



# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

School Bus Operators  
Bus Attendants  
Para-Transportation  
Support Personnel (PTSP)

This handbook is the property of:

Prepared by JPS  
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

## FOREWORD

School bus transportation is an integral part of today's educational system. School bus drivers and transportation support personnel are expected to act as positive role models to the children entrusted to their care and to represent the school district before the public. If a bus operator or attendant sets a good example, his or her attitude of professional responsibility encourages the development of social responsibility among students. Likewise, good transportation practices promote general public confidence in school personnel and programs.

Our first and highest priority is the safe delivery of students to and from school. The safety of every student depends on the judgment and skill of our transportation team.

To be a good bus driver or transportation support employee, you must be well informed with respect to the responsibilities of your position. This *Handbook* has been developed as an easy reference for bus operators, operator trainers, bus attendants, para-transportation support personnel ("PTSP") and Transportation Department staff. The handbook contains information specifically related to the Jefferson Parish Schools ("JPS") transportation policies and procedures that you need to know in order to be successful in your job.

These policies were developed in accordance with applicable federal, state and local law and Jefferson Parish School Board ("JPSB") policy, which can be located on the district website at the following link: <http://jpschools.org/school-board/>. As a JPS employee, you are responsible for being familiar and complying with all JPSB policies and procedures, including those contained in this *Handbook*.

This *Handbook* is dedicated to everyone who strives to make each school bus ride a safe and rewarding experience for the students of Jefferson Parish Schools.

JPS Transportation Department

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## **POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **A. School Bus Operator**

Reporting to the Executive Director of Transportation and school-based administration, the School Bus Operator is responsible for transporting students safely and ensuring the vehicle is in clean, safe operating condition at all times while abiding by federal, state and local law, district policies and Transportation Department procedures.

#### **Scope of Responsibility:**

Own and operate a clean, safe and properly functioning vehicle in accordance with applicable traffic laws and safety regulations, including the operational policies and procedures set forth herein.

- Maintain school bus operator certifications as required under federal and state law and school board policy.
- Possess certification of fitness for duty from a qualified physician. School Bus Operators are required to return to the JPS authorized physical examination provider who conducted the employee's annual examination when such physical is valid for less than one year. In addition, School Bus Operators shall follow the physician's orders as indicated on the JPS physical examination form.
- Conduct required inspections in a timely manner in order to ensure that the vehicle and all related equipment meet applicable safety standards. Maintain adequate levels of fuel, engine oil and coolant.
- Report emergencies, accidents, breakdowns, delays and absences to the Executive Director or designated Transportation personnel in a timely manner.
- Supervisory responsibility for bus attendants and transportation support personnel to ensure that assigned duties are performed properly and completely.
- Maintain a polite and professional relationship with co-workers, students, parents/guardians and the public at all times.
- Complete assigned routes in accordance with established time schedules and locations.
- Oversight and management of passenger conduct and safety. Assist passengers when entering and exiting the bus, during transport and when crossing streets.
- Notify parents/guardians of bus stop pick-up/drop-off time and location.
- Maintain confidentiality of student information.
- Accurately and timely prepare and submit required reports.
- Participate in all required departmental and district professional development activities.

- Provide a working telephone number to the Transportation Department and parents to facilitate communications.
- Perform other duties as assigned by the Executive Director of Transportation and school-based administration.

## **B. Bus Operator Trainer**

The Bus Operator Trainer is an important member of the Transportation Team and is paid a stipend for each Bus Operator trained. Trainers are required to observe and instruct trainees in the safe, efficient operation of a school bus after the trainee has obtained a Commercial Driver's License and to evaluate the trainee at the end of the training period.

### **Operator Trainer Selection Criteria**

- 3+ years as a JPS School Bus Operator
- 3.0 or higher on most recent evaluation
- Participation in the Louisiana School Bus Operator Course and Defensive Driving Course within the last 3 years.
- No preventable accidents in the last 3 years , and no more than 3 non-preventable accidents
- No record of DUI/DWI and not more than 2 moving violations in the past 3 years
- No record of a positive result on any drug/alcohol test
- No record of disciplinary action within the last 3 years
- Exemplary past performance of duties and responsibilities as a Bus Operator, including a reputation for working well with co-workers, students, parents/guardians and the public.
- Proven knowledge of Louisiana Department of Education Bulletin 119 (*Louisiana Transportation Specifications and Procedures*) and School Board and Transportation Department policy and procedure.

### **Scope of Responsibility**

- Instruct each trainee on the operational procedures contained in this *Handbook* and other applicable guidance referenced herein.
- Ensure trainee familiarity with this *Handbook* and applicable Transportation Department forms and reporting procedures.
- Upon completion of the behind-the-wheel training directed by the Transportation Department, the trainer shall submit a written evaluation and recommendation with respect to the trainee's behind-the-wheel driving skills to the Executive Director or designee.
- Perform other duties as assigned by the Executive Director of Transportation.

### **C. Bus Attendant and Para-Transportation Support Personnel (PTSP) Responsibilities**

The Bus Attendant and PTSP report to the Executive Director of Transportation and school-based administration and are responsible for assisting the school bus operator by attending to, and ensuring the safety of special needs students while in transit. The responsibilities of a PTSP may be limited to providing child-specific services to an assigned student. In the event of an emergency, a PTSP may be called upon to assist the operator and attendant, but only after ensuring the safety and security of any assigned student(s).

#### **Scope of Responsibility**

- Possess certification of fitness for duty from a qualified physician. The Bus Attendant or PTSP is required to return to the JPS authorized physical examination provider who conducted the employee's annual examination when such physical is valid for less than one year. In addition, the Bus Attendant or PTSP shall follow the physician's orders as indicated on the JPS physical examination form.
- Assist passengers on and off the bus, while crossing the street and while in transit, including those who are wheelchair-bound, require ambulatory appliances or restraint systems or exhibit challenging behaviors.
- Understand and act on the specific needs of passengers assigned to his/her vehicle and ensure that protective safety devices are in use and properly secured.
- Assist the school bus operator with the management of passenger conduct and conducting inspections of special needs equipment.
- Maintain the confidentiality of student information.
- Promptly notify the school bus operator of any conditions that may threaten passenger safety, including passenger behavior.
- Prepare and submit required reports in an accurate and timely manner.
- Assist the school bus operator in reporting emergencies, breakdowns, accidents or delays to the Transportation Department.
- Maintain a polite and professional relationship with co-workers, students, parents/guardians and the public at all times.
- Participate in required departmental and district professional development activities.
- Familiarity and compliance with applicable Board and Transportation Department policies and procedures.
- Perform other duties as assigned by the Executive Director of Transportation.

## PERSONNEL POLICIES

### A. Employment Status

Any school bus operator who has acquired tenure shall retain his or her tenure status absent sufficient cause for removal under La. R.S. 17:493. Bus operators hired after July 1, 2012, shall not be eligible to acquire tenure and shall be treated as support personnel under Board policy.

### B. Compensation

#### School Bus Operator Compensation

Compensation consists of base salary and applicable supplements, less authorized payroll deductions. Supplements include:

- **Activity Trip** is student transport which initiates from a specific school for co-curricular or extra-curricular activities.
- **Community Skills Supplement** is a stipend paid to operators who transport special needs students and teachers to designated work sites on selected days throughout the school session as dictated by the Special Education Department. This is not considered a trip which comprises the driver's assigned route.
- **Mid-day/Platoon Supplement** is a designated pay assignment for transport between school sites which is based on mileage. Fuel is provided to operators for completing this trip which is considered part of the driver's route.
- **Operational Supplement** is compensation issued to an owner-operator for the operation of a school bus.
- **Over-the-Mileage Supplement** is a stipend paid to drivers whose route exceeds the mileage cap of the operator as established through operator service credit.
- **Shuttle Supplement** is a stipend paid to operators who transport students for a specific instructional program on selected days during the school session. This shuttle is not considered a trip which comprises the driver's assigned route.
- **Special Education Supplement** is a stipend paid to operators who are responsible for transporting special needs students.



- **Cash Incentives (Windows of Opportunity)** are issued to currently employed owner-operators who have been employed with Jefferson Parish Schools as an owner-operator for at least one year who wish to purchase a new or newer bus and/or a new or newer lift-equipped bus. A new bus is defined as one which has never been “titled.” For the purposes of this incentive, a newer bus cannot be more than five years old.

Mileage will be re-calculated to reflect any route/trip changes that may occur during the school year.

Air Condition Reimbursement – drivers assigned to transport special needs passengers who require air conditioning, per IEP, may be reimbursed up to \$900.00 annually for documented repairs to the air conditioner and related equipment.

Fuel Card Overages for purchases of fuel in excess of the weekly allotment or unauthorized charges (e.g. drinks, snacks) will be deducted from the employee’s paycheck.

### **Bus Attendants and Para-Transportation Support Personnel (“PTSP”) Compensation**

Compensation consists of base salary and applicable supplements, less authorized deductions. Bus Attendants and PTSPs may earn supplemental pay for activity trips, community skills trips or the performance of duties that go beyond the employee’s regular job duties.

## **C. Benefits**

### **Retirement**

Bus operators, attendants and PTSPs who work 20 hours per week or more are eligible for, and will be enrolled in, Louisiana School Employees Retirement System (LSERS).

