

PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

I. ELIGIBILITY

The Washington County Board of Education (WCPS) is committed to providing transportation for pupils who are eligible.

- A. *Transported Areas.* Policy EEA contains criteria that identify pupils who are eligible for WCPS transportation services.
- B. *Non-transported Areas.* Non-transported areas apply to public middle and high school pupils residing within one and one-half (1 ½) miles, elementary, including kindergarten pupils, residing within one (1) mile from the designated pupil entrance to the school to where the property line of the pupil's resident meets the roadway as designated by the Supervisor of Transportation or his/her designee.
- C. *Exceptional Conditions for the Provision of Service within a Non-transported Area.*
 - 1. When pupils are required to walk across a roadway involving an unusual hazard as determined by the Supervisor of Transportation or his/her designee.
 - 2. When pupils are required to walk more than ¼ mile along a road having a posted speed limit of 45 miles per hour or more.
 - 3. When pupils are required to walk across an at-grade high speed railroad crossing, bridge or overpass, or through a tunnel having inadequate walkways as determined by the Supervisor of Transportation or his/her designee.
 - 4. When pupils residing within a non-transported area do not have a suitable walkway between their homes and their assigned school. A suitable walkway is defined as either a sidewalk, pathway, road shoulder or surface over which pupils may walk without walking in the travel lanes of the roadway. This provision does not apply when the residential community is adjacent to the school grounds or has little or no transient traffic, or when the volume of traffic as determined by the Supervisor of Transportation or his/her designee is non-hazardous during the time pupils walk to and from school.
- D. *Provision of Service to and From School.*
 - 1. Pupils must ride the bus to which they have been assigned.
 - 2. To promote safety, consistency and accountability, WCPS will allow, within the pupil's assigned school zone, for two consistent AM stop location and two consistent PM stop location per pupil for the school year. Exceptions will be made only in case of an emergency, as determined by the Supervisor of Transportation or designee or relocation of the custodial parent from the existing residence to a new location.
 - 3. Parents must complete the Transportation Location Change Request Form (See Exhibit EEA-E) for transportation to and/or from any location other than home. Any such requests are subject to the approval of the Supervisor of Transportation or designee.
 - 4. At the conclusion of school year 2008-2009, school system officials designated by the Superintendent are to review this section of the transportation regulations and are to report their findings to the Board of Education at a public business meeting.

II. ROUTING AND SCHEDULING

- A. Pupils are expected to be at their designated bus stop 5 minutes prior to the scheduled time.

- B. The walking distance to a bus stop may be up to but not to exceed the distance that pupils are required to walk to and from school; however, the Transportation Department will endeavor to route buses so as to minimize the walking distance to a bus stop. This is exclusive of private driveways and roadways.
- C. School buses shall be routed so that all pupils are seated and loads do not exceed the rated capacity. If extenuating circumstances create an overload, i.e. unanticipated ridership at the beginning of the school year or an emergency, a corrective plan will be immediately identified and remedied as soon as possible but no later than five (5) student days after notification of the overload condition.
- D. The Transportation Department does not use taxi cabs to transport pupils to and/or from school.

III. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Riding the school bus is a privilege. Pupil behavior directly affects the safety of all passengers. School buses are an extension of the school campus and all school rules and regulations apply accordingly. Parents or guardians must ensure that their child(ren) understand the rules and regulations for riding the bus.

- A. Parents should notify their child's school immediately of a change of address or a requested change in transportation.
- B. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide supervision for their child(ren) while walking to, from, or waiting at the designated bus stop, or while walking to and from school if they reside in the designated non-transported area. Parents are responsible for identifying the appropriate walk route from home to school or the bus stop.
- C. Parents are expected to have children at the assigned bus five (5) minutes before the scheduled arrival time of the bus in the morning. Traffic volume or accidents, beyond the control of the Transportation Department, may affect the bus schedule. Please allow a window of time for the bus to arrive.
- D. Parents or guardians are liable for damage caused by their child(ren) to the property of others, including the school bus.
- E. Parents are expected to check local radio stations and television broadcasts, as well as the WCPS web page for announcements of a delayed opening, closing or early dismissal of schools.

IV. SCHOOL BUS RIDERS RULES AND REGULATIONS

The school bus is an extension of the school day. Conduct should be the same as in the classroom. The driver is authorized to assign seats to all students.

- A. *While on the bus*
 1. Keep all body parts inside the bus at all times after entering and until leaving the bus.
 2. Assist in keeping the bus safe and sanitary at all times. **NO EATING OR DRINKING ON THE BUS.**
 3. Remember that loud talking and laughing or unnecessary confusion diverts the driver's attention and may result in a serious accident.
 4. Treat bus equipment as you would valuable furniture in your own home. Damage to seats, etc., must be paid for by the offender.

