
- Transportation of unauthorized persons is not permitted. ONLY approved assigned students and Board of Education personnel authorized to ride the bus may be transported.

- It is the responsibility of the driver and driver assistant to keep his/her address and telephone number up-to-date with Transportation.
- Transportation personnel shall be prohibited from soliciting sales of products or services to or through students or their families during working hours. Personnel shall be prohibited from soliciting sales or services or delivering merchandise to fellow employees during working hours. Conducting personal business or advertising products using Board of Education material (i.e., phones, copy machines, faxes, etc.) is prohibited.
- Bus drivers are required to maintain at all times a valid non-restricted commercial driver's license with the required endorsements for the vehicle their job assignment requires. Loss of license can be grounds for termination.
  - Bus drivers requiring new or renewal of license will contact the Transportation Office ten (10) days prior to their license expiration date for remedial training.
  - Bus drivers, who fail to take the necessary training, and as a result cause their license to be downgraded, will be placed on suspension without pay until the situation is corrected. If the employee does not make an attempt to rectify the situation, the employee will be subject to discharge.
- Drivers and/or Assistants are responsible for sweeping their bus once per day (15 minutes) and washing it as needed (at least once every 10 operating days; 45 minutes - 66 passengers or less/60 minutes – 67 passengers and above). When cleaning the buses, do not sweep trash off the bus and onto the yard. Bus drivers are responsible for picking up the paper and trash around their bus. (Inside cleaning of bus is 30 minutes.)

## **DISCIPLINE**

- No student will be discharged after boarding the bus in the morning until the bus arrives at the school. Written permission from the principal and parent to drop the student off at a bus

stop, other than the student's home stop, will be honored in the afternoon if space allows.

- The driver shall be on the bus when the students are boarding the bus.
- If a student has been suspended from the bus, yet shows up at the bus stop, the driver will transport the student to the school and accompany the student to the principal's office. At no time should a driver refuse to transport a student from school unless directed so by the Transportation Supervisor. If a student is uncontrollable (i.e., fighting, loud, or abusive, suspected of having a weapon, drugs, alcohol, etc.) the driver that has a radio should notify their dispatcher so that the student can be removed. If no radio is available the driver should drive to the nearest telephone and report the situation and await assistance. Students that are merely disorderly will be transported and normal discipline procedures followed.
- No student will be put off the school bus at school or en route without first notifying a teacher, principal, or supervisor.

**NOTE:** Where at all possible, it is best to take the student to his/her stop in the afternoon and turn the student in to the principal the next morning.

## **ROUTES**

- The Transportation Department will develop all bus routes which will include the time allotted for completion of the specific route assignment. Changes to the routes should be expected during each term, especially on special needs routes.
  - Transportation Department will operate services in the most safe, efficient and cost effective manner as possible.
  - The total times—starting and ending—will not be changed by the bus driver, however, the driver may request a reevaluation of the route. If the supervisor agrees that changes are needed, he/she will reevaluate and incorporate any indicated changes necessary. Otherwise, each driver will follow the specific route assignment without any deviations. Extra time will be allotted if road construction, accidents, or severe weather increases the driver's time.

- At no time will buses be driven off the scheduled routes or leave earlier than the approved time on the written schedule. Unless authorized, no driver will drive through private property, commercial property, residential property, subdivisions, or parking lots in order to make his/her run shorter or to avoid traffic signals or other situations. Drivers shall have a copy of their current bus schedule on their bus at all times. Unscheduled stops at stores, restaurants, and unauthorized areas are not permitted unless approved in advance by the Dispatcher or Transportation Supervisor.
- No driver is to make arrangements with another driver to drive an assigned trip. If a driver or attendant is unable to complete a trip as scheduled he/she is to contact the Dispatcher.
- Buses shall run on schedule at the time designated at each bus stop. Under no circumstances shall the bus run ahead of schedule. If a bus runs late due to the driver's negligence (i.e., lost keys, oversleeping, etc.) the driver will be subject to disciplinary action.

### **LEAVE AND/OR ABSENCES**

- Drivers and driver assistants are to schedule their appointments at times which do NOT conflict with their morning or afternoon routes, if possible. For those who have midday assignments (between morning and afternoon runs), the dispatcher will reassign midday runs to someone else on days that the employee has appointments. Any appointment which conflicts with the employee's work day is NOT subject to reimbursement. It is, however, understood that on rare occasions an appointment may be extended into the afternoon run through no fault of the employee (e.g., a 10:30 a.m. appointment may extend into the afternoon because of the need for extra tests, etc.). On these occasions the Dispatcher should be notified as soon as the employee becomes aware.
- If it becomes necessary to be absent from work due to an illness, the driver/assistant must notify his/her supervisor at least 45 minutes prior to the time the bus is scheduled to leave the approved parking area to begin the scheduled route.
  - Contract bus drivers are responsible for acquiring sub drivers from the approved Transportation list.

