
Transportation and Commuter Safety

Policy 6-101

Scope:

This policy applies to district-operated school bus drivers, school buses, student walkers and bicyclists, and parent drop-off and pick-up zones.

Purpose

The District is committed to ensuring the safety of all students, staff, and families as they travel to and from school and school-sponsored activities.

1. Driver Qualifications

All bus drivers must meet licensing and training requirements and defined in Vehicle Code § 12517 and all other applicable law.

2. Transportation Safety Plan

The Superintendent or designee shall create a transportation safety plan for procedures school personnel are to following order to ensure the safe transport of students. The plan shall address all of the following required in Education Code § 39831.3:

- Determining if students in prekindergarten through 8th grade require and escort to cross the road pursuant to Vehicle Code 22112(d)(1);
- Procedures for all students in prekindergarten through 8th grade to follow as they board and exit the bus at their bus stops;
- Boarding and exiting a school bus at a school or other trip destination;
- Procedures to ensure that a student is not left unattended on a school bus, student activity bus, or youth bus; and
- Procedures and standards for designating an adult chaperone, other than the driver, to accompany students on a school activity bus.

A current copy of this transportation safety plan is required to be kept by each school site and made available to the California Highway Patrol (“CHP”) upon request.

A. Emergency Transportation Planning

- The District shall integrate transportation protocols into emergency response and disaster preparedness planning, including coordination for evacuation procedures when necessary.

3. School Bus Safety Procedures

A. Daily Vehicle Inspections

- All school buses shall be maintained and operated in compliance with California Vehicle Code §§ 34500-34520.

Bus drivers are required to perform daily bus inspections and submit written reports in compliance with the requirements of 13 C.C.R. § 1215. Before driving the bus, the driver must inspect each school bus to determine that it is in safe operating condition, equipped as required by law, and all equipment is in good working order.

B. Passenger Restraint System.

Bus drivers shall be instructed regarding procedures to enforce proper use of the passenger restraint system.

C. Fire Extinguishers

Each school bus shall be equipped with at least one fire extinguisher, except for wheelchair school buses which shall have two, located in the driver's compartment and at the wheelchair loading door or emergency exit for wheelchair school buses. The fire extinguishers will meet the standards and required inspections specified by the law.

D. Child Safety Alert System

Each school bus or student activity bus shall be equipped with an operational child safety alert system pursuant to Vehicle Code § 28160.

A student activity bus that does not have a child safety alert system may be used under specific circumstances pursuant to Vehicle Code § 28160.

E. Electronic Communications Devices

A bus driver shall not use a wireless telephone or other electronic wireless communications device while operating a school bus or student activity bus unless it is used in a manner permissible under Vehicle Code §§ 23123.5, 23125 and used for work or emergency related purposes.

F. Safe Bus Operations

School buses and student activity buses shall not be operated when the number of passengers exceeds bus seating capacity, except when necessary in specified emergency situations which require that individuals be transported immediately to ensure their safety, pursuant to Education Code § 39834.

School bus operations shall be limited when atmospheric conditions reduce visibility on the roadway to 200 feet or less during regular home-to-school transportation service. Bus drivers for school activity trips may discontinue bus operation whenever they determine that it is unsafe to continue operation because of reduced visibility, pursuant to Vehicle Code § 34501.6.

G. Unauthorized Entry

The Superintendent or designee may place a notice at bus entrances that warns against unauthorized entry. The driver or another school official may order any person to disembark if that person enters a bus without prior authorization. (Education Code § 39842; 13 C.C.R. § 1256.5)

4. Bus Accidents

In the event of a school bus accident, the bus driver shall stop at the scene, immediately notify or cause to be notified the California Highway Patrol and the Superintendent or designee. The bus driver shall not leave the immediate vicinity of the bus to seek aid unless necessary.

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain a report of each accident that occurred on a public or private property involving a school bus with students aboard. The report shall contain pertinent details of the accident and shall be retained for 12 months from the date of the accident. If the accident was not investigated by the CHP, the Superintendent or designee shall forward a copy of the report to the local CHP within five (5) working days of the date of the accident.

5. Pick-up and Drop-Off Safety

- Each school site shall maintain a clear traffic flow plan to ensure safe ingress and egress for students, parents, and staff.
- Designated areas for pick-up and drop-off shall be clearly marked and supervised during high-traffic times.

6. Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

- The District shall promote safe walking and biking through age-appropriate education and reinforcement of pedestrian and bicycle safety laws.
- Students under the age of 18 riding bicycles must wear helmets as required by Vehicle Code §21212.

7. Safe Routes to School

- The District encourages collaboration with local government, law enforcement, and transportation agencies to identify and maintain safe routes to school
- Opportunities to pursue grants or support for infrastructure improvements that enhance student commuter safety will be evaluated when feasible.

8. Student Safety Instruction

Students must follow safety rules while riding buses, and annual emergency evacuation drills shall be conducted in accordance with Education Code § 39831.5 and all other applicable law.

All students who are transported in a school bus or student activity bus shall receive instruction in school bus emergency procedures and passenger safety. The instruction must be provided as follows:

- Upon registration, the parents/guardians of students in prekindergarten through 6th grade who have not previously been transported in a school bus or student activity bus will be provided with written information on school bus safety. That information will include:
 - A list of school bus stops near the student's home;
 - General rules of conduct at school bus loading zones;
 - Red light crossing instructions;
 - School bus danger zone; and
 - Walking to and from the school bus stops.
- At least once school year, all students in prekindergarten through 8th grade who receive home-to-school transportation shall receive safety instruction that includes, but is not limited to:
 - Proper loading and unloading procedures, including escorting by the driver;
 - How to safely cross the street, highway, or private road;
 - Instruction on the use of passenger restraint systems including:
 - The proper fastening and release of the system;

- The acceptable placement of the system on students;
- The times at which system should be fastened or released; and
- The acceptable placement of the system when not in use.
- Proper passenger conduct
- Bus evacuation procedures
- Location of emergency equipment
- This instruction may also include the responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit. As part of this instruction, students shall evacuate the school bus through emergency exit doors.
- Before departing on a school activity trip, all students riding on a school bus or student activity bus shall receive safety instruction which includes, but is not limited to, the location of emergency exits and the location and use of emergency equipment. This may also include the responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit.
- Each year, all students who receive home-to-school transportation in a school bus shall be provided appropriate instruction in safe riding practices and emergency evacuation drills.

Each time the instruction is given the information below must be recorded and remain on file at the District office or the school site for one (1) year and is subject to inspection by the Department of the California Highway Patrol.

- The Name of the District
- Name and location of the school
- Date of instruction
- Names of supervising adults
- Number of students participating
- Grade levels of students
- Subjects covered in the instruction
- The amount of time the instruction took
- Bus driver's name
- Bus number
- Any additional remarks

9. Authority of Driver

Students that are transported in a school bus or in a student activity bus are under the authority of the bus driver. The bus driver is responsible for the orderly conduct of the students while they are on the bus or being escorted across the road. Student refusal to submit to the authority of the bus driver is sufficient reason for the student to be denied transportation. However, the bus driver will not require a student to leave the bus while enroute.

Procedures relating to suspension of riding privileges are governed by Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 3-104.