### **Health and Life Insurance**

Bus operators, attendants and PTSPs who work 20 hours per week or more are eligible for health and life insurance from the State of Louisiana Office of Group Benefits, and are eligible to enroll in benefits offered to district employees free of charge (dental, vision and \$10,000 basic life insurance).

For more information about employee benefits, contact a benefits representative in the Human Resource Department or go to the Human Resource page on the district website.

## D. Leaves of Absence

An employee may request leave for the reasons set forth in the School Board policies listed below. A leave of absence must be requested in accordance the procedures established by the Transportation and Human Resource Departments. Leave may be granted with, or without pay, depending on the circumstances. An employee who wishes to request a leave of absence should consult this *Handbook* and the applicable Board policy, which can be located on the district website. Employees may also contact a Human Resource representative for further guidance on leave requests. Following are the types of leave that have been authorized by the Jefferson Parish School Board:

**Sick Leave (GBRIB)** Employees hired for the school year or longer are entitled to ten (10) days absence per year because of personal illness or other emergencies without loss of pay. This policy also addresses the following categories of sick leave that may be available to Transportation Department employees under certain circumstances.

- **Emergency Leave**
- **Extended Sick Leave**
- **Sick Leave Assault/Battery**

**Family Medical (“FMLA”) Leave (GBRIBA)** The School Board shall permit qualified employees to take up to twelve (12) workweeks of unpaid family and medical leave for family and medical reasons.

**Maternity (GBRIC)** An employee who becomes pregnant is eligible for unpaid maternity leave. The employee has the option of choosing maternity leave or using current and accumulated sick leave for the period of medical disability occasioned by pregnancy and childbirth. Employees who use current and/or accumulated sick leave shall be subject to all policy provisions, regulations and procedures affecting sick leave.

**Military (GBRID)** Eligible employees may take up to fifteen (15) days paid military leave per calendar year upon proper submission of an application for such leave. Leave without pay shall be granted when military leave is for more than fifteen (15) working days in one calendar year.

**Bereavement (GBRIF)** An employee may be granted a leave of absence without loss of pay of up to three (3) days in the event of a death in the immediate family of the employee or his/her spouse. The employee may be granted an additional day if the funeral is held more than two hundred (200) miles from New Orleans.

**Jury Duty/Court Appearance (GBRIH)** An employee called to serve jury duty, or subpoenaed to serve as a witness in a court proceeding, including depositions, on school business, shall be granted a leave of absence without loss of sick, emergency, or personal leave or any other benefit, upon proper submission of a request for such leave.

**Leave Without Pay (GBRIJ)** The School Board may grant a leave of absence without pay for a period not to exceed one (1) year to a regular employee who requests such leave in writing when the Board determines that it is in the best interest of the school system to grant the requested leave.

## EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

This section contains a summary of School Board policies that apply directly to Transportation personnel, as well as a selection of policies that address specific employee obligations and general information that may be helpful to you as a Transportation Department employee.

This synopsis is intended as an easy reference and does not represent a complete statement of Board policy. School Board policies can be located on the JPS website. Inquiries regarding Board policy may be directed to the Human Resource Department. Questions regarding the information in this *Handbook* or other Transportation Department policy and procedure should be directed to your immediate supervisor.

### A. General Responsibilities (GBR)

All employees shall have a responsibility to make themselves familiar with, and abide by, the policies and procedures of the Jefferson Parish School Board, the Transportation Department and other rules and regulations as may be applicable to the employee's position.

All employees shall be expected to carry out their assigned responsibilities in a conscientious and exemplary manner. This includes daily punctual attendance at work, proper care and protection of School Board property, and concern and attention toward their own and the Board's legal responsibility to supervise students for their safety and welfare.

All persons employed by the Jefferson Parish School Board are representatives of the school system. As such, they shall be expected to present themselves as positive examples to the students and community they serve.

Employees should dress in a professional manner. They should not engage in inappropriate conduct. The use of abusive or profane language in the presence of students or while representing the school system shall be expressly prohibited.

### B. Individuals with Disabilities (GAAB)

No otherwise qualified person shall, on the basis of disability, be subjected to discrimination in employment, promotion, demotion, transfer, or any employment-related function or process, under any program or activity in the Jefferson Parish School System. A qualified person with a disability is one who is able to perform the primary functions of his/her position with, or without, reasonable accommodation.

Complaints of discrimination and inquiries regarding required accommodations may be directed to the main point of contact for EEO matters in the Human

Resource Department. School Board Policy GAAB, which can be located on the district website, contains detailed guidance on filing a complaint and how to request reasonable accommodations.

### **C. Sexual Harassment and Other Forms of Harassment (GAEAA)**

The School Board is committed to maintaining an academic and work environment in which all employees, volunteers, and students are treated with respect and dignity. The School Board prohibits sexual harassment or any other form of harassment based upon a person's membership in a legally protected class or a person's engagement in legally protected activities. This policy includes sexual harassment, or any other form of illegal harassment of any employee, student, volunteer, or visitor. Complaints of harassment by non-employee volunteers, vendors or service providers may also be filed under this policy.

Complaints of discrimination/harassment may be directed to the main point of contact for EEO matters in the Human Resources Department. School Board Policy GAEAA, which can be located on the district website, contains detailed guidance on filing a complaint of discrimination.

### **D. Complaints (Grievances) and Appeals (GAE)**

Any employee has the right to appeal the violation of a policy and/or procedure affecting him/her. Complaints or grievances about any job action taken against an employee are excluded from this policy. The person(s) filing the complaint shall be assured freedom from restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal in presenting his/her appeal with respect to a personal complaint. The primary purpose of this procedure is to secure, at the most immediate level possible, an equitable solution to the claim of the aggrieved employee(s).

Board Policy GAE contains detailed guidelines on how to file a grievance. You may also contact the Human Resources Department for further guidance on filing a grievance.

### **E. Personnel Records (GAK)**

A personnel file shall be accurately maintained in the central administrative office for each present and former employee. These files shall contain applications for employment, references, and records relative to compensation, payroll deductions, evaluations, and such other matters as may be considered pertinent to the proper maintenance of all personnel records. An employee may review his/her personnel file upon request to the Human Resource Department. Access to personnel files is restricted as detailed in Board Policy GAK.

## **F. Alcohol and Drug Abuse and Testing – CDL Holders (GAMEB)**

The unlawful use, abuse, confirmed presence in the body, possessions, manufacture, distribution, dispensation, transfer, storage, concealment, or sale of legal and illegal drugs, controlled substances, alcoholic beverages, weapons, stolen property, or drug related paraphernalia is strictly prohibited during the course and scope of School Board business and/or while on or using School Board property.

The School Board reserves the right, at all times and in any work area, when circumstances warrant or reasonable cause exists, or his/her supervisor has reasonable suspicion, to conduct unannounced reasonable searches and inspections of School Board property.

The School Board also reserves the right, as a condition of employment or continued employment, to require employees to submit to medical or physical examinations or tests. The procedures used may include, but are not limited to, urine drug tests, blood alcohol tests, breathalyzer tests, or other medical examination to determine the use of any substance prohibited by this policy or to determine satisfactory fitness for duty. The tests may be announced or unannounced and may be conducted for the reasons and in accordance with the procedures set forth in Board Policy GAMEB.

Any employee who is taking medication that may cause adverse side effects while working is required to inform his/her supervisor. The School Board reserves the right at all times to have a licensed physician determine if use of a prescription drug or medication would make it unsafe for an employee to perform his/her job duties.

## **G. Social Media (KBGA)**

Employees are expected to exercise good judgment and personal responsibility when using social media. Sharing student information on social media is strictly prohibited. Employees shall not use social media to contact or communicate with any JPS student.

## **H. Criminal Proceedings and Arrests (GBRAB)**

Employees are required to report to his or her immediate supervisor an arrest for a felony, driving under the influence (DUI/DWI), or any justified complaint of child abuse or neglect on file in the central registry pursuant to Article 615 of the Children's Code.

The report must be made within twenty-four (24) hours of the arrest or before reporting to work on the next regular work day, whichever is shorter.

Employees are also required to report the disposition of any legal proceedings related to any such arrest, which shall also be made a part of any related files or records.

#### **I. Reporting Moving Violations Convictions**

School bus operators must report convictions of moving violations to the Transportation Department within thirty (30) days of conviction.

Convictions of out-of-state moving violations must be reported to the Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles within thirty (30) days of conviction.

#### **J. Mandatory Reporter (JGCE)**

Bus operators and other transportation support personnel are mandatory reporters. Pursuant to La. Children's Code Article 609(A), mandatory reporters who have cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare is endangered as a result of abuse or neglect are required to report to the appropriate authority.

#### **K. Employee Conduct (GBRA)**

All employees, volunteers, student teachers, interns, and any other person affiliated with the Jefferson Parish School Board have the responsibility to be familiar with and abide by the laws of the state, the policies and decisions of the School Board, and the administrative regulations and procedures designed to implement Board policies.

Employees and others shall also comply with the standards of conduct set out in this policy and with any other policies, regulations, procedures, or guidelines that impose duties, requirements, or standards of conduct attendant to their status as School Board employees.