- **NOTE:** An unexcused absence of three or more successive scheduled working days will be considered as a voluntary resignation. Irregular attendance may justify termination.
- Employees reporting back to work after being absent due to illness for **three (3) or more consecutive days** will be required to have a doctor's statement. They should also contact their dispatcher to verify their assignment before returning to work. When questionable circumstances arise, an employee may be required to provide a doctor's statement, even if the employee has been out less than three (3) consecutive days. Abuse of the sick leave policy is not fair to the other workers that are diligent in their attendance.
- Tardiness: Employees are expected to report to work on time.

## DAILY DUTIES

- Driver must inspect his/her bus daily and complete the checklist on the vehicle inspection report. The vehicle inspection report is to be signed and dated, indicating completion of the inspection and recording of deficiencies found.
- Drivers are responsible for seeing that their bus maintains an adequate amount of fuel at all times.
- Bus Drivers/Assistants will inspect all seats at the end of each individual load and report any damaged seats at the end of that shift to their Dispatcher.
- All articles, such as books and clothing, left on the bus are to be turned in to the school office if not claimed by the student within two (2) days. **NEVER** throw away such articles left on the bus.
- Drivers/Assistants will maintain a Student Disciplinary Referral Log and report the second referral to their dispatcher at the end of that shift.
- Drivers/Assistants will assign seats to all students and maintain a seating chart which will be submitted to their supervisor when necessary. Any change to the seating chart will also be submitted.

## EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Physical examinations, as required by Board Policy, are to be completed by the dates established by the Human Resources Department. Physical examination cost is the employee's responsibility. The Board reserves the right to require, at its expense, reexamination at any time.
- Drug and alcohol training must be attended as scheduled by the Transportation Department.

## EQUIPMENT

- It is the responsibility of the independent contractor or bus company to prepare and submit requests for vehicle repairs and the responsibility of the driver/assistant to prepare and submit requests for special needs equipment repairs. These reports are to be submitted to the dispatcher immediately. Unnecessary abuse of equipment or failure to maintain reasonable preventive maintenance and cleanliness will result in disciplinary actions. The

offense of bus neglect resulting in serious damage or injury shall be cause for termination.

- No equipment, such as radios, additional mirrors, stickers, or signs, shall be installed or removed from school system-owned vehicles by drivers except when such equipment is installed or approved for installation by the Transportation Department.
- Keys shall always be removed from the ignition of the bus when parked anywhere other than the Service Center, Substation, or personal residence. Keys shall never be left in the ignition when a bus is parked on school grounds.
- A bus driver should always drive in a safe and courteous manner and always practice defensive driving techniques.
- Mobile radios are provided for emergency purposes only (i.e., notification of problems, breakdowns, etc.). Unnecessary or malicious use of the radio is prohibited.
- Bus drivers should not enter or leave the Service Center lot through the gate onto 2501 Dodds Avenue. Buses should leave the Service Center by turning right onto 28<sup>th</sup> Street.

## **SAFETY**

- Obey all speed limits as follows:
  - Rural streets not to exceed posted speed limit.
  - Highway and interstate not to exceed 55 mph.
  - Service Center or substation parking lot not to exceed 5 mph.
- Never leave the bus unattended with the engine running at any location other than the Service Center lot or your assigned substation lot.
- While a vehicle is in operation, all headlights and ICC lights must be turned on.
- While loading and unloading students, regardless of location, the STOP sign must be out and driver must direct the students as to when to cross the street in front of the bus. **NEVER** allow students to cross the street from the rear of the bus. Loading zones at schools may require individual direction from Transportation Supervisor unless otherwise directed by police and/or school crossing guard.
- The door is to be kept closed when the bus is in motion and students are on the bus.
- Personal vehicles should exit and/or enter from the 28th Street gate **ONLY**. Personal vehicles **WILL NOT** be permitted beyond the Transportation Dispatch Office. Temporary parking has been provided on the Dodds Avenue parking area of the Service Center for those who have business to conduct in the Maintenance and/or Transportation Building.

