



Appling County School System

Transportation Operations Manual



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Transportation Director

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This book is written for the Bus Drivers of Appling County who go that “Extra Mile” to ensure that the most precious cargo, our children, are transported to and from school and school activities each day safely.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of Appling County Schools Transportation Services is to provide the safest, most efficient and dependable bus transportation for each student as a part of ensuring a successful education.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1A. Introduction

The purpose of the Transportation Operations Manual is to provide all Appling County School System Transportation Employees with clear and consistent written guidance about current safety and operational procedures.

High Standards

Being a school bus driver is an important and challenging job. The Appling County School System maintains extremely high safety standards for student transportation. It is our professional responsibility to be aware of current safety recommendations and requirements. We need up-to-date information to protect students, the Appling County School System, and ourselves.

School transportation is constantly changing. New safety procedures are developed each year to address new safety concerns. Relying on what we learned when we started our careers as bus drivers is insufficient today.

Careful Review of Information

Ask your supervisor about anything in this manual that seems unclear or confusing.

1B. Notice of Equal Opportunity

It is the policy of the Appling County Board of Education not to discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, handicap, religion, or national origin in any local school or system policy which might affect the admission and treatment of students or the employment of both academic and non-academic personnel working in connection with the educational program or activity in the Appling County Board of Education. Any employee who has a grievance or complaint shall follow the proper procedure for filing a grievance or complaint.

SECTION 2: ADMINISTRATION

2A. Appling County Schools Transportation Department Chain of Command

Shop Supervisor

Trainers

Administrative Assistant

Transportation Director

Superintendent of School



2B. Responsibilities of Bus Driver/Monitors/Substitute Bus Drivers

- 1) Reporting
- 2) Qualifications
- 3) Primary Responsibilities
- 4) Essential Functions
- 5) Bus Driver – Monitor Teamwork

2C. Administrative Policies

- 1) Attendance
- 2) Clothing/Proper Attire
- 3) Cell Phone Usage
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- 6) Bus Passing
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2D. Disciplinary Procedures

2E. Approved Fueling Sites for Appling County Buses

2A. Appling County School System Chain of Command

Bus Driver/Monitor/Substitute Bus Driver

Trainer/Route Supervisor/Bus Shop Supervisor

Administrative Assistant to the Director of Transportation

Director of Transportation

2B. Responsibilities of Bus Drivers

1) REPORTING

Bus drivers report to Trainers/Route Supervisor/ Shop Supervisor/ Administrative Assistant/Transportation Director

2) QUALIFICATIONS

- Required Licenses: Valid Commercial Class B Driver's License (CDL) with Passenger and S-Endorsement.
- Background Check
- No moving violations (no points) within the last year and no more than three (3) Points within the last three (3) years. No DUI charge.
- Education: High School Diploma or GED certificate
- Age: At least 21 years of age (5 year driving history)

3) PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY

Your primary responsibility is to transport students and other school personnel safely to and from school.

NOTE: Children who are not currently enrolled in Appling County Schools are prohibited from riding the bus even though there may be a relation to the driver or monitor.

4) ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Morning:

- Complete security awareness / pre-trip inspection. This inspection should include a walk-through of the bus to check for vandalism and cleanliness and to unlock the rear door.
- Complete the pre-trip inspection form as bus is inspected.
- Drive bus to pick up students at designated stops following routes as prescribed by Route Planning.

- No elementary drop off until 7:15am
- Perform Child Check after each school drop off in the am
- Complete post-trip security awareness inspection

Afternoon:

- Complete pre-trip security awareness inspection. Fill out pre-trip inspection form.
- Regular drivers must be on their bus by 1:50 p.m. to cover their routes
- All Non-Assigned Elementary Drivers Must Be on Their Bus by 1:50pm

To Receive Possible Afternoon Assignment:

- All buses are to be in at the elementary complex school by 2:15 p.m.
- Drive bus to drop off students at designated stops following route sheets.
- Perform Child Check after each school
- Complete post-trip security inspection.

Other job tasks:

- Attend all meetings for entire length. State DOE and Monthly Meeting are MANDATORY.
- Conduct emergency evacuation drills certification
- Have bus serviced monthly per schedule
- Report for Drug & Alcohol Test as directed
- Turn in paperwork such as Fuel logs, timesheets, student rosters, and student headcounts to Transportation Department as directed.

FAILURE TO DO SO MAY LEAD TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND POSSIBLE TERMINATION.

5) BUS DRIVER-MONITOR TEAMWORK

Monitors are assigned to special needs routes only. It is important that the bus driver and monitor understand they are a team.