5. Never tamper with the bus or any of its equipment.
6. Remember to take all books, lunches or other belongings with you upon exiting the bus.
7. The aisle must remain clear at all times.
8. Do not throw anything out of the bus window.
9. Remain seated at all times until your destination is reached.
10. Horseplay is not permitted around or on the school bus.
11. Bus riders are expected to be courteous and respectful to fellow pupils, the bus driver, and the driver's assistant.
12. Maintain absolute quiet when approaching and crossing a railroad track.
13. In case of a road emergency, follow directions from the driver.
14. The school bus is a drug, alcohol and tobacco free zone.
15. Use of cell/camera phones by pupils is prohibited.
16. Objects too large to fit in seat, animals of any kind, skateboards, scooters and liquids are not allowed on the bus.

B. After leaving the bus

1. The driver will not discharge riders at places other than the regular bus stop at the home or at school unless by proper authorization from the school principal.
2. When it is necessary to cross the road, always walk at least ten feet in front of the bus, looking to make sure that no traffic is approaching from either direction.
3. Always go straight home when you get off the school bus.

C. Extracurricular Trips

1. The above rules and regulations apply to any trip under school sponsorship.
2. Pupils shall respect the directions of a competent chaperone appointed by the school.
3. Cell phone use is only permitted for emergency reasons.

V. STUDENT BUS DISCIPLINE

Discipline problems on the school bus distract the driver's attention from driving, which potentially could lead to an accident. To minimize that type of situation from occurring, the following guidelines have been established. Also, to help create consistency among schools when dealing with discipline on the school bus, the following step-by-step plan was created. Severe offenses, such as weapons, drugs, fighting, etc., will escalate the steps of consequences and possibly the loss of bus riding privileges at all school levels. If a student loses his/her bus riding privileges, it is for all Washington County School Buses. The following has been created:

A. *ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:*

1. **FIRST REFERRAL:**
Student conference with school administrator, phone call and/or form letter sent home to parent.
2. **SECOND REFERRAL:**
Student conference with school administrator, phone call and/or form letter sent home to parent. Student will lose bus riding privileges for one school day.
3. **THIRD REFERRAL:**
Student conference with school administrator, phone call and/or form letter sent home to parent. Student will lose bus riding privileges for up to three school days.
4. **FOURTH REFERRAL:**
Student conference with school administrator, phone call and/or form letter sent home to parent. Student will lose bus riding privileges for up to five school days.
5. **FIFTH REFERRAL:**
Student, parent conference, with school administrator and transportation Assistant Supervisor. Form letter sent home to parent. Student will lose bus riding privileges for up to ten school days.
6. **SIXTH REFERRAL:**
Student will lose ALL BUS RIDING PRIVILEGES for the remainder of the school year.

Drivers may be present at student conferences during any level of the referral process.

The school administrator may skip steps in the referral process should particular situations arise which, in the opinion of the administrator, are extremely unsafe.

B. *MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS:*

1. **FIRST REFERRAL:**
Student conference with school administrator, phone call and/or form letter sent home to parent.
2. **SECOND REFERRAL:**
Student conference with school administrator, phone call and/or form letter sent home to parent. Student will lose bus riding privileges for up to three school days.
3. **THIRD REFERRAL:**
Student conference with school administrator, phone call and/or form letter sent home to parent. Student will lose bus riding privileges for up to five school days.
4. **FOURTH REFERRAL:**
Student conference with school administrator, phone call and/or form letter sent home to parent. Student will lose bus riding privileges for up to ten school days.

5. FIFTH REFERRAL:

Student will lose ALL BUS RIDING PRIVILEGES for the remainder of the school year.

Drivers may be present at student conferences during any level of the referral process.

The school administrator may skip steps in the referral process should particular situations arise which, in the opinion of the administrator, are extremely unsafe.

VI. EXCEPTIONS

The Superintendent of Schools may make exceptions to the Board Policy or Administrative Regulation under emergency conditions, when:

- A. Compliance with the Board Policy or Administrative Regulation may endanger the life and physical well being of pupils; or when
- B. Compliance with the Board Policy or Administrative Regulation may make the operation of pupil transportation impossible or unsafe due to an Act of God, strike, rebellion, or other unforeseen disturbance.

These exceptions shall remain in effect only until the next regular meeting of the Washington County Board of Education.

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Board of Education of Washington County