- **NOTE:** The School System is **NOT LIABLE** for personal vehicles lost or damaged.
- Due to the extreme danger that exists for students in and near areas where vehicles are dispatched, buses will NOT be permitted to load or unload students at the Dispatch Centers.
- No eating or drinking is permitted on the school bus by students, drivers, mechanics and driver assistants. **NO SMOKING** will be permitted on the school bus at any time. No smoking is allowed within 50 feet of a school building.
- A driver **shall not pass or pull alongside another bus** while either bus is transporting students. The right lane should be utilized unless it is obstructed or when making an immediate left turn.
- When it is necessary to utilize a backup turnaround on a busy roadway, the driver shall back from the main road onto a secondary road or driveway. Of course, due caution must be observed in order to make certain the area to the rear of the bus is clear for backing. If possible, the driver should use a non-student spotter on the ground or a spotter in the rear of the bus.
- All bus drivers and substitutes are required to complete a pre-trip safety inspection of their school bus daily. All bus assistants are required to pre-trip the inside of their bus daily
- **NO CELLULAR PHONE USE WHILE OPERATING YOUR SCHOOL BUS. WHEN CELLULAR PHONE IS USED FOR SPECIAL NEEDS ROUTE, THE ASSISTANT WILL USE THE PHONE AND MAKE THE CALL(S) AT ALL TIMES.**
- **STOP! CHECK YOUR BUS FOR SLEEPING CHILDREN BEFORE YOU EXIT AFTER YOUR MORNING RUN AND YOUR AFTERNOON RUN.**

## ACCIDENTS

- Drivers **MUST** report all accidents/incidents by radio or telephone:
- Students' physical condition must come first. Radio or call the Transportation office at 209-5680; an ambulance and the police will be dispatched.
- In case of an accident, **DO NOT** move the vehicle until the police make a written report. **DO NOT** admit any guilt to anyone. Only discuss the accident with the police officer, your supervisor, or the School System's Administrative staff. Report any contact from the other party involved or persons representing them to the Transportation Supervisor or his designee.

- When involved in an accident, the bus driver shall list the names of all students on the bus. **DO NOT** let any student leave the scene of the accident unless proper authorization form is signed by a parent and/or guardian. Remove students from the bus only if their safety is endangered.
- Any bus driver involved in a preventable accident where serious injuries or damages occur will be disciplined according to the circumstances.
- When a bus driver is involved in an accident, he/she should get a description of the person(s) and other vehicle(s) as completely as possible before passing along the information to the Transportation Department.
- Any driver guilty of a moving traffic violation will be disciplined accordingly.
- All bus drivers approaching railroad tracks **MUST** have their emergency flashers on (not amber lights) and stop at a point **NO CLOSER** than 15 feet from the tracks. Drivers should stop and look both ways before proceeding. If flashers and bells continue to flash and ring after a prudent period of time with no train in sight, use extreme caution before crossing tracks.

NOTE: If your bus should stall on railroad tracks or crossings, **IMMEDIATELY EVACUATE** all students to a safe place approximately 200 feet from the tracks. If a telephone is available, call Hixson dispatch at 847-4816, 847-4817 or Tyner dispatch at 209-8409 or Service Center at 209-5692, 209-5693 immediately to notify the Transportation Department of the situation. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES** will a driver remain on the bus with students in an attempt to start the bus.

### **SPECIAL BEHAVIOR**

- Possession of weapons (firearms, explosives, explosive weapons, bowie knife, hawk bill knife, ice pick, dagger, sling shot, leaded cane, switch blade knife, blackjack, knuckles, or any other weapon of any kind) are prohibited and grounds for dismissal.
- Any attempt to defraud the Board of Education or its employees is prohibited and grounds for dismissal (modifying time cards, taking tools or other Board property, etc.).
- Rude, abusive, and/or vulgar language to students, school personnel, or supervisors is prohibited and will be dealt with on an individual basis. It is the responsibility of Driver/Assistant to maintain a professional attitude at all times.

- Fighting, wrestling, and other forms of personal violence while on Board of Education property or during work hours is prohibited and grounds for dismissal.
- **Misuse of radio or disruption of communication is prohibited.**
- The general safety of students, employees, and the public is to be guarded at all times. Any negligence which endangers others will not be tolerated and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
- Drivers shall stay on assigned routes. Buses are not permitted at non-designated locations (e.g., stores, banks, restaurant, etc.) unless the driver has permission from their Dispatcher or the Transportation Supervisor. Drivers found at unauthorized areas without permission will be disciplined.
- There shall be no personal use of School Board property.

## **SUMMARY OF OFFENSES/DISCIPLINARY ACTION(S)**

Disciplinary action(s) will be proportional to the seriousness of the offense(s). It is always the goal to be consistent in disciplinary matters; however, no two situations are ever exactly alike in all particulars. Past disciplinary problems and evaluations will also be taken into account. Continued disciplinary offenses may result in recommendation for termination.