The bus driver is responsible for safely driving the vehicle. Monitors must understand their duties to:

- Observe students for potentially dangerous medical conditions.
- Assist the bus driver in maintaining the safety of all students on the bus.
- Interact with children on bus.
- Engage children in conversation when appropriate.
- Attend to children's particular needs.
- Provide physical assistance when needed.
- Intervene if necessary.
- Know when to ask bus driver for assistance.

The actions of the monitor can ensure a safe, comfortable ride for everyone on board. The bus driver must understand the role of the monitor is a valuable part of the team that can successfully ensure children are transported safely to and from school. Teamwork is essential.

Both bus driver and monitor are to be involved during loading/unloading process, whether at the child's home or school, and whether the child can walk or not.

Both driver and monitor must perform and successfully complete at least one (1) physical special needs emergency evacuation drill annually. This evacuation drill will be designed and administered by the special need's supervisor and/or their designee. Any monitor that fails to meet the requirements of the drill will be disqualified as an employee with Appling County Schools. Any special needs driver that fails to meet the requirement may be reassigned to a regular needs route.

Monitors must be well trained in various disabilities, intervention techniques, and have the knowledge of the children on the bus, the equipment on the bus, the route, evacuation procedures and transportation policies. A special needs bus is not to travel unless there is a special needs monitor on the bus even when you are traveling from school to school. Failure to follow this policy could result in **TERMINATION OF THE DRIVER AND MONITOR.**

2C. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

1) ATTENDANCE

Regular and prompt attendance is expected and required of Transportation Department employees. In case of emergency or other circumstances when it is possible to give advance notice, employees must personally call the **ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TWO (2) HOURS** before the am route in the mornings. If you are not going to be on your route that morning, you must contact the **TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT between the hours of 3:00am and 5:00am. If you call after 5:00 am, you will be charged Leave without Pay (LWOP) for your absence.**

Afternoon Routes, you must notify the **ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT** no later than 11:00 a.m. **or you will be charged Leave without Pay (LWOP). NO EXCEPTIONS! DO NOT LEAVE A MESSAGE OR VOICEMAIL!**

Plan and make every effort to work every school day. The person who can deliver the highest quality transportation service to our students and schools is you.

Every school day is an essential day of work for a transportation employee! It is important that employees:

- Are mindful of the negative impact their absence will have on their students (substitute drivers, missed and late buses) and co-workers (double runs, crowded buses).
- Plan to conduct personal business and make routine follow up doctor appointments outside of your

normal route times and/or on non-school days. Sick Leave has been granted to employees for the express purpose of absence due to the employee's illness or illness in the employee's immediate family, which requires the employee to care for said family member.

- Personal Leave has been granted for the purpose of tending to important, urgent, or emergency professional and/or personal business, outside the first two weeks of school, during holidays, or the last two weeks at the end of the school year. Drivers must follow district policy in applying for and using personal leave. ([Policy GARH: Employee Leaves and Absences](#))
- Drivers who have excessive absences or more than 45 consecutive days off route will be moved to the bottom of the full-time substitute list regardless of condition due to the best interest of the students.
- Drivers who are allowed to park at home are required to bring their bus to the school bus shop when absent. **No Exception, not following this procedure will also lead to Disciplinary Action of reprimand or possible suspension.**
- No summer work will be allowed if not on regular route the last two (2) weeks of school. This includes but is not limited to Field Trips, Summer School programs, 4-H Camp, summer camps, Parks & Recreation summer programs, and any work at base.
- 90 passenger buses may be taken off routes to accommodate field trips per transportation director.

2) CLOTHING/PROPER ATTIRE (PROFESSIONAL CASUAL)

All transportation personnel should dress appropriately for their work assignments. Professional casual is defined as appropriate for school bus drivers and monitors. Some guidelines are listed below, but are not limited to the following:

- See-through garments, spandex, tube or halter tops are not allowed.
- Tank top straps must be at least 2 inches in width.
- Tops must not have large arm openings (Example – muscle shirts). All tops must cover mid-section of body completely. Shorts/pants/skirts must be no shorter than knee.
- Appropriate lining or under garments must be worn and completely covered. No garments shall be worn that expose more than 4 inches of skin below the hollow of the neck.
- Garments such as pajama pants and sports bras are prohibited.
- Clothing that advertises alcohol, tobacco, profanity, or offensive slogans are not allowed.
- Body Piercing: No piercing to be exposed except in the ear.
- Tattoos: Tattoos or markings Must be covered during hours on duty.

FOOTWEAR

- Footwear must have closed toe and heel straps.
- High-heeled shoes and flip-flops are not allowed.
- Shoes must be worn when driving/monitoring.
- Do not place an extra pair of shoes on the bus in the driver compartment to change into while not driving.