Employees and all others shall be expected to observe at least the following standards of conduct:

- Be courteous to students, one another, and the public and conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner.
- Recognize and respect the rights and property of students, other employees, and the public.
- Maintain confidentiality of all matters relating to students and other employees.
- Demonstrate dependable attendance and punctuality with regard to assigned activities and work schedules.

- Observe and adhere to all terms of an employee's contract or job description.
- Strive to keep current and knowledgeable about the employee's area of responsibility.
- Refrain from promoting personal attitudes and opinions for matters other than general discussion.
- Refrain from using undue influence to gain, or attempt to gain, promotion, leave, favorable assignments, or other individual benefit or advantage.
- Advocate positive personal behavior on or off campus and attempt to avoid improprieties or the appearance of improprieties.

#### **L. Employee Discipline (GBK)**

The Superintendent, in accordance with state law, shall have authority to discipline employees in any manner, including oral or written reprimand, suspension, or termination, when an employee's behavior warrants such action. When not otherwise provided for by state law or policy, any disciplinary action to be considered by the Superintendent shall be the decision of the Superintendent.

With the driver's permission, the Board may opt to continue using the vehicle of an owner/operator on suspension. The suspended driver will receive operational pay only if the Board uses his/her vehicle during the period of suspension.

#### **M. Dismissal (GBN)**

With the exception of lay-offs caused by programmatic changes, budget cuts, staff reorganizations, reconstitution of schools under Board Policy and/or reductions in force, no School Board employee shall be dismissed except upon stated reasons and in accord with all statutory provisions. Any school employee shall be dismissed by the Superintendent, in accordance with statutory provisions, upon final conviction or pleading nolo contendere of certain crimes enumerated in La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §15:587.1 and/or any other felony.

Employees may be dismissed in accordance with the procedures set forth in Board Policy GBN.

A tenured school bus operator shall not be removed from his/her position except upon written and signed charges of willful neglect of duty, or incompetence, or immorality, or intoxication while on duty, or physical inability to perform his/her duties, or failure to keep his/her transfer equipment in a safe, comfortable, and practical operating condition, or of being a member of or contributing to any group, organization, movement, or corporation that is prohibited by law or injunction from operating in the state, and then only if found guilty after a hearing by the School Board by a majority of the Board's membership.



An additional ground for the removal from office of any permanent school bus operator shall be the abolition, discontinuance, or consolidation of routes, but then only if it is found as a fact, after a hearing by the School Board, that it is in the best interests of the school system to abolish, discontinue, or consolidate said route or routes.

Following is a non-exclusive list of conduct that may, depending on the circumstances, constitute cause for dismissal:

- Failure to adequately perform the duties and responsibilities of the position as set forth in the job description.
- Failure to follow Board and Transportation Department policy and procedure as otherwise set forth in this *Handbook*.
- Failure to comply with state and federal law and regulations applicable to an employee's job duties.
- Failure to timely and accurately submit required reports as otherwise set forth in this *Handbook*.
- Failure to promptly and adequately communicate with the Transportation Department as otherwise set forth in this *Handbook*.
- Failure to adequately instruct passengers on safe riding practices and proper behavior or to manage student conduct in accordance with school bus discipline procedures.
- Failure to observe traffic laws and regulations, including the operating policies and procedures set forth herein.
- Engaging in immoral acts or substance abuse while on duty.
- Physical disability to perform the duties of the position, with or without reasonable accommodation, as determined by a qualified medical professional.
- Failure to maintain the school bus in safe, clean, and comfortable operating condition. Following are some examples of failure to properly maintain equipment:
  - Failure to replace tires which do not meet minimum requirements (4/32" in all front tire grooves, 2/32" in all rear tire grooves).
  - Failure to replace cracked windows.
  - Absence of fully functional audible backing alarm.
  - Absence of fully functional crossing control arm.
  - Failure to conduct required inspections.
  - Failure to make immediate repairs to faulty equipment.
  - Failure to comply with seating requirements.
  - Unauthorized signage.
  - Installation of unauthorized after-market devices on the school bus.

#### **N. Electronic Communications between Employees and Students (GAMIA)**

Employees may only communicate with students via means provided by the school system (e.g. via district e-mail). Except as expressly approved in writing by the

school principal and parent/guardian, communications between students and employees on personal electronic devices, including cell phones and personal computers, are strictly prohibited.

#### **O. Evaluations (GBI)**

All employees shall be subject to annual performance review in accordance with the procedures established by the Human Resource Department.

#### **P. Tobacco Use (GAMA)**

Chewing, smoking, carrying a lighted cigar or cigarette, pipe or any other form of smoking object or device, or possessing any lighted tobacco product or any other lighted combustible plant material shall be prohibited on School Board property, and on all school buses. Tobacco products and smoking paraphernalia must be stored so that they are not observable by students while loading or unloading, or during transport.

#### **Q. Employee Attendance (GBRB)**

Employees are expected and required to report to their designated work locations in the prescribed manner and at the prescribed time work activity is to commence. Tardiness, unexpected absence, or failure to report to work as scheduled may result in disciplinary action.

If an employee will arrive late or must be absent from work, he/she must notify the Transportation Department in accordance with departmental procedure. Absences must be approved and will be recorded in half-day increments. Bus operators are not authorized to use leave solely because their buses are inoperable.

Bus operators who must be absent from work are responsible for securing a qualified substitute operator from the Transportation Department substitute list. A substitute driver is one who is approved by the Transportation Department to serve in the place of a full-time bus operator. Substitute drivers may also serve as substitute attendants.

As a last resort, and only when approved by the Executive Director (or designee), a “buddy” operator may be used to complete the operator’s route. A “buddy” driver is one who agrees, and is able, to transport another operator’s students to and/or from school and complete his/her regular assignment without overloading any bus.

Note that when a “buddy” operator is used and an owner/operator’s bus is removed from service by the employee or the Transportation Department, operational pay will be withheld for the period that the bus is removed from service.

Bus owners on approved leave without pay may be placed on the daily rental list for a period not to exceed 120 days.

## **OPERATIONAL POLICIES**

### **A. Schedules**

#### **Annual School Year Calendar**

The approved annual school year calendar is posted on the district website and the Transportation Department website. Notices of changes due to emergencies (make-up days for emergency school closings, etc.) will be posted on the websites and employees will be notified of changes. Buses assigned to transport non-public school students will follow the JPS Annual School Year Calendar.

#### **Daily School Schedule**

Daily start and end times of schools will be set annually by the Transportation Department in order to ensure safe, effective, and efficient transport.

School principals (public and non-public) may contact the Executive Director of Transportation to request a change in the school's daily transportation schedule. The Transportation Department will make every effort to accommodate such requests, but reserves the right to make the final decision on proposed schedule changes.

#### **Daily Transportation Time Window**

The Transportation Department has established a thirty (30) minute window for buses to arrive before the official morning ("take-in") bell and 30 minutes after the official afternoon ("dismissal") bell. The principal should consult with any operator who consistently fails to meet this requirement. The operator and/or principal should consult with the Transportation Department if the assigned route is making it difficult for the operator to arrive during the established window.

#### **Emergency Early Dismissal**

At times during the school year, various emergencies (e.g., lock-downs, plumbing problems, power outages, extreme weather conditions, etc.) may require the early dismissal of one school, a cluster of schools or all schools in the Parish. Decisions regarding the early dismissal or emergency closing of a school or schools will be made by the Superintendent (or designee) based upon recommendations from staff members.

The Transportation Staff and/or principals will make every effort to contact operators and attendants with further direction as to how they should proceed.

## **B. Route Assignments**

### **School Bus Operators**

The term “route” shall apply to the combined total daily trips (or runs) regularly assigned to the bus operator.

School bus routes shall be designed so that they begin at the farthest point from the school or schools served and proceed on the shortest charted course, except when the Transportation Department determines that it is more economical to do otherwise and/or when there are hazardous conditions.

Time schedules, bus capacities and numbers of students to be transported and availability of bus attendants will be taken into consideration in determining route assignments and/or trip runs.

Portions of routes (i.e., “trips” or “runs”) may be assigned and/or revised as deemed necessary by the Transportation Department.

### **Bus Attendants and PTSPs**

Bus attendants may select a route based on seniority during the Transportation Department Bus Attendant Job Fair. PTSPs are assigned based on child-specific needs as indicated in student Individual Education Plans or Individual Accommodation Plan.

### **Assignment of Routes to New Operators**

When a replacement operator is hired during the school year for a route that was not selected at the most recent Operator Job Fair, the new operator may elect to keep the route. Routes that were not available during the most recent Operator Job Fair are considered temporary.

### **Summer Program Bus Operator and Attendant Process**

School bus operators and attendants who wish to be considered for summer employment must apply for summer positions by the deadline each year. Operators and attendants will be selected based on seniority in accordance with the Summer Route Selection Process.

### **Specialty Trip Rotational Assignments**

With the exception of bus operators who are grandfathered due to previous policy provisions, vacant community skills trips will be assigned on a continuing rotational basis, in accordance with the following:

- Assignments will be made in order of seniority to eligible, JPS-certified school bus operators currently assigned to special needs routes.
- The operator must commit to a minimum assignment of three (3) weeks for safety reasons, as consistent transport is the safest form of transport.