Most non-serious first offenses will result in a verbal warning or reprimand. Subsequent violations of the same regulation or a different regulation will result in a written warning or reprimand. Further violations could result in a disciplinary hearing.

Serious offenses, however, such as preventable accidents resulting in serious damage or injury, breaches of safety, unreported accidents, insubordination, etc., may result in a disciplinary hearing leading to suspension without pay or termination.

## **TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS**

The Hamilton County Board of Education may provide school transportation facilities for children who live over one and one-half (1-1/2) miles by the nearest accessible route from middle/high schools, one (1) mile for elementary schools, to which they are assigned by the Board and in transportation facilities for children who live less than one and one-half (1-1/2) miles by the nearest accessible route from the school in which they are enrolled. (State funds are not received for students transported less than one and one half miles.) (Reference: Tennessee Code Annotated 49-6-2101)

Children living within the legal boundaries of Hamilton County, Tennessee, who are legally enrolled in Hamilton County Schools, shall be eligible for transportation according to the following conditions and categories.

### **ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS AND CATEGORIES FOR BUS TRANSPORTATION**

- Elementary schools: Students who live one mile or more from school of attendance. Safety may dictate an exception to this rule.
- Middle and senior high schools: Students who live one and one-half miles or more from school of attendance. Safety may dictate an exception to this rule.
- Additional bus route service to non-eligible areas may be added as funds are available for this service as approved by the Board.
- No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Transportation: Students electing to attend the paired school through the No Child Left Behind program will be provided transportation from assigned pickup points in their feeder base zone. Additional regulations on this service are contained in the out-of-zone policy provision.
- Exceptional education students living within the boundaries of the county-wide classes: Not all students enrolled or eligible for enrollment will be transported, and approval for all Exceptional education transportation will be on an individual basis.
- Federal Programs Transportation: Students enrolled in educational programs partially or totally funded by federal funds and whose program of services includes the providing of transportation may be transported at the expense of the program.

- Students receiving special health and dental services from agencies in Hamilton County: Such transportation services shall be on an individual basis and only as authorized for specific and required needs.
- The actual distance for eligibility shall be determined as follows:

From the center of the driveway of the student's home, where it intersects the public thoroughfare (in the event no driveway exists on this thoroughfare, the center of the student's home where it would intersect with the thoroughfare will be the determining boundary), and along the nearest public route (meaning public vehicular thoroughfare).

All apartment complexes, trailer courts, public housing projects, etc., will be measured from the closest entrance drive of said complexes, etc., to a point where the school bus normally discharges its passengers at the school.

### **OPENING AND CLOSING TIME OF SCHOOLS**

Opening and closing times of schools will be established to provide for maximum use of transportation equipment. Generally, secondary schools will start forty five minutes to one hour prior to elementary schools or at such intervals to maximize savings in transportation costs.

### **SCHOOL BUS ROUTES**

- Express routes shall be established in order to provide the most efficient and timely service.
- Buses will not deviate from their express routes to run dead end streets, side roads, or subdivisions to pick up students who live within the distances stated (one mile-elementary; one and one-half mile - senior high, junior high, and middle) from the nearest express route bus stop.
- Bus stops will be established along express routes in rural areas with no sidewalks at intervals of approximately .2 miles for elementary students with emphasis being placed on the closest safe bus stop at .2 miles. The approximate distance between secondary students' bus stops in rural areas is twelve hundred feet. In urban areas or areas with sidewalks, bus stops will be established at the closest safe bus stop to twelve hundred feet along the express route for both elementary and secondary students.

- The Transportation Supervisor shall conduct studies of bus routes in each zone in order to provide the safest possible routes requiring the shortest length of time needed to get all children to and from school in the most safe and economical way.
- Bus routes in each school zone shall be arranged in such a way as to equalize load and size and to obtain the full use of equipment.
- Bus routes shall be arranged in such a way as to provide each eligible child in the zone transportation to school within the prescribed time limits. Bus routes shall begin no earlier than one and one-half hours before school opens, and the children shall not be in transit from school more than one and one-half hours after dismissal. The above is the maximum time limit. The Transportation Department will strive for an average transit time of no more than thirty to forty-five minutes.
- The official bus route shall not be extended or changed until such proposed change has been approved by the Transportation Supervisor and such change has been checked to determine whether it meets all rules and regulations pertaining to safety, efficiency, and economy.
- Once the official bus route has begun, stops shall only be made to take on or discharge children. No special stops are to be made that are not on the route sheet.
- The principal or his/her designee should be on the school grounds when the buses arrive and it is recommended that they remain 30 minutes after the close of the school day.