3) CELL PHONE USAGE

According to O.C.G.A. Code 40-6-165 parts (d) & (e), it is unlawful to use a cell phone while operating a school bus.

(d) The driver of a school bus shall not use or operate a cellular telephone or two-way radio while loading or unloading passengers.

(e) The driver of a school bus shall not use or operate a cellular telephone while the bus is in motion.

Cell phones, including ear pieces and blue tooth devices, must be turned off while operating a school bus. No ear piece is to be worn while driving the bus. **1st offense to a bus driver that has been observed on his/her cell phone while the bus is in motion will be disciplined accordingly, this includes texting. The 2nd offence will be termination.**

Cell phones may be used in case of an emergency only by following the process below:

- Bus stopped
- Bus in neutral
- Parking brake applied
- Hazard lights applied

Cell phones may not be used to contact 911 directly unless:

- it is a life-threatening situation; you are unable to get in touch with the transportation director or administrative assistant. Please contact dispatch and request 911 assistance where as we have resource officers to dispatch for behavior problems.

The use of the two-way radio is used for emergency or student information retrieval. Radios can be used on field trips to communicate with another driver while the buses are in motion. During this time there must not be any loading or unloading of students.

4) TOBACCO USE

In accordance with ACBOE Policy, smoking and use of other tobacco products shall be prohibited by all school district employees while:

- on Board of Education property,
- while attending or participating in on-campus or off-campus school activities or events,
- or while on any school bus.

There is NO SMOKING allowed onboard a school bus.

5) RADIO USE

The radio is a tool to be used for communicating information and for requesting assistance when necessary. To this end, unnecessary chatter on the radio is disruptive and should not be encouraged. The following are some helpful tips to keep radio traffic to a minimum:

- In all instances, drivers should yield the radio to Dispatch, supervisors, and mechanics.
- Key the mic first, wait for beep then speak.
- Speak with a normal speaking voice when possible.
- The radio is not a telephone. Only one person can speak at a time. Personal information such as student names, phone numbers, or other confidential information should not be announced over the radio unless requested by base or dispatch.
- When calling in a 911, a physical address is required. Even with our GPS technology, we cannot always pull up an accurate address to give to the emergency dispatcher.
- Announcements are just that. They are not an open forum for discussion. If you have questions concerning an announcement, contact the administrative assistant or the transportation director via telephone.
- If your radio has been turned down or off temporarily, you should turn it back on or up for at least 3 minutes before you attempt to transmit.
- Keep all transmissions short and to the point. The object is to use the radio as little as possible. This keeps it open for appropriate use.

6) BUS PASSING OTHER BUSES WHILE LOADING AND UNLOADING

The question is when can I pass or go around another bus? The quick and easy answer is DON'T. Be patient and wait a couple of minutes for the bus(es) in front of you to finish loading or unloading. We know this isn't always the case; therefore, if the decision is to pass a bus, please make sure of the following:

- It is okay to pass a bus as long as the bus is empty and the flashers are on. The stationary bus should also be pulled as far forward as possible to be out of the way of the normal loading and unloading area.
- It is okay to pass a bus as long as the driver of the stationary bus is in a spotter position and motions to go around.
- If there is ever a question as to whether you can pass a bus or not, DO NOT PASS. Wait until you know for sure and the surrounding area is clear. If the bus flashers are not on or another driver is not out to motion you around, DO NOT PASS! Wait!

Keep in mind this is all about student safety. We will always err on the side of safety. If you have questions regarding this safety procedures, please see your transportation director.

7) ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

Vehicle accidents:

- All accidents, regardless of the monetary damage, are serious. All accidents will be investigated to determine if corrective action is needed. All accidents, regardless of how minor, will be reported to base and an accident investigation team will be dispatched to the scene.
- If there is a possible injury to the driver, the transportation director will ensure a Worker's Compensation report is filed.
- If involved in an accident, notify your director and he/she will notify EMS and law enforcement if necessary. A list of the students onboard will need to be provided to these officials. Please read and familiarize yourself with the following procedures:

Accident Procedures:

- Stop the bus immediately. Activate hazard flashers.
- Secure the bus, set brakes, if danger of fire – turn off ignition. If danger of fire does not exist, leave ignition on for the two-way radio.
- Remain Calm, reassure and account for all students, and check for injuries. **DO NOT MOVE INJURED UNLESS IT IS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY.**
- Make decision to evacuate. If danger is greater on bus, immediately start evacuation procedures. Be alert for smoke, fire, ruptured fuel tanks, ETC.
- Contact Dispatch by radio and inform them that you have been involved in an accident and give them your location. At this time, it will be necessary to determine if medical assistance is needed and should be contacted. If decision to evacuate was made, please place radio microphone outside of driver's window for easy access.
- Vehicle should not be moved until directed by law enforcement officials or Transportation supervision. If directed to move vehicle, move the vehicle off the roadway to a safe location and wait for accident investigation team to arrive.
- Provide information only to investigating officers. Do not discuss facts of accident with the public or news media. Do not place blame or make admission of guilt.
- Make a list of all students on the bus. This will be necessary as an accurate record for possible future medical payments.
- If not evacuated, all students must remain on bus. They are not to be released, even to their parents, and parents are not allowed on the bus. Students can be released only after given approval from law enforcement official.
- When released from scene you will be given directions by the Transportation Director as to how you should proceed.
- As a best practice, any Appling County employee in an accident involving a board vehicle may be subjected to a post-accident drug/alcohol screening.

8) SCHOOL BUS EVACUATION DRILLS

In accordance with Georgia Code 20-2-188 Section (e), each student and school bus driver shall perform an annual emergency school bus evacuation drill. Therefore, each Appling County School System school bus driver shall perform one (1) physical bus evacuation drill with **each** school serviced and one (1) verbal bus evacuation drill with **each** assigned route transporting students.

9) OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Appling County School System employees are reminded that their job assignments within the school system are their first obligation. If outside employment is necessary and taking time or energy from this position or affecting their performance, they will be asked to choose one or the other. Bus drivers are obligated to the school system for five (5) hours per day.

10) SAFETY MEETING REQUIREMENTS

Attendance at all State Department of Education meetings is mandatory. Attendance fulfills the requirements for Georgia Law 20-2-1125. You must sign the attendance roster in order to receive credit for attendance at the annual safety meeting. Drivers arriving late and/or leaving early will not be given credit for attendance.

NOTE: Children are not allowed to attend any safety meeting. Childcare must be arranged by the employee prior to the meeting.

11) PARKING CRITERIA (TBD BY ROUTE PLANNING)

Buses should be parked at the bus shop unless cleared by the Transportation Director to be parked at the driver's home.

To continue parking at home the following criteria must be met:

- Bus has been at shop or school every time driver has been out (Supervisor to determine).
- Drivers attendance must be in good standing (less than 7 days).
- Drivers will be responsible for maintaining their own parking spot at home. No gravel will be provided to the driver.
- If you receive permission to park at home and we have ONE instance where the bus is not taken to a school or the bus shop if the driver is out (Dispatcher to determine), this privilege will be taken away.
- No buses can be used for personal business for any reason.

12) SEVERE WEATHER/ TORNADO PROCEDURES

In the event we experience severe cold weather (20° or below), it will be necessary for ALL BUSES to be parked at the following locations:

- BASE (Bus Shop) this will allow our maintenance staff to be at this location with mobile start units for those buses that will not crank. Having these buses at central locations also ensures the buses are cranked and warm for you and your students. It also minimizes delays reaching your route due to non-start issues. Should you choose to ignore these instructions, you may be subject to disciplinary action.

In the event we experience severe weather including a tornado watch or warning, the following recommendations should be followed:

- If there is a **tornado watch** the district should monitor for the changing status of the weather. Drivers should continue their route under extreme caution and monitor their 2- way radio for updates from Dispatch, Unit 1, or Unit2.
- If there is a **tornado warning** at dismissal time, the school should hold the students until the warning has lifted. Drivers should wait inside the school with the students.

If drivers are already on their route and become aware that a tornado warning has been issued, they should proceed to the nearest educational facility or other shelter and take the students inside. Drivers need to be aware of schools, and alternate sites such as fire stations, public buildings or other emergency shelters located on their route. If feasible, notify dispatch of your shelter location. Drivers and students should remain in the shelter until the warning is lifted. Drivers should stay with the students and monitor weather broadcasts to know when the warning has expired

If unexpected weather conditions present a hazardous situation or if unable to reach a safe location as indicated above, the driver should:

- Pull the bus well off of the roadway to a safe location and stop the vehicle. Keep the engine running.
- Turn on 4-way emergency flashers and strobe light in order that other motorists can see that the bus is stopped.

Assessing the Need to Evacuate:

Student safety and control are best maintained by keeping students in the bus during an emergency and/or impending crisis situation if doing so does not expose them to unnecessary risk of injury. A decision to evacuate should include consideration of the following conditions:

- Is there a fire involved?
- Is fuel leaking?
- Might the bus roll or tip, thereby causing further threat to safety?
- Is the bus likely to be hit by other vehicles?