Compensation will be reduced accordingly in the event an operator fails to complete an assigned community skills trip.

Operators will be assisted on community skills routes by assigned special education teachers and classroom aides, rather than regular bus attendants and PTSPs.

The Transportation Department reserves the right to remove a driver from the Community Skills Trip rotation for valid reasons.

## **C. School Bus Locations, Loading and Unloading Passengers**

### **Bus Stop Locations**

It is the bus driver's responsibility to select a safe stopping point for the stop location established by the Transportation Department on the route issued, for students to load and unload from the school bus. Safety, not convenience, is the most important factor in determining the location of bus stops. The Transportation Department considers the following guidelines in selecting the location of bus stops:

- Bus stops should not be located on major thoroughfares, unless there is no safe alternative. Operators shall consult with the Transportation Department for guidance on the location of bus stops for students who reside on major thoroughfares, particularly where speed limits exceed 25 miles per hour.
- The bus operator should determine on which side of the roadway the majority of children's residences are located and then design stop locations so as to minimize roadway crossings by passengers.
- Children shall not be required to walk across more than two (2) lanes of traffic on undivided roadways with posted speed limits of 25 mph or less.
- Children shall not be required to walk across roadways that are divided with a median or a physical barrier because vehicles traveling in the opposite direction are not required by law to stop when meeting school buses that have stopped to pick up or discharge passengers. (Note: Designated turning lanes are not considered to be medians.)
- Bus stops must be located at least one hundred (100') from intersections for student safety.
- Buses are prohibited from stopping within intersections to pick up or discharge passengers.
- Centralized bus stops that is, stops where all students are picked up and discharged at the same location, may be designated for express bus routes. Parents/guardians or their designees are responsible for supervising students at the bus stop.
- For regular routes, walking distances to and from bus stops shall be established in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Elementary school students: two tenths (.2) mile, except in situations where safety dictates a shorter or longer distance.
  - Middle school students: four tenths (.4) mile, except in situations where safety dictates a shorter or longer distance.
  - High school students: six tenths (.6) mile, except in situations where safety dictates a shorter or longer distance.
  - Special needs students: as indicated in the student's IEP/IAP when special consideration is required.
  - Stops should be arranged at closer intervals during periods of darkness or inclement weather unless doing so would disrupt the bus schedule by more than five (5) minutes.
- Bus drivers must report any unsafe conditions at bus stops to the designated Transportation Coordinator, who will assist the driver in determining the appropriate course of action.
  - Children must ride the bus to which they have been assigned and board/disembark at the designated bus stop every day. Drivers shall report students who do not observe this requirement in accordance with the student disciplinary procedures.
  - Requests to change a bus route in order to accommodate a student should be forwarded to the designated Transportation Coordinator or the Executive Director of Transportation for a final determination.

## **Loading and Unloading Passengers**

Loading and unloading passengers is one of the most difficult and important of a school bus operator's responsibilities. School bus operators must be totally focused on the changing environment around the bus stop from the time the bus approaches the stop until it pulls away. The following guidelines will assist you in safeguarding your passengers and other motorists.

### Loading and Unloading Guidelines for Home Bus Stops

- As the bus approaches a bus stop, the operator must scan the area to assess traffic conditions and pedestrians in the area.
- The operator shall activate the overhead amber lights on the bus at a distance of not more than 500' and not less than 100' from the bus stop, depending on prevailing conditions such as visibility, road and weather conditions, speed limits or other factors that may affect the ability of other drivers to bring their vehicles to a stop.
- The operator then re-scans the area to assess the responses of other motorists and pedestrians in the area.
- The operator stops the bus approximately 12'-15' from the waiting students, sets the parking brake, shifts the bus into "neutral" and activates the red stop lights, the stop arms and the crossing control arm.

- The operator scans again to ensure that all traffic that is required to stop has stopped and that it is safe for students to proceed.
- The operator, using the universal hand crossing signal, then signals students to cross the roadway (if required)—walking and not running—and other students to enter the bus in an orderly manner. During this procedure, the operator scans the area, checking traffic to ensure that vehicles remain stopped and that no students are running to catch the bus.
- After all students have entered the bus and are seated, the operator scans the area, checking again for late students and monitoring traffic before pulling away from the bus stop.
- When it is safe, the operator signals by deactivating the red lights, the stop arms and the crossing control arm, shifts the bus into gear, releases the parking brake and resumes forward motion.
- During unloading activities, the operator must ensure that passengers remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop and the operator signals them to exit the bus in an orderly manner.
- Students who must cross the roadway should wait for the operator to signal them across. Students should cross 12' to 15' feet in front of the bus.
- Students must never be allowed to cross roadways behind the bus.
- Students who must walk parallel to the bus after exiting must be instructed to walk out of the “danger zone”—at least ten (10) feet away from the side of the bus.
- The operator must count the number of students getting on or off the bus (unless the operator knows all students by sight) and must account for their whereabouts until they have cleared the danger zone of the bus.
- The bus operator’s attention must not be diverted from the students who are engaged in the loading/unloading process; therefore, misconduct among other passengers must not be tolerated.

#### Loading and Unloading Guidelines for Campus Bus Stops

- Buses may arrive on school campuses no earlier than thirty (30) minutes before the instructional time bell in the morning and no later than thirty (30) minutes after the dismissal bell in the afternoon.
- Unless dismissed by a teacher or other school authority on bus duty, school buses are required to wait seven (7) minutes at the loading zone after the dismissal bell in the afternoon. The principal or designee may detain the bus longer than seven (7) minutes in the event of an emergency.
- The operator shall notify the Transportation Department in the event the bus is detained at a school due to an emergency situation. The Transportation staff will notify the operator’s other assigned schools and make arrangements for an alternate bus, if necessary.

## **Mandatory Seating and Reporting Overloads**

- Passengers must be seated, facing forward, with both legs resting within the confines of the seating area and must remain seated when the bus is in motion.
- A bus is overloaded if the number of passengers exceeds the number of seats available on the bus.
- If the bus operator observes that there are not enough seats for all students to be seated, while leaving the aisles completely clear, the operator shall report the overload to the Transportation Department.

## **JPS Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten Transportation Agreement**

Parents/guardians of Pre-K/K (Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten) students who ride the school bus are required to sign an agreement to comply with the following:

- The student must wear the mandatory PURPLE school logo shirt every day.
- The student must wear the name tag provided by the teacher every day for the first two (2) months of school. After that date, the school may decide to continue use of the name tags or choose to have the information connected or printed on the child's school bag.
- A parent/guardian or designee who is at least 12 years of age must be present when the student gets on the bus in the morning.
- A parent/guardian or designee who is at least 12 years of age must be present at the bus stop to receive the student in the afternoon.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide to the school and bus operator with the names and a working phone number for those persons authorized to receive the student at the bus stop.

School bus operators shall not refuse transport of a Pre-K/K student to school in the morning, even if the student is not supervised in accordance with this policy.

School bus operators shall not permit a Pre-K/K student to disembark in the afternoon if the parent/guardian or designee is not there to meet the bus.

The bus operator must return the student to school if the parent/guardian or designee is not there to meet the bus.

Upon returning to the school, the student may be released only to a school administrator or designee.

Any violation of the Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten policy shall be reported to school administration on Form SB: Bus Behavior Report.

It is incumbent upon bus personnel to ensure that the parent/guardian or designee is present at the stop prior to releasing the PreK/K student from the bus. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including, termination of employment.



## **Archdiocese of New Orleans Kindergarten Transportation Agreement**

Archdiocese of New Orleans does not authorize transportation of students below the kindergarten grade level; therefore, Pre-Kindergarten students of any age shall not receive JPS transportation service.

Parents/guardians of Kindergarten students who ride the school bus are required to sign an agreement to comply with the following:

- Kindergarten bus riders must wear the mandatory PURPLE lanyard labelled KINDERGARTEN around his/her neck when riding the school bus. These lanyards will be provided by each school. This will help the bus driver identify our young students. Parents are responsible for placing the lanyard on their children before boarding the bus each morning. The school will provide the lanyards to K bus riders each afternoon at dismissal for the bus ride home.
- A parent/guardian or designee who is at least 12 years of age must be present when the student gets on the bus in the morning.
- A parent/guardian or designee who is at least 12 years of age must be present at the bus stop to receive the student in the afternoon.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide to the school and to the bus operator the names and a working phone number for those persons authorized to receive the student at the bus stop.

School bus operators shall not refuse transport of a K student to school in the morning, even if the student is not supervised or wearing the purple lanyard in accordance with this policy.

School bus operators shall not permit a K student to disembark in the afternoon if the parent/guardian or designee is not there to meet the bus.

The bus operator must return the student to school if the parent/guardian or designee is not there to meet the bus.

### **D. Vehicle Maintenance and Inspection**

#### **School Bus and Related Equipment Maintenance**

School buses and related equipment must be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal standards, including the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, and manufacturers recommended service procedures.

The bus owner is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the school bus. Operators who drive buses that they do not own are responsible for notifying the owner of any defects discovered during inspection. Failure to maintain a school bus in safe, comfortable operating order or failure to notify a bus owner of vehicle/equipment defects shall constitute grounds for operator dismissal.