## RULES OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS RIDING SCHOOL BUSES

These rules of conduct have been developed to provide a safe and pleasant environment for students while being transported. Transportation is an elective provided by the Board, and failure to comply with any of the rules will be grounds for excluding a student from riding a bus.

### **Disciplinary Action for Minor Offenses:**

First Referral	—	Verbal Warning
Second Referral	—	Letter to Parent
Third Referral	—	3-day Bus Suspension and Conference with Parent(s)
Fourth Referral	—	Suspension of riding privileges for ten (10) days, in addition to parent conference
Fifth Referral	—	Suspension of riding privileges for the remainder of the year

Students suspended through the end of a school year will require a meeting with the principal, driver, and Transportation Supervisor before being readmitted onto the bus.

### **Disciplinary Action for Major Offenses:**

First Offense	—	5-day suspension and parent conference
Second Offense	—	Suspension of riding privileges for remainder of the year

**NOTE:** Students who endanger and/or harm other students while being transported may warrant suspension of riding privileges for the remainder of the year. Students suspended through the end of a school year will require a meeting with the principal, driver, and Transportation Supervisor before being re-admitted onto the bus. **Whenever a bus, for disciplinary reasons, is required to return back to school, or help is requested by the driver over the radio or by other means, the offense is considered major and subject to suspension of the offending party or parties.** Whenever a bus is returned to school, there will be an investigation to determine the cause. If the bus is generally disruptive, with no one or even a small group of students readily identifiable as the instigators, all the student riders will be warned that future disruptions will cause all riders to be denied bus

service for the next day after the second disruption. After an incident where a bus has to return to school, a dispatcher will meet with the driver to review and investigate the occurrence and to make recommendations for future improvements. Any incident that involves the breaking of a law, including vandalism of the bus, is always considered a major offense.

The principals and the Transportation Supervisor will enforce the disciplinary procedure outlined above for major and/or minor offenses. No exceptions will be made as to the enforcement of the discipline noted above unless the school determines that a harsher penalty is more appropriate. The responsibility for sending the letters and setting up the parent conferences will rest with the school. Every referral after the first one shall be sent to the parents by the school through the mail. Principals shall act on referrals with-in 24 hours to preclude a problem from getting worse before some action is taken. Each school shall provide a designated slot at the location of the teacher mailboxes for referrals. One driver at each site will be designated to daily pick up all referrals at that site and take them to the dispatcher that day.

The Transportation Supervisor can refuse to transport a child that is considered a threat (danger, risk, hazard, etc.) to the safety of the other children, driver and assistant.

## **RULES OF CONDUCT:**

- 1) Students shall be at the bus stop at the scheduled time. The bus schedule does not allow additional time to wait for those students who are tardy.
- 2) Students will stand a safe distance from the flow of traffic at the bus stop and wait until the bus door is open before moving toward the bus. They shall not play on highways or streets.
- 3) While the bus is loading or unloading, students shall enter or leave the bus promptly and in an orderly manner.
- 4) While riding the bus, students shall be under the supervision of the driver/assistant and shall obey the driver/assistant at all times.
- 5) Students shall conduct themselves in such a manner that they will not disturb other riders on the bus or distract the attention of the bus driver. The use of abusive or obscene language is strictly forbidden at all times. Students are not permitted to bring weapons of any kind, pets, or other living animals on the bus.
- 6) Students shall not tamper with any of the safety devices such as door latches and fire extinguishers.
- 7) Students shall not shout or make gestures toward anyone outside the bus.
- 8) Students shall not extend their hands, arms, head, or any other part of their body through the window.
- 9) Students shall not deface or litter the bus. They shall not write on the bus, damage seats, or throw paper, food, or other objects on the floor of the bus, nor from the bus. Unnecessary abuse of the school bus by a pupil; e.g., cut seats, broken glass, etc., will result in the pupil becoming ineligible for transportation. Said pupil shall become eligible again only when payment is made for damages and assurances given that the abuse will not recur.
- 10) Food, gum, and drinks may not be consumed or chewed on the bus, and smoking is not permitted.
- 11) Students shall keep aisles of the bus clear in order to admit passage in the aisle.
- 12) Students shall not ask the driver to let them off the bus at any other place except their regular stop without written permission signed by the principal.
- 13) Students who must cross the road or highway to enter the bus must wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the driver has signaled them to cross in front of the bus.
- 14) Students who must cross the road after leaving the bus in the afternoon shall go to a point on the shoulder of the road ten feet in front of the bus and cross the road only after the driver has signaled them to cross.

15)The driver/assistant has the authority to assign a student a seat when it becomes necessary for disciplinary reasons.