- Is the bus in the direct path of a sighted tornado or other natural disaster, such as rising water?
- Would evacuating students expose them to speeding traffic, severe weather or other dangerous environments?
- Considering the medical, physical and emotional condition of the students, does staying in the bus or evacuating the bus pose the greater danger to the student's safety?

Assess the need to evacuate, and under most severe weather conditions keep the students on the bus. Have the students protect their heads by lowering their face against their upper legs so that they are below the window level. Students should cover their faces with a jacket, book, etc. to protect themselves from flying debris. Notify dispatch of your location. Do not allow students off of the bus to move trees, limbs, cables, or power lines. Dispatch should be notified for further direction and assistance. Be extremely cautious for the students' safety. Do not allow students to disembark from your bus if the driver arrives at a stop and is aware or suspects that there are power lines down in the area. Dispatch should be contacted for further direction or assistance. Radio Dispatch for further assistance if the bus cannot be moved due to blockage of the roadway.

Note – If unable to reach Dispatch in the event of an emergency, drivers should call 911.

13) HOW YOUR TIME IS CALCULATED

Bus drivers are obligated to the school system for five (5) hours per day. All drivers will be required to submit a time sheet monthly if you have extra time. All times should reflect actual times. DO NOT ROUND TIMES UP OR DOWN

WORK DAY:

- AM time starts 30 minutes prior to 1st stop.
- AM time ends 30 minutes after drop-off @ last school.
- PM time starts at 2:00 pm (all drivers MUST be @ school no later than 2:00 pm).
- PM time ends 30 minutes after drop-off of last student.
- 30 minutes includes pre/post trip inspections, fueling, travel time to/from stops, schools, and parking.
- This leaves 4 hours for actual route time daily.

YOU WILL NEED TO BRING YOUR SIGNED TIME SHEET IN YOURSELF. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GET IT IN ON TIME. ALL PAY MUST BE TURNED IN BY 10:00 AM ON THE DUE DATE. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE. ALL TIME SHEETS RECEIVED AFTER THE DUE DATE WILL BE HELD AND PAID ON THE FOLLOWING PAY PERIOD UNLESS IT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT.

ALL TIME SHEETS MUST BE THE ORIGINAL TIME SHEET WITH THE ORIGINAL SIGNATURES ON IT. THIS IS

PER STATE AUDITORS. WE WILL NOT ACCEPT A COPY OR A FAXED COPY OF YOUR TIME SHEET.

DRIVER'S WILL NOT BE PAID FOR TIME SPENT AT BASE DUE TO MONTHLY SERVICE. THIS DATE IS PRE-DETERMINED SO PLANS MAY BE MADE. ALWAYS CHECK WITH SHOP FOREMAN.

14) DRIVER'S LICENSE

Only persons who are properly licensed, have been certified as bus drivers, and are employed by the Appling County Board of Education may drive an Appling County School System bus. This includes regular bus drivers, substitute bus drivers, coaches, teachers, and transportation personnel. A copy of your current driver's license with the correct name and address must be kept on file in the Transportation Office. Every licensee must have his/her license in his/her possession at all times when operating the school bus.

15) MOVING VIOLATIONS

Bus drivers must report any moving violation (in personal vehicle) to the Director, Assistant Director, or your training supervisor within three (3) days of receiving the violation.

Any driver receiving a ticket for a traffic violation while operating a board-owned vehicle must notify the Director of Transportation within 24 hours. Severity of infraction will determine level of disciplinary action to be taken.

Any school bus driver found guilty of driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol or other drugs in a vehicle, private or commercial, will be terminated by the Appling County Board of Education.

16) IDENTIFICATION BADGES

All employees must wear identification badges whenever on school property or in any school building. Badges may be obtained at the bus shop.

17) PERSONAL LEAVE GUIDELINES

Personal Leave should only be used when absolutely necessary. **A three (3) day advance written request is required. All personal leave forms must go to the Transportation Director for approval.** [\(See Policy GARH: Employee Leaves and Absences\)](#)

The following guidelines are also in effect:

- No more than two (2) drivers per day will be approved (excludes field trips.)
- Drivers taking Personal Leave for Field Trips can only do so if they have Personal Leave available.

- Drivers cannot use Leave without Pay (LWOP) to support field trips
- No Personal Leave will be granted on the day before and the day after a holiday and/or school break.
- Personal Leave will not be granted the first two weeks or the last two weeks of school unless approved by the Director of Transportation. There will be no personal leave approved before the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays.