Operators are responsible for keeping accurate maintenance records for each vehicle.

Buses must be maintained in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. Any alterations and/or modifications that do not comply with manufacturer's specifications may result in a bus being removed from service. This does not apply to mobility lift, climate control and/or safety program equipment.

### **Rental School Buses**

Spare buses that have been inspected and approved by the Transportation Department will be made available for rental to eligible operators whose vehicles are temporarily disabled.

Only vehicles that meet all rental bus requirements and appear on the Transportation Department's approved rental bus list may be used as spares.

Rates for daily bus rentals are established annually. Rental rates shall be charged in half-day increments.

### **School Bus Inspections – Bi-Annual**

All school buses must be inspected bi-annually by a Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections approved inspection station. Bi-annual inspections must be completed during the period from June 1 through August 31 or December 1 through February 28. Inspection stickers must be displayed on the left, bottom corner of the school bus windshield.

### **School Bus Inspections – Daily**

School bus operators are required to perform inspections of the school bus before, during and after every trip, whether on a scheduled bus route, an athletic trip, a field trip or other activity trip.

**Pre-Trip Inspections.** The driver must check the interior, exterior and engine compartment before setting the bus in motion to check the backing alarm and brakes. The pre-trip inspection shall be conducted in accordance with the *Louisiana Commercial Operator's Manual* and Unit 2 of the Louisiana School Bus Operator Course. Lifts, mobility aid securement devices, occupant restraint systems and all other specialized equipment must be inspected. Bus attendants and PTSPs may be assigned the duty of inspecting specialized equipment. Items that are not functioning properly during pre-trip inspections may result in the bus being taken out of service until repairs are made.

A **Pre-Trip Inspection Report** must be completed by the operator and maintained on the school bus, as required by Commercial Motor Vehicle Regulations. The Report shall be submitted to the Transportation Department at the end of the reporting period and a new report form issued to the operator.

**En route Inspections** are intended to ensure that the school bus and its equipment are functioning safely and that passengers are conducting themselves

properly. Any suspected equipment malfunctions should be checked during the post-trip inspection, unless immediate attention is warranted; inappropriate passenger behavior should be handled in accordance with state and JPS procedures.

**Post-Trip Inspections** must be conducted after every trip, except that the operator (and attendant or PTSP, if applicable) must inspect the bus after every segment of the morning and afternoon trips in accordance with the Child Safety Check Procedure. The driver should also check any suspected equipment malfunctions and take steps to address any malfunctions or defects.

### **School Bus Inspections Concurrent with Drug/Alcohol Testing**

Operators shall proceed to mandatory drug/alcohol testing in the vehicle (contract or rental) used to complete his or her last route.

Designated Transportation staff shall inspect the school bus for cleanliness, compliance with federal and state design and construction standards and proper functioning of equipment.

If the bus operator does not present the bus for inspection as described herein above, the operator must return with the bus as directed for the vehicle inspection and may face disciplinary action.

### **Child Safety Check Procedure**

Leaving a child on a school bus is a serious offense which can lead to criminal charges against operators and attendants and, further, constitutes cause for disciplinary action up to, and including, termination of employment.

Bus operators and attendants must comply with the following steps in order to ensure that students are not left on parked buses:

- During the pre-trip inspection, the operator shall remove the “No Passengers on Board” sign from the rear (emergency) door and place the sign in a secure location.
- After every trip, morning and afternoon, the operator and attendant, if applicable, shall conduct a walk-through inspection to ensure that there are no students remaining on the bus.
- After confirming that there are no students on the bus, the operator shall affix the “No Passengers on Board” sign to the glass panel of the emergency door so that the sign can be seen from the exterior of the bus.

### **Towing Disabled School Buses**

Disabled school buses insured by JPS may be towed only by a licensed, insured towing company.

## **Mandatory Retirement from Service**

A school bus that reaches the age of 25 model years, as calculated under Bulletin 119 – Louisiana School Transportation Specifications and Procedures, shall be retired from service.

## **Breakdowns**

The school bus operator is responsible for taking the following steps in the event his/her bus breaks down or is otherwise out of service:

- Arrange for a spare bus, if available.
- If no spare buses are available, arrange for a “buddy” to assist, even if the “buddy” must make a second trip.
- Inform the assigned school(s) and the JPS Transportation Department of the situation and the arrangements to transport students.

The Transportation Department will assist if the operator encounters difficulty in arranging for routes to be covered or in providing notice to assigned school(s).

## **E. Passenger Instruction and Safety**

### **Student Instruction**

Students who ride a school bus must be instructed on school bus safety and emergency evacuation procedures. School bus operators shall be responsible for working with school staff to organize and conduct such instruction in accordance with the deadlines noted on the bus operator calendar.

Instruction shall be presented twice each year, at the beginning of each semester and must, at a minimum, include the following:

- Identifying individuals in positions of authority over passengers
- Loading and unloading procedures
- Seat assignment
- Acceptable conduct on the bus and at bus stops
- Care of the bus and its equipment
- Emergency procedures, including evacuation drills

Schools must forward to the Transportation Department a completed T-7 (Safe Riding Practices Classroom Instruction Form) and T-8 (Emergency Evacuation Drill Verification Form) upon completion of the required training each semester.

### **Student Conduct and Safety**

School bus operators, attendants and PTSPs are responsible for reinforcing appropriate school bus and bus stop behavior, including, but not limited to the following:

- Remain at home when you or any member of your family has a contagious disease.
- Arrive at the bus stop no more than 15 minutes and no less than 10 minutes before the scheduled pick up time.
- Walk on sidewalks whenever possible. If there are no sidewalks, walk on the edge of the left side of the street, facing on-coming traffic.
- Proceed to assigned bus stop.
- Stand off the road at least 10 feet when waiting for the bus.
- Conduct yourself in an orderly manner, avoiding damage to private property and safe-guard against injury to yourself and others.
- If necessary to wait across the street from the bus stop, await the bus operator's signal before crossing, and cross 12'-15' in front of the bus.
- Board the bus only when the operator is seated at the controls.
- Board the bus in single file, holding onto the handrail, and promptly proceed to the seat assigned to you by the operator.
- Stow band instruments and school bags under the seat or where designated by the operator, but never in the aisle, the entrance or the exit.
- Sit straight in your seat with both feet on the floor in front of your seat, and remain seated at all times when the bus is in motion. This will minimize injury in cases of emergency stops or collisions.
- Always keep the aisle clear.
- Speak quietly and carry on normal conversations with other passengers in your vicinity. (Loud talking and shouting will distract the operator.)
- Avoid unnecessary conversations with the operator.
- Abstain from eating, drinking or smoking on the bus.
- Keep arms and head inside the bus windows at all times.
- Refrain from using profanity.
- Avoid littering at the bus stop and/or in the bus, and never throw objects inside or outside the bus.
- Respect pedestrians and other motorists at all times.
- Protect the bus. Report to the operator as you leave the bus any damage you notice. (Parents shall be required to pay for damage caused by students.)
- Avoid touching any mechanical controls, including entrance and emergency doors, emergency window latches and roof hatch latches, except in cases of emergency, and only then in accordance with emergency procedures as explained by the operator.
- Never ask the operator to permit you to get off at any stop other than your designated stop. (NOTE: Parents must send authorization to the school principal, who then may authorize the operator to pick up or discharge students at an alternate stop, provided the stop is on the operator's assigned route and has been approved by the Executive Director of Transportation (or designee).)

- Any student who must cross the street after leaving the bus should wait for the operator to signal that it is safe to cross. The student should cross approximately 12'-15' in front of the bus (never behind the bus).
- Students should go home immediately after reaching the "home bus stop" location after school.
- All pencils, pens and/or any other sharp objects shall be stored in the student's book bag while riding on the bus.
- Any students sustaining an injury while riding on the bus should report this injury to the bus operator immediately.
- The following items are not allowed on the bus: alcohol, drugs, pets, glass objects (except eye-glasses), weapons of any kind, and objects (including school "projects") that are too large to be held in your lap or placed under your seat.
- Students with temporary disabilities (e.g., fractures, pregnancy, etc.) must present a Temporary Disability Medical Statement (available at the JPS Transportation Department website) signed by the attending physician and stating the nature of the temporary disability and the student's physical capability and limitations with respect to riding the school bus.
- Comply with all other JPS student conduct policies and procedures.

### **Student Discipline Procedure (JCDAD)**

Bus operators are recognized to be in authority with regard to pupil behavior in or about the vehicle which he/she operates. School Board regulations regarding proper conduct on buses shall be provided in writing to students and parents/guardians at the start of each school year. The operator shall report disorderly or unmanageable pupil conduct to the principal of the school in which the pupil is enrolled in accordance with the following procedures:

The operator should address less severe student conduct issues as follows:

- Attempt to resolve the issue(s) with the student(s) involved.
- If the misbehavior continues, contact the parent/guardian and enlist their assistance in resolving the issue(s). Explain the consequences if misbehavior continues.
- If the misbehavior continues after speaking with the parent/guardian, submit a completed Bus Behavior Report to the student's attendance school.

The Bus Behavior Report should clearly and completely describe the conduct for which the student is being referred.