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

- Driver/Assistant Responsibilities
  - Inform pupil of violation.
  - Have individual conference with pupil.
  - Assign seat (if necessary).
  - The driver/assistant should report referrals to the principal on the appropriate disciplinary form. Driver/Assistant should complete all copies of the form and deliver them to the principal or his/her representative. The driver/assistant should maintain a copy for their records to use as follow-up with the principal. When the driver/assistant has received the yellow copy of the disciplinary form back from the principal, the driver should make appropriate notations and turn in the form to the dispatcher.
  - Bus drivers who must return to the school for disciplinary help will be required to identify the disruptive child(ren). The school staff person should remove the child and have the legal guardian or parent pick up the child. The child will be suspended as per major offense guidelines.
  - Drivers/Assistants are not to give students snacks (candy, gum, drinks etc.) at any time.
- Principal's Responsibilities
  - The principal is ordinarily responsible for discipline administered due to misconduct of students riding school buses. When the principal receives both copies of the disciplinary form from the driver, the principal should take the appropriate disciplinary action (See Disciplinary Action for Minor/Major Offenses) and note such action on the disciplinary form. The disciplinary action could include letters to parents, setting up parent conferences, or suspension from the bus depending on the number of seriousness of the offense(s). The principal should then return the white copy to the driver.
  - It is recommended that the principal or their assigned staff person remain at the school thirty (30) minutes after dismissal. This person will handle discipline if buses return to school and provide student information in the event of a bus accident.
  - Principals are to provide a typed student list 20 days after the start of school which gives the student name,

address, phone numbers (home and work numbers), and assigned bus number.

- Transportation Supervisor Responsibilities
  - The Transportation Supervisor can refuse to transport a child who is considered a threat to the safety of the other children, driver and assistant or who is continually disruptive, abusive and distracting to the safe concentration of the driver.

### **OPERATING PROCEDURES DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER**

The following procedures shall be followed in determining the closing of schools when snow or inclement weather prohibits the transporting of students on school buses.

- The Transportation Supervisor and his staff shall determine the condition of roads in all school zones. After checking with the U. S. Weather Bureau, the Transportation Supervisor will report his findings and recommendations to the Deputy Superintendent no later than 5:00 a.m. A final status check of road conditions will be made frequently between 5:00 and 5:30 a.m.
- The Superintendent or his designee will make a determination regarding school closing and notify necessary staff and media no later than 5:45 a.m.
- On these inclement weather days, appropriate notification will be given to the news media. A call will be placed to all student households and staff members advising of the school closure and if School Age Child Care is open or closed. Parents should also be instructed to listen for the appropriate announcement via TV and radio so they can plan accordingly.
- When changing weather conditions necessitate early dismissal of school, public announcements and emergency calls to student homes will be made a minimum of one hour prior to school closing.
- Principals should explain to children and parents that on inclement weather days - when children are dismissed early because of snow, ice, flooding, etc. - school buses will carry the children as close as practical (in the judgment of the school bus driver) to their home stop. Buses will not operate on steep hills, dangerous curves, dead end roads, etc. All extra-curricular activities (including practices) are to be canceled.
- Principals or principal designee are responsible for checking and reporting the condition of the school building each day

during the closure. The person checking the building is responsible for calling the maintenance office at 209-5600 with an update on the condition.

- When the temperature drops below 21 degrees regardless of school schedule or break, principals and or principal designee are responsible for checking the building and calling the maintenance office at 209-5600 between the hours of 7:30 AM and 3:30 PM to report the building condition. Building should be checked daily during any school closure.

## **SECOND JOBS**

It is considered dangerous for bus drivers to work a complete shift (8 hours) and/or have less than six hours sleep prior to running a route. Employees who work such shifts may be subject to transfer to other jobs within the school system.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORTATION**

### **ROUTE/BUS ASSIGNMENT POLICIES**

Students are placed on routes that are designed to maintain safety for all students as well as minimize the length of time for each route. Total riding time should not exceed one and one-half (1-1/2) hours, morning or afternoon.