18) SICK LEAVE

Following are the guidelines for sick leave: [\(See Policy GARH: Employee Leaves and Absences\)](#)

- Sick leave is to be used for personal illness, physical disability, (including disability related to maternity), injury, and contagious disease.
- Absence due to illness in the employee's immediate family. The Appling County Board of Education defines the term "Immediate Family" as parents, wife, husband, children, sister, brother, grandparents, grandchildren, spouse's parents, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, grandparent-in-law, aunt, uncle, niece and nephew and other relatives living in the home with the employee.
- **Drivers must notify the Transportation Department of their absence no later than 5:00 a.m. of the morning route and 11:00 a.m. of the afternoon route. Drivers who call in after the specified times will be charged Leave without Pay (LWOP).**
- If an employee is absent for three or more days due to a possible FMLA qualifying reason, the employee may apply for FMLA. For any absence lasting 10 or more days, an employee must apply for FMLA with the Human Resource Services Department - FMLA office. Any questions concerning FMLA should be directed to the Human Resource Department. Ten (10) or more (cumulative and/or consecutive) days of absence not covered by FMLA is considered excessive absences and could result in attendance/performance issues.
- An employee cannot draw worker's compensation and sick leave or short-term disability at the same time
- Employees employed after the opening of school will have their sick leave prorated to reflect the proper number of days for their share of the 11 ¼ days based on 1 ¼ days earned per month of service or 9 months.
- Sick leave days not used will be brought forward and can be added to the next year.
- Employees who are absent from work in excess of accrued sick leave and entitlement from the present year will have deducted from their regular pay one day's salary for each day absent. After all accrued sick leave has been used, deductions for any additional absence is made the month immediately following the absence(s).
- **Sick leave cannot be used for field trips.**
- All employees are eligible to join the Appling County Sick Leave Bank for the purpose of possibly being provided with sick leave after their own leave has been exhausted. Employees who select to become members of the Sick Leave Bank are required to contribute part of their sick leave to the Bank. Employees are encouraged to contact Human Resources for more information concerning the

Sick Leave Bank.

- Any driver who has been on extended sick leave may be required to provide medical clearance documentation and/or a pass to return to work physical.

19) POLICY/PROCEDURE CHANGES

Policy or procedure changes and clarifications are made known in many ways; through memos, meetings, and system publications. You are responsible for reading and becoming familiar with policy revisions.

20) HEALTH AND SAFETY

Appling County Schools is committed to providing each employee with safe and healthy working conditions. Drivers must contribute to the maintenance of a safe and clean environment. This is a team effort. To this end, an employee is responsible for:

- Knowing the potential hazards of the job
- Learning and following the safety practices required by management
- Using safety devices required by the job
- Correcting and/or reporting safety hazards immediately
- Immediately reporting any accident or injury
- Maintain good housekeeping practices including keeping all emergency exits clear and fire extinguishers accessible.
- Dashboards must be clear of all obstructions.
- No bus will be serviced or inspected by the mechanic unless cleaned and trash emptied. Newer buses (2002 and newer) will be withdrawn from drivers who fail to maintain and clean their bus. (2nd warning)
- During times of extreme heat (90° or above), allow students to have water on the bus in the afternoons only. All containers should be made of plastic and have a secure twist on lid. Also, operate your bus with windows fully open and utilize roof hatches in the correct position to optimize air flow.

21) MEDICATIONS

Prescriptions: Report all prescription information to your Route Supervisor.

Over-the-counter Medications: Some over-the-counter medications can cause drowsiness especially when combined with other medications. If you have questions concerning driving the bus while on certain medications, you need to contact Jennifer Summerall, District Nurse Coordinator, and get instructions from our administrative assistant.

22) FIRST REPORT OF INJURY

Steps to follow for On-The-Job accidents and injuries:

- You must notify your Transportation Director at the time of the accident. Director will notify Human Resources Worker's Compensation Dept.
- If medical assistance is necessary, the Workman's Compensation Dept. will make the necessary appointment.
- The employee must sign a WC-207 Authorization and Consent Form. Should you receive a job-related injury or illness and medical treatment is needed, you MUST select a Worker's Compensation panel physician.
- Any driver who is involved in an accident must complete an Employee Accident Report.
- If proper documentation is not completed, your claim may be denied by the Workman's Compensation Department.

23) ANNUAL BUS DRIVER PHYSICALS

All school bus drivers must pass a physical prior to employment and one each year thereafter to maintain employment with the Appling County Board of Education. Only full-time drivers and substitute bus drivers on the active substitute list will be eligible for an annual county paid physical.