Bus operators and attendants, if applicable, must attend conferences scheduled to address student misconduct on the bus.

School bus operators are not authorized to punish students; instead, bus operators must report the behavior to school for a determination as to the appropriate response.

The bus operator shall be provided a copy of the completed Bus Behavior Report upon completion of the action taken by the school authority.

In cases of severe misconduct, the principal or designee may temporarily suspend the pupil's bus privilege until appropriate disciplinary action is taken. The pupil's parents should be immediately notified of the temporary suspension. The pupil's parents shall be responsible for providing transportation during the period of suspension.

Severe misconduct includes, but is not limited to, fighting, possession/use of illegal substances or weapons, bullying, inappropriate touching or other conduct that poses an immediate threat to the safety of passengers, motorists or pedestrians. Serious misconduct must be reported to the school immediately.

Only in cases of life-threatening, imminent danger may an operator direct a student/passenger to exit the bus at a location other than the student's assigned bus stop. In such cases, the operator should report the situation immediately to 9-1-1 and the Transportation Department.

### **Items Prohibited on School Buses**

The following items and/or their usage are prohibited on school buses used to transport JPS students:

- Tobacco products and/or smoking paraphernalia
- Alcohol, including empty containers
- Illegal drugs
- Weapons of any kind
- Motor oil, coolant, windshield washer solvent, brake fluid or any other fluids that may be required by the school bus
- Unsecured objects, including, but not limited to, musical instruments, athletic equipment, paper, crates, boxes and other items placed on the dashboard or elsewhere in or near the operator's compartment, first aid kits and other emergency equipment
- Glassware (except eye glasses)
- Musical instruments, large class "projects" or other carry-on items that cannot safely be held by the student or secured beneath the student's bus seat.

Note that food and/or beverages may not be consumed by the driver or passengers while the bus is in motion.

### **Prohibition against Leaving Bus Unattended**

The bus operator shall not leave the bus unattended, except in the case of an emergency.

In the event of an emergency, the operator must turn off the engine, set the parking brake, remove the keys from the ignition switch, activate hazard lamps and, using

the Push-To-Talk Device, notify the Transportation Department of the nature of the emergency.

### **Push-To-Talk (PTT) Device**

PTT devices are issued to school bus operators for the sole purpose of conducting Transportation Department business.

In emergency situations (accidents, breakdowns, passenger behavior, etc.), the operator should move the bus off the roadway to a safe location, stop and secure the bus before contacting the Transportation Department, law enforcement and/or other emergency-responding agency.

PTT devices must be fully charged and activated not less than one hour before and after the operator's morning and afternoon routes and must remain activated during the routes and activity trips. Transportation Department staff will monitor PTT devices to ensure compliance with activation requirements.

Downloading ring tones, games or applications, sending/receiving text messages (except those required by JPS) or other non-work-related use is strictly prohibited. Charges for unauthorized use of the PTT device will be deducted from employee pay.

Employees may be required to reimburse the district for lost, stolen or damaged PTT devices and related equipment.

### **Restricted Use of Cell Phones**

The use of any communication device other than the employer issued PTT while operating a school bus is strictly prohibited, except that the use of a cell phone by an operator may be authorized in emergency situations involving:

- An emergency system response operator, 9-1-1 safety dispatcher, or school administrator.
- A hospital or emergency room.
- A physician's office or health clinic.
- An ambulance or fire department rescue service.
- A fire department, fire protection district, or volunteer fire department.
- A law enforcement agency.

### **Fleet Fuel Policy**

Fleet Fuel Cards, along with a five-digit Personal Identification Number (PIN), will be issued to employees authorized to purchase fuel. Fleet Fuel Cards may be used only for purchasing fuel when school is in session and for specific school buses that are assigned to daily bus routes.

The Transportation Department shall determine the amount of fuel that may be purchased with the Fleet Fuel Card based on the mileage of the driver's daily route, exclusive of the mileage traveled for athletic, field or other activity trips.



Charges for fuel purchased in excess of the authorized amount, or any other unauthorized charges will be deducted from driver pay.

### **Fueling Buses with Passengers on Board Prohibited**

The operator is responsible for ensuring that the bus has enough fuel to complete any assigned trips. In the event that an operator must refuel during a trip, all passengers must exit the bus during refueling.

At no time is a school bus operator authorized to fuel a school bus when passengers are on board the bus.

### **Seating and Overloads**

Students must remain seated at all times when the bus is in motion. An operator may not transport more passengers than the number of seats available on the school bus. The operator must report immediately to the Transportation Department if there are more children assigned to a bus than the number of available seats.

## **F. Driving Maneuvers and Related Procedures**

### **Backing**

Backing the school bus is a very dangerous maneuver and should be avoided whenever a safer alternative is available, particularly on school campuses.

If backing is required to turn the bus around or otherwise to access a clear travel path a spotter should be used to assist the operator. If no spotter is available, the operator must exit the bus and check the area around the bus before backing.

Every school bus must be equipped with a backing lamp, which is activated when the bus is shifted into reverse gear, and with a backing alarm, which is activated when the bus rolls backward, whether the transmission is in reverse, neutral or forward gear.

If the backing lamp and/or backing alarm are not functioning properly, the bus should be taken out of service until the necessary repairs are made.

Before backing begins, the bus operator must sound the horn and activate the four-way hazard lamps.

If backing is required at bus stops where passengers will be loaded, passengers must enter the bus and be seated before the backing maneuver is executed.

If backing is required at bus stops where passengers will be exiting the bus, passengers must remain seated on board the bus until the backing maneuver has been completed.

## **Railroad Crossings**

School buses must stop at railroad crossings, whether or not there are passengers on board.

School buses must never cross railroads when signals have been activated unless signaled to do so by a railroad official or a law enforcement officer.

The following procedures apply at railroad crossings:

- As the school bus approaches the crossing, the operator shall ensure that the bus is in the right-most lane of traffic, check traffic conditions and tap the brake pedal to signal that the bus is preparing to slow and stop.
- At approximately one hundred feet (100') from the crossing, the operator shall activate the four-way hazard lamps.
- The operator shall turn off equipment that is making noise (e.g., radio, heater, defroster fan, etc.) and require passengers to be quiet.
- The operator shall bring the bus to a complete stop not less than fifteen feet (15') and not more than fifty feet (50') from the nearest rail.
- After coming to a complete stop, the operator shall open the operator's side window and entrance door to enhance sound and visibility.
- Before setting the bus in motion, the operator shall look both ways, up and down the tracks, to ensure that no trains are coming and scan the opposite side of the crossing to ensure that no obstructions might prevent a safe crossing.
- If the crossing is configured with multiple tracks, the operator must ensure that all tracks are clear of a moving train before proceeding across the tracks.
- If no train is coming and before setting the bus in motion, the operator shall close the entrance door and cross without shifting gears at any time.
- When the bus has cleared the crossing, the hazard lamps shall be cancelled, and the operator should resume normal speed.

## **Turns**

Making turns with school buses is a very dangerous maneuver due to blind spots, slow acceleration speed, the length and width of the bus, the "pivot point" of the vehicle and other factors that the operator must consider before, during and after turns.

Tail swing is another factor. Tail swing refers to the motion of the bus from the rear wheels to the rear bumper; the longer the bus, the greater the distance of tail swing. The direction of tail swing is opposite the direction in which the bus is being steered. Failure of the operator to be aware of the amount of tail swing for different buses he/she drives can result in collisions with persons or objects during turns.

Before making a turn from a roadway, changing lanes or reentering a roadway, the operator must activate the vehicle's turn signal not less than one hundred (100') before the turn and shall maintain the signal throughout the turn. If the turn signal

does not cancel automatically when the turn is completed, the operator must manually cancel the turn signal.

### **Right Turns**

- The approach to right turns and the turn itself must be made as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the road.
- Even if multiple lanes of traffic are available for a right turn, the school bus should occupy the right-most lane so as to reduce blind spots.

### **Left Turns**

- On two-way roadways, the bus operator must ensure that the turn can be made safely without interfering with on-coming traffic. Keep the bus as close to the center line as practicable.
- If the bus must wait for traffic to clear the intersection before making the left turn, the operator should keep the front wheels pointing straight ahead to avoid being pushed into oncoming traffic in the event the bus is struck from the rear by another vehicle.
- If multiple lanes are available for left turns, the school bus should be positioned in the right-most left turn lane so as to reduce blind spots keeping traffic to the operator's left which enables a wider turning radius.

### **Intersections**

When two vehicles approach or enter an intersection from different highways/streets at approximately the same time, the operator of the vehicle on the left shall yield the right-of-way to the vehicle on the right.

At a four-way stop intersection, the operator of the first vehicle to stop at the intersection shall be the first to proceed. If two or more vehicles reach the four-way stop intersection at the same time, the operator of the vehicle on the left shall yield the right-of-way to the vehicle on the right.

### **Driving Speeds**

School buses must not be driven faster than 55 mph on highways and no faster than legal speeds elsewhere even when buses are being escorted.

The maximum speed for school buses shall be 35 mph or the posted speed (whichever is less) under conditions that require frequent stops to receive and discharge passengers.