### **BUS STOPS**

- Bus stops are set at the child's address whenever possible. The bus will arrive both morning and afternoon at the driveway entrance of the street address where possible. Parents are required to bring the student to the bus or observe the student as they approach or leave the bus.
- Students will not be allowed off the bus in the afternoon if there is no one at home, except where a prior written parent/guardian permission form has been signed by parent/guardian, given to the Driver and on file in the Transportation Department.
- Two attempts will be made to bring students home in the afternoon. If the second attempt is unsuccessful, the Chattanooga Police Department (698-2525) or Hamilton County Sheriffs Department (622-0022) will be contacted to take custody of the student. If necessary, the Department of Human Services in Hamilton County, Child Protective Services (266-0162), will be contacted also. They will be responsible for notifying parent/guardian of student(s)' location.
  - It is important that the parent/guardian keep the school updated of any address and/or telephone numbers changes at all times. This includes beeper numbers, cell phones, etc.
- If three (3) occasions occur during the year where parent/legal guardian is not present to receive a student at the regular scheduled time, the child can be removed from Transportation. During this removal a meeting will be required by the Exceptional Education Department which will include the Transportation Department and the parent/legal guardian. At the time a mutual solution is achieved by Exceptional Education, Transportation, and the parent/legal guardian, the child may be reinstated to transportation. During this temporary removal from the bus, the parent/legal guardian may be eligible for mileage reimbursement upon approval.
- Stops are to be made at the approximate time as indicated on the route. Student(s) should be prepared to board the bus five minutes

prior to their approximate route pick up time. Your assistance in this will also reduce the route riding time for all students in order to arrive at school on time.

- When the driver arrives on time at morning stop(s) and student(s) are not ready, the driver should not wait more than three (3) minutes and continue on the route. The driver will notify the Dispatcher by two-way radio when this occurs. There will not be a second attempt to pick up student(s) on the day this occurs.
- Safety is a factor in determining where a bus stop shall be located.

### **MEDICATION**

No school official or teacher will routinely dispense prescription medication to students except in unique situations in which a child's health is dependent upon long-term medication (i.e., Ritalin) or emergency medication (i.e., Benadryl). If under these circumstances a child is required to take oral medication during school hours and the parent cannot be at school to administer the medication, only the principal or the principal's designee will administer the medication. (Bus drivers and/or bus driver assistants are not approved to administer medications.)

### **BUS AND EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE**

Bus driver and assistant are trained to inspect the bus and equipment. These inspections are performed daily prior to transporting students.

Inspections of buses are performed by State of Tennessee Department of Safety Personnel.

### **TWO-WAY RADIOS**

All buses operated by Hamilton County Schools are equipped with two-way radios. This keeps the driver of the students in direct and immediate communication with the Dispatcher if an emergency arises.

Radios need to remain "on" at all times. If radio is not working, notify your supervisor as soon as possible.

## **ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE CHANGES**

Parents and/or guardians will report any changes of address and telephone numbers immediately to your child's school. The school will notify the Exceptional Education Department.

Changes of address may require five (5) working days to reschedule your child's Special Needs Transportation. Parents will be notified by the bus driver of any new route information resulting from any address change. Transportation will not be provided until the school, parent/guardian, and driver are notified of the approved address change or addition to a route.

Parent/guardian is responsible for transportation of the student to and from school until the change is approved and rescheduled on a route.

## **STUDENT INJURY**

If an accident occurs during the morning run, the driver will notify the Transportation Department and that office will notify the principal that the bus has been involved in an accident and will arrive late. If there are injuries, the Transportation Department will give the name(s) to the principal, who will then notify those parents/guardians.

If an accident occurs during the afternoon run, the principal is notified if there are injuries, and the principal contacts parent/guardian of injured student(s). If school is closed at the time of the accident, the Transportation Department will notify the parents of injured students. Parents typically are not notified if an accident occurs in the afternoon and there are no injuries. Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) are "REQUIRED" to check each child for injuries at the accident site. If injuries occur, students are normally taken to T. C. Thompson Children's Hospital. Parents will be required to come to the hospital to sign children out of the hospital.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Special Needs Transportation Staff will not reveal any information about a special needs student to anyone other than the parent/legal guardian and Hamilton County Department of Education (HCDE) employees as deemed necessary.

Transportation will not share information with daycare centers, friends, neighbors, etc. regarding a student's behavior on the bus, in the classroom or conversations overheard and/or discussed in a group.

Special Needs Driver and Assistant have signed a Confidentiality Agreement to disclose personally identifiable information to the appropriate HCDE employee(s) and/or designee(s) with a specific need to know as deemed necessary.

### **NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE**

The Transportation Department is requesting that parents of Exceptional education children call the Dispatcher, 209-5692 (Service Center), 209-8408, (Tyner TNT Area), or 847-4816 (Hixson Area), when your child is not going to school. If the Transportation Department is notified that your child will be out of school for more than three days, we will discontinue your stop until we receive your call to return or a date to resume transportation is given.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Parents are not permitted to ride to and from school. Parents are to refrain from supervising or interfering with the Transportation staff regarding problems encountered on the bus. Interference could cause personal liability.