- Hearing & Vision Aids – If you require the use of vision or hearing aids, you must have them with you for the exam
- If you are taking medications that could possibly alter your driving ability, you must provide a statement from your personal doctor assuring the medication does not impair your ability to drive a commercial vehicle – school bus.
- If you have a condition that disqualifies you during your physical, you must follow up with your personal physician. YOU are responsible to get this information back to our physician.
- Physicals will not be scheduled more than sixty (60) days prior to the first day of school. ALL PHYSICALS MUST BE QUALIFIED 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.
- Substitute / Trip Drivers that do not work 9 days per semester will be removed from the active substitute driver list. This does not include employees / coaches who drive for their teams during that teams' season.

24) FIELD TRIP PROCEDURES

- School buses belong to the school system, not to a specific individual.
- Unless notified by the Transportation Department, any school bus may be used for a field trip.
- Field trip drivers are responsible for cleaning a school bus that was used for a field trip. If a bus is dirty prior to leaving for a field trip, the field trip driver should report it to the transportation director. Field trip drivers are paid to drive, clean, and fuel the bus.
- A list of students present on each bus must be readily available for chaperones, bus drivers, and emergency personnel.
- All bus drivers must be given specific directions to the activity using the safest possible route. When more than one bus is used for a field trip, special attention must be given to the distance between

buses and other vehicles to allow for emergency stops.

- No food or drink is to be consumed on a school bus at any time.

25) EVALUATIONS

An evaluation will be conducted on each bus driver and monitor annually. The purpose of the evaluation is to enhance job performance and support the professional growth of employees. Substandard performance will be dealt with through progressive disciplinary action. Each driver will be required to perform a Skill Performance with an Appling County Schools trainer or a supervisor.

26) SCHOOL BUS VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

School buses are equipped with video surveillance systems. These video surveillance systems are mechanical and are not guaranteed to work all the time. Bus drivers with video surveillance systems are to ensure the systems are working at all times. The video surveillance systems are for the protection of the student and the driver. It is required that all buses equipped with recording systems have these systems operating anytime students are on the bus. While loading at the school ensure the ignition switch is in the ACC position. This will allow the system to record without the engine idling.

Videos from the bus are viewed by school system personnel and law enforcement agencies. Bus videos cannot be released to parents, guardians, or students for any reason. Parents/guardians will not be permitted to make a copy of the recording. All videos must be viewed either at a school or the transportation office. A parent/guardian or school administrator must request to the transportation office to view a video within three (3) days of an incident. Video recordings will be used by building level administrators to assist in determining whether the incident occurred and, if so, the severity of the incident. Video recordings revealing unlawful actions may be brought to the attention of law enforcement agencies. Disciplinary action may be instituted prior to parental viewing of the recordings. Recordings are routinely written over unless school officials have reason to save the recording.

27) GPS SYSTEMS (GLOBAL POSITIONING SATELLITES)

The buses are equipped with GPS units. This system tracks many functions of the bus. Reports may be generated on the following activities:

- Speed
- Location
- Idling
- Engine On / Engine Off
- Bus Stop Location
- School Time Arrival / Departure

These reports may be used to verify payroll, determine times for routes, and validate stops made, and route deviations.

28) ALCOHOL AND DRUG TESTING

The Appling County Board of Education is committed to ensuring the highest possible standards of safety. Employees engaged in safety-sensitive functions include, but are not limited to:

- School Bus Drivers
- Coaches/Teachers licensed to drive a school bus
- Maintenance workers

These employees are mandated to be tested by Federal Law. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) regulations are enforced by the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) and require that all Commercial Driver's License holders (CDL) be drug screened by urine testing and be alcohol screened by breath alcohol testing.

The following alcohol and drug tests are required:

- Pre-Employment
- Random - Random testing is conducted on a random, unannounced basis just before, during, or just after performance of safety-sensitive functions. Guidelines are followed according to the FMCSA in selecting bus drivers by a computer-based random number generator, meeting the minimum annual percentage rates. All drivers selected must report to the test facility immediately after completing route. All other business shall be put aside.
- Post-Accident drug testing will be at the discretion of the transportation director according to state guidelines.

Reasonable Suspicion

Reasonable suspicion testing is conducted when a trained supervisor has made observations based on specific behavior or appearance, speech difficulties, or surrounding odors that are characteristic of alcohol and drug misuse.

Alcohol

Because alcohol is a legal substance, the rules define specific alcohol-related conduct. Performance of safety sensitive functions is prohibited:

- While having a breath alcohol concentration of 0.02 percent or greater as indicated by an alcohol test
- While using alcohol
- Within four hours after using alcohol
- By refusing to submit to an alcohol test

Consequences of a Positive Test

Consequences of a positive test result for alcohol and/or drugs will be immediate termination.