### **Interstate and Other Controlled Access Highway Driving**

On multiple-lane highways, school buses must use the right-hand lane except to pass, to turn or to avoid hazardous conditions.

Bus operators must establish a safe following distance: at least four (4) seconds at speeds less than forty (40) mph under ideal road, traffic and weather conditions; at least five (5) seconds at speeds of forty (40) or more mph under ideal road,

traffic and weather conditions; more space under less than ideal conditions. Following distances must be increased in less than ideal conditions.

### **School Bus Emergency Procedures**

School bus emergencies may involve mechanical failure, passenger or operator illness or injury, collisions, or other unanticipated events. The school bus operator is responsible for directing passengers in the event of an emergency. This responsibility is shared by bus attendants or other employees who are responsible for assisting the bus operator on daily routes and/or special activity trips.

Before every athletic trip, field trip or other activity trip, the operator should brief passengers on the locations of emergency exits of the bus and procedures to follow in the event the bus must be evacuated.

Instruction should include, but is not limited to, the following items:

- Types of emergencies that may occur (mechanical failure, dangerous position of a stopped bus, adverse weather, collision, medical emergencies, etc.).
- Variations in procedures for specific emergencies.
- Locations of emergency equipment and emergency exits on the bus.
- Conditions that require evacuating the bus, as indicated in Unit 7 of the *Louisiana School Bus Operator Course*.
- Evacuation procedures.
- Dealing with emergencies in the event the bus operator is incapacitated.

On daily bus routes, one or more responsible passengers (first on in the A.M.; last off in the P.M., preferably) should be instructed on how to secure the bus in the event of an emergency and the operator is unable to do so.

On activity trips, a chaperone or other responsible adult should be instructed on how to secure the bus in the event of an emergency and the operator is unable to do so.

The operator is responsible for seeking appropriate assistance and notifying the Transportation Department regarding the nature of the emergency and the action plan.

The bus operator is responsible for determining whether or not the bus should be evacuated. The decision shall be based on whether the passengers would be safer on board the bus or outside and away from the bus.

If an evacuation is required, the operator shall remove the first aid kit from its mount and take the kit and PTT to the location where students have been assembled.

If the bus is stopped on a roadway, the operator shall set the parking brake and activate red flashing lights and stop signs during evacuations; if the bus has been moved off the roadway, the operator shall set the parking brake and activate the four-way flashing hazard lights.

After students have been removed to a safe location, the bus operator is responsible for securing the bus.

- Ensure that the parking brake has been set.
- Ensure that no passengers remain on the bus.
- Place reflective emergency triangles in the following manner:
  - On a straight, flat two-way, undivided roadway—one approximately 100' to the front of the bus; one approximately 10' to the rear of the bus; one approximately 100' to the rear of the bus, all on the traffic side of the vehicle.
  - On a two-way undivided roadway that is configured with a hill or a curve in the front or in the rear of the bus—extend the triangle in the front up to 500' and the second triangle in the rear up to 500', depending on the proximity of the bus to the hill or the curve.
  - On a straight, flat, divided roadway or a one-way roadway—none in front of the bus; one approximately 10' to the rear of the bus; one approximately 100' to the rear of the bus; one approximately 200' to the rear of the bus.
  - On a one-way divided roadway or a one-way roadway that is configured with a hill or a curve—extend the rear-most triangle up to 500', depending on the proximity of the bus to the hill or the curve.

For every trip (daily bus routes and all activity trips), the operator (or other responsible adult on activity trips) should have a roster of all passengers, including passengers' names, dates of birth and seat locations. In the event of an emergency that results in injury to one or more passengers, this information must be provided to investigators.

The bus operator is responsible for obtaining the name and telephone number of an emergency contact for each passenger.

### **Alleged/Post-Collision Procedure**

In the event of a collision or alleged collision, the bus operator shall follow the steps listed below unless he or she is unable to do so as a result of injuries sustained in the collision:

- Shift the bus into “park,” set the parking brake, turn off the ignition switch, remove the keys and activate the four-way hazard lights.
- Call 9-1-1 and contact the Transportation Department using the PTT Device and speak directly to a member of the JPS Transportation Department. **DO NOT LEAVE A MESSAGE.**
- If the collision occurs outside of normal business hours contact the JPS answering service at 457-2749. Be sure to report the nature of the accident, details about injuries, if any, and the location of the bus.
- Photograph the scene of the accident and vehicles involved, if possible.
- Move the bus out of the flow of traffic if the accident is not serious.

- Passengers should remain on board unless the circumstances warrant evacuation of the bus.
- Check all passengers for injuries. Question each student. Render first aid as needed.
- Secure the bus by setting the reflective triangles at the side of the roadway as indicated under School Bus Emergency Procedures.
- Secure names, address, and phone numbers of witnesses, if possible.
- Using the seating chart, indicate the arrangement of all passengers at the time of the accident. Note injured passengers, if any.
- Report for alcohol/drug testing as directed.
- Limit discussion of the accident to the investigating officer(s) and Transportation Department personnel or as otherwise directed by the Transportation Department.
- Do not discuss fault at the scene of the accident.
- Keep the Transportation Department informed regarding possible or ongoing litigation related to any accident in which you were involved while operating a vehicle for JPS.
- Submit a completed Accident Report Form to the Transportation Department within twenty-four (24) hours of the accident.
- Explain the accident in full detail with Transportation Department administrative staff. You may also be called upon to provide a detailed explanation to the district's claims representative for insurance purposes.
- Be sure to include the Item Number of the police report at the bottom of the accident report form.
- **FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION YOU MUST IMMEDIATELY REPORT ALL ACCIDENTS, NO MATTER HOW MINOR, TO THE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT.**
- Any bus operator who is involved in an accident shall be required to participate in the Accident Review Process, as described below.

### **Accident Review Process**

The primary purpose of the Accident Review Process is to determine whether or not action is necessary to avoid similar situations in the future.

The Executive Director of Transportation (or designee) will select members of the Accident Review Board, who will meet at a designated time to review one or more accidents. The panel will be provided details of the accident and operator accident history.

The members of the Review Board will consider the facts related to the accident and make a determination as to whether the accident was "preventable" or "non-preventable" and make recommendations as to subsequent disciplinary or remedial action that may be deemed appropriate.

A “preventable” accident is one that the operator failed to take all reasonable steps to avoid. An accident may be determined to be “preventable” even if the operator was not ticketed or found at fault by the investigating officer(s).

A “non-preventable” accident is one that could not have been avoided.

Factors such as malfunctioning traffic signals, obstructions, sudden equipment failure will be taken into consideration in making a determination regarding whether an accident was, or was not, preventable. The Accident Review Board will also consider whether the operator knew, or should have known, of any contributing cause such that she/he could have avoided the situation.

Recommendations of disciplinary action will be referred to the Human Resource Department and processed in accordance with applicable Board policies.

## **Regulations for Activity Trip Bus Transportation**

### **School Responsibilities**

The school principal or a designee (“school representative”) shall be responsible for coordinating activity trip transportation.

The school representative is responsible for ensuring that all activity trips are adequately chaperoned and that there are seats on the bus for all passengers.

The school representative shall provide the bus operator with a roster listing the name and birthdates of every passenger, including chaperones. The roster shall be used to prepare a seating chart after all passengers have been seated on the bus.

### **Selection of Drivers for Activity Trips**

In order to be considered for activity trips, operators must complete an application and return a copy to each school representative no later than the end of the third week of school year. Operators hired or assigned to a new route/trip during the school year will be included in the activity trip rotation upon submission of the application to the school. Activity trip applications are available in the Transportation Department.

Activity trips shall be offered to operators who drive daily trips for a school on a rotational basis. Other operators may be selected if none of the school’s daily trip drivers are available. This regulation does not apply to out-of-town trips involving interstate commercial carriers.

Failure to accept an activity trip scheduled between 9:30 A.M. and 1:30 P.M. and 4:30 P.M. and 12:00 midnight will result in the operator’s name being moved to the bottom of the rotation. Failure to accept three (3) trips as assigned will result in removal of the operator’s name from the activity trip rotation for the remainder of the school year.

Failure to arrive at the point of origin or destination on a return trip will result in an operator’s name being removed from the list of available operators for the

remainder of the school year. Exceptions will be made for operators who provide verification of a breakdown or other emergency; however, the OPERATOR is responsible for arranging for another bus to fulfill his/her contractual obligation with the school in such instances, or to notify the principal or school office staff in time for the school to arrange for another bus to complete the assignment.

### **Scheduling**

Unless a conflict is unavoidable, the school must schedule activity trips so as not to conflict with daily trips. To minimize potential conflicts, schools should make every effort to schedule activity (non-athletic) trips between 9:30 A.M. and 1:30 P.M. and 4:30 P.M. and 12:00 midnight, so that operators can complete their regularly assigned routes before and after activity trips.

If the school is unable to avoid such scheduling conflicts, every effort should be made to schedule the activity trip such that the operator can arrange for safe alternative transportation of all regularly assigned students.

It is the bus operator's responsibility to arrange for a "buddy" operator to cover his/her regularly daily trips and request approval from the Transportation Department. An operator must refuse an activity trip if he/she is unable to arrange coverage of his/her regular daily trips without overloading.

### **Rates**

Rates for activity trips and related regulations are published annually on the Transportation Department website.