### **SCHOOL CLOSING FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER**

In the event of early dismissal due to inclement weather, all Hamilton County residents will be notified by the local radio and television stations. Transportation will be provided to the original bus stop if possible. If the bus is unable to make it to the stop, the parent/guardian will be notified to meet the bus at an alternate stop location. It is important that telephone numbers be current and up-to-date with the school.

Parent/guardian should listen for the appropriate announcement on the local radio and television stations.

### **PERSONAL HYGIENE**

All personnel and students must maintain an acceptable level of personal cleanliness. Student(s) will not be permitted on the bus if clothes and/or person is soiled with body waste. Schools will be responsible for seeing that this condition is corrected before loading the child on the bus in the afternoons. Perfumes must be avoided due to the sensitivity of others. Some are made physically ill by strong scents and smells.

## **TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS**

- Special Needs students are encouraged to ride regular bus routes whenever possible. They shall adhere to regular school bus rules when doing so.
  - Some Special Needs students may require a combination of regular and special routes. Such arrangements are the responsibility of the Supervisor of Transportation.
- Exceptional education students riding regular buses may receive some special attention with regard to individualized seating, loading and unloading precautions, a "big brother/sister" to assist, etc. These adaptations are the responsibility of the Transportation Supervisor, the respective school Principal(s), and the concerned Bus Driver(s).
- The actual routing of Special needs buses is the responsibility of the Supervisor of Transportation. Any adjustments, additions, or deletions of said routes shall be jointly planned and made known to all concerned (i.e. principal, parent/guardian, Transportation Supervisor, etc.).
- Parent/guardian of Special Needs students shall help load and unload their children at their respective homes if assistance is required.
- Parent/guardian and/or teacher must be present at all times when loading and unloading a Special Needs student in the mornings and afternoons.
- When a Special Needs student(s) requires a lift to load and unload the child, parent/guardian should remain five feet from the lift when in motion.
- A Special Needs student's behavior may be such that he/she has to be temporarily removed from a special route. If the situation is not corrected, the removal may be permanent and other means of transportation may be necessary.
- In the case of emergencies on special routes (either a mechanical breakdown or difficulty with a student), the Dispatcher, Supervisor of Transportation, and the respective school Principal shall be immediately notified. The driver/assistant shall not leave students alone in the vehicle.
- While riding the bus, students shall be under the supervision of the driver and/or assistant and shall obey them at all times.
- Students shall conduct themselves in such a manner that they will not distract the attention of the bus driver or disturb other riders on

the bus. Students must obey the rules that are posted on the bus at all times.

- The use of abusive or obscene language is forbidden at all times.
- Students shall not bring knives, sharp objects, firearms, animals, or radios on the bus.
- Students will wear seat belts while being transported at all times.
- Students shall not shout or make gestures toward anyone inside or outside the bus.
- Students shall not tamper with any of the safety devices such as emergency exits, fire extinguishers, radios, etc.
- Students shall not put their hands, arms, head, or bodies out of the windows.
- Students shall not deface or litter the bus. They shall not write on the bus or damage seats, throw paper, food, or other objects on the floor of the bus or from the bus. Unnecessary abuse of a school bus by a student, such as cut seats and broken windows, will result in that student becoming ineligible for transportation. Said students shall become eligible again only when payment is made for damages and assurances given that the abuse will not reoccur.
- Special Needs Drivers cannot request that students be picked up before the school bell times in the afternoon.
- Neither food nor drinks may be consumed on the bus.
- The use of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs is prohibited.
- Students shall keep aisles of the bus clear of books, lunches, coats, and feet.
- One (1) band instrument and/or one (1) book bag shall be permissible only if they can be held on the student's lap or put on the floor by the student's feet. If there is any question about a certain instrument's transportability, the bus driver shall be the judge as to whether it may be transported. No large instruments will be transported.
- Student(s) shall not ask the bus driver to let them off the bus at any other location except at their regular stop unless there is prior written permission of the parent/guardian and principal, and the form is signed and on file in the Transportation Department.
- If a special needs child is mainstreamed on a regular bus, the following shall apply to students who must cross the road or highway to board a bus:
  - If student arrives at the stop just as the bus approaches the stop, he/she shall wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the driver has signaled for him/her to cross in front of the bus.
  - Parents/guardians will bring the child to the bus and pick the child up on the loading door side of the bus. If

parent/guardian is not available, the assistant will help the child across the street.

- Transportation of siblings not classified as Exceptional Education students are not permitted to ride special needs buses
- Students will not be permitted to board a bus if their behavior is considered by the driver to be an endangerment to the child and/or passengers in the bus.
  - When the child's condition changes and his/her behavior is not an endangerment, the child will be transported.