### **Privately Owned Buses**

A school may contract a privately owned bus only if a bus in the JPS fleet is not available. This requirement does not apply to long trips for which motor coaches are contracted.

Privately owned buses must meet all federal, state and local standards and operators must be certified by the JPS Department of Transportation. Individual contractors shall be responsible for the cost of the required drug screening.

A copy of a current Class A or B Louisiana Commercial Operator's License with a *Passenger* and a *School Bus* endorsement, along with evidence of liability insurance coverage in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000 single limits (primary coverage), with umbrella or excess liability of \$1 million per occurrence and \$2 million aggregate must be presented to the school principal, along with an insurance certificate endorsed naming the Jefferson Parish School Board as an "Additional Named Insured" and waiver of subrogation in favor of the Jefferson Parish School Board.



## **G. General Rules and Regulations**

Personal/private business and/or nonpublic activity trips shall not be approved nor covered by JPS and its insurance provider. Only those individuals possessing the appropriate license and endorsements shall be allowed to operate the bus.

Only those individuals authorized by the JPS shall be transported.

## **TRANSPORTING PASSENGERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Transportation for students with disabilities is a highly personalized service, requiring a thorough assessment of the student's physical, social, emotional and intellectual capacities. The need for transportation as a related service is determined on a case by case basis by the Individual Education Plan (IEP) Committee or the IAP/504 Committee. Unless it is specifically stated in a student's IEP that they must receive specialized transportation, each student with a disability is to be placed in a setting that most closely approximates the environment of his/her non-disabled peers. This is called "least restrictive environment" and applies to transportation as well as the classroom. In other words, if a child is able to ride a "regular" school bus, he/she should not be assigned to a "special needs" bus.

### **Placement of Student with Special Needs**

The IEP Committee or IAP/504 Committee is responsible for determining whether a student is in need of special educational or related services or accommodations. Transportation is considered a related service. The educational and related services that the district must provide in order to ensure that a disabled student receives a free and appropriate education is set forth in the student's IEP. Required accommodations, including specialized transportation services, are set forth in a student's Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP).

The Transportation Department works closely with the Special Education Department to coordinate transportation services for students with special needs. Decisions regarding school bus assignments are made by staff members in Transportation and Special Education based on the information contained in the student's IEP or IAP.

Scheduling transportation for students with disabilities is a complex process that involves, among other things, consideration of appropriate staff and equipment. Therefore, school-based staff may not register or assign special needs students to buses, but instead, must obtain bus assignments from the Transportation Department.

Bus operators and attendants will receive appropriate child-specific information when the assignment is made and before transportation services commence.

Bus operators and attendants are responsible for ensuring that all equipment, including wheelchairs and other mobility devices are in proper working order.

### **Required Training for Bus Operators and Attendants**

School bus operators and bus attendants (aides, monitors, and PTSPs) shall participate in general and child-specific training on procedures for safely transporting all students, including those with special transportation needs. Participation in mandated pre-service and child-specific in-service training may be a condition of employment or continued employment. Failure to attend mandated training, or to complete related training activities, shall constitute cause for

immediate suspension pending completion of the required training, and may result in further disciplinary action, up to and including, termination of employment.

### **Operating Procedures for Transporting Special Needs Students**

The bus operator and attendant(s) are expected to follow the normal operating procedures mandated by state and federal law and district policy and as set forth elsewhere in this handbook. Operators and attendants are also expected to comply with the specialized operating procedures for transporting children with special needs set forth herein.

The bus operator is responsible for ensuring that assigned support personnel are present on the bus before picking up the first passenger.

The bus operator and support personnel shall work together to conduct pre-trip inspections of the vehicle and equipment and ensure that a passenger roster and other required documentation is present on the bus when starting a trip.

#### Loading/Unloading Procedures

**The parent or a designee that is 16 years or older must be at the bus stop to place the student on the bus in the morning and receive the student from the bus in the afternoon.**

The procedures for loading/unloading special needs students can be quite different from the procedures used for general education students. Child restraints, car seats and seat belts are not allowed in seats with emergency windows. For students that require the use of a lift, the following procedures shall be followed:

- Set the brake and put the bus in neutral.
- Activate the wheelchair lift switch located in the driver's area.
- Lower the lift onto the flat area of the sidewalk or preferably the driveway with the service door on the student residence/school side for loading and unloading.
- Load/unload the student facing outward.
- Lock wheelchair brakes.
- Turn power off on all electric wheelchairs.
- Make sure the student is secured.
- Do not ride lifts unless required.

Be reminded that during off-roadway loading/unloading, traffic is not required to stop for the school bus. Loading/unloading on private property must be approved by the Executive Director of Transportation (or designee.)

Unrestrained passengers shall not be seated in seats immediately behind those that require restraint in order to prevent "double-loading" of seat backs in the event of a front or rear-end collision.

The bus operator is responsible for en route inspections of the bus and for ensuring that the bus attendant and/or para-transportation personnel are attentive to the needs of passengers.

Bus support personnel should document student behavior that may be cause for concern and transmit his/her written notes to school staff. Follow the normal procedure for reporting disciplinary matters.

A special needs student may require assistance getting home from the bus stop. The IEP or 504/IAP will provide direction as to whom the student may be released. A special needs student may not be unloaded at the bus stop except in accordance with the IEP or 504/IAP. Follow these steps if the parent/guardian or designee is not present when the bus arrives at the stop:

- The bus operator should attempt to reach the student's emergency contact if there is no response at the student's home.
- If the operator is successful in reaching the emergency contact, and waiting for that person to meet the student at the bus will not cause an unnecessary delay, wait for the student to be picked up.
- If waiting will cause undue delay, give the emergency contact an estimated time when the bus will return to drop off the student. Notify the Transportation Department and continue to take other passengers to their home stops.
- If the operator is not successful in reaching the emergency contact, notify the Transportation Department and continue to drop off other passengers.
- When all other passengers have been returned to their home bus stops, the bus operator should either return the student to the home bus stop to be dropped off to an authorized adult or again attempt to reach the student's parent/guardian or the designated alternate contact.
- If the operator is still unable to reach the parent/guardian or alternate contact, the operator should notify the Transportation Department and seek further direction.

In the event the school bus is involved in a collision at a speed of 35 mph or greater, the bus operator and support personnel should document the use of occupant restraints at the time of the collision and provide such documentation to the Transportation Department

## NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

The Jefferson Parish School Board shall provide bus transportation for Jefferson Parish students enrolled in Jefferson Parish non-public schools in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Eligible students must be bona fide residents of Jefferson Parish and must attend a state-approved school located within Jefferson Parish.
- Eligible students must reside more than a mile from their respective schools of attendance.
- Routes and school times shall be established by the transportation department of the Jefferson Parish School Board.
- The design and locations of each route shall be predicated upon number of students and their residential locations, safety factors, and the amount of time required to transport students to and from school, and may include centralization of pickup and delivery points and/or consolidation of bus stop locations.
- If required for specific bus routes, representatives of the non-public school sector shall develop a list of recommended centralized pickup and delivery points, along with a plan for student management at the designated locations, for consideration by the transportation department staff. (Note: Student management at designated centralized pickup and delivery points shall be the responsibility of the appropriate non-public schools in the mornings and afternoons).
- Bus transportation shall be provided in accordance with the adopted public school calendar unless authorized by the Jefferson Parish School Board or its designee.
- Any deviation from the daily time schedule not included in the annual public school-year calendar must be authorized by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
- All students transported by buses under the supervision of the transportation department shall abide by the rules and regulations established by the Louisiana Department of Education and the Jefferson Parish school district.

The principals of schools that receive transportation services administered by the School Board shall:

- Maintain and submit statistical information and other reports as required by the local transportation department and the Louisiana Department of Education.
- Maintain a program of safety education for students riding school buses and for completing and forwarding to the transportation department proper forms at the appropriate times during each school session.
- Conduct personnel conferences with bus drivers in accordance with regulations and procedures of the school district.

- Abide by and enforce all policies and procedures approved for the administration of the transportation department of the Jefferson Parish School Board and the Louisiana Department of Education.

Eligibility of students and/or schools for transportation services, in addition to the stipulations set forth herein above, shall be determined by the following requirements:

- Students shall not be transported from their home-district to a school in another district except as approved in the annual agreements between non-public school representatives and the Jefferson Parish School Board.
- There is a minimum of forty (40) students per route, unless existing routes can be adjusted to absorb the increase.
- The term district, as herein applied, is defined as a church parish, community, congregation, or other such designation of a geographic area, or a portion thereof, all located within the civil parish of Jefferson.

The addition of routes or the extension of existing routes must be approved by the Jefferson Parish School Board in accordance with criteria listed below.

- Written request from principal and governing board of the school submitted before March 15 of the previous school year. (Emergency situations may be processed through August 15).
- Attainment of "Approved" status from the Louisiana Department of Education and "compliance" with *Brumfield v. Dodd* as required by the state.
- Attainment of "compliance" status for all policies and administrative procedures required by the school system and the state.
- Minimum of forty (40) students per route requested, unless existing routes can be adjusted to absorb the increase.
- Ability of the transportation department to schedule routes within requirements of the school system and the state.