NOTE: Refusal to report for drug and alcohol testing will be considered a positive result.

29) SEXUAL HARASSMENT

All staff members are entitled to a work environment free from all forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. Among behavior that might be considered sexual harassment is behavior: (1) which is not welcome, (2) which is personally offensive, (3) which debilitates morale, and (4) which therefore interferes with work effectiveness.

Offensive sexual flirtations, advances or propositions; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic or degrading verbal comments about an individual or his/her appearance; the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; or any offensive or abusive verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature is strictly prohibited. No individual shall threaten or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that a staff member's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the staff member's employment, evaluation, wages, advancement, assigned duties, shifts, or any other condition of employment or career development.

Any Transportation Department employee, applicant for employment, or other person wishing to report or file a complaint alleging a violation of sexual harassment involving the Transportation Department shall promptly notify either the Transportation Director or the Title IX Coordinator designated and authorized by the district. Any employee who receives information alleging sexual harassment of an employee shall report it to the Transportation Director or Denise Rentz, Title IX Coordinator. Other information regarding sexual harassment and the reporting process can be found in Appling County School System Policy GAEB.

30) CODE OF ETHICS

The Standards of Conduct to be observed by Appling County Public Schools employees are as follows:

Effective October 15, 2019

505- 6 -.01 THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS

(1) Introduction. The Code of Ethics for Educators defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission has adopted standards that represent the conduct generally accepted by the education profession. The code defines unethical conduct justifying disciplinary sanction and provides guidance for protecting the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators, and assuring the citizens of Georgia a degree of accountability within the education profession.

(2) Definitions

(a) "Breach of contract" occurs when an educator fails to honor a signed contract for employment with a school/school system by resigning in a manner that does not meet the guidelines established by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

(b) "Certificate" refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the Professional Standards Commission.

(c) "Child endangerment" occurs when an educator disregards a substantial and/or unjustifiable risk of bodily harm to the student.

(d) “Educator” is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, “educator” also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.

(e) “Student” is any individual enrolled in the state’s public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the school year of graduation.

(f) “Complaint” is any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board, or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the Professional Standards Commission alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators. A “complaint” will be deemed a request to investigate.

(g) “Revocation” is the invalidation of any certificate held by the educator.

(h) “Denial” is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate.

(i) “Suspension” is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the Professional Standards Commission.

(j) “Reprimand” admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

(k) “Warning” warns the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

(l) “Monitoring” is the quarterly appraisal of the educator’s conduct by the Professional Standards Commission through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit a criminal background check (GCIC). The Commission specifies the length of the monitoring period.

(m) “No Probable Cause” is a determination by the Professional Standards Commission that, after a preliminary investigation, either no further action need be taken or no cause exists to recommend disciplinary action.

(3) Standards

(a) **Standard 1: Legal Compliance** - An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude; of any other criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana as provided for in Chapter 13 of Title 16; or of any other sexual offense as provided for in Code Section 16-6-1 through 16-6-17, 16-6-20, 16-6-22.2, or 16-12-100; or any other laws applicable to the profession. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of *nolo contendere*, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought; a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted; and a situation where an adjudication of guilt or sentence was otherwise withheld or not entered on the charge or the charge was otherwise disposed of in a similar manner in any jurisdiction.

(b) **Standard 2: Conduct with Students** - An educator shall always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
2. committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;

3. committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
4. engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student that would violate a state or federal law;
5. soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student;
6. furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student; or
7. failing to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the educator's residence or any other private setting).

(c) Standard 3: **Alcohol or Drugs** - An educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. being on school or Local Unit of Administration (LUA)/school district premises or at a school or a LUA/school district-related activity while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs; and
2. being on school or LUA/school district premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity sponsored by the school or school system (booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations, or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum i.e. Foreign Language trips, etc).

(i) For the purposes of this standard, an educator shall be considered "under the influence" if the educator exhibits one or more of the following indicators, including but not limited to: slurred speech, enlarged pupils, bloodshot eyes, general personality changes, lack of physical coordination, poor motor skills, memory problems, concentration problems, etc.

(d) Standard 4: **Honesty** - An educator shall exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting, or omitting: -

1. professional qualifications, criminal history, college or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic award, and employment history;
2. information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other governmental agencies;
3. information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;
4. reasons for absences or leaves;
5. information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation; and
6. information submitted in the course of professional practice.

(e) Standard 5: **Public Funds and Property** - An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. misusing public or school-related funds;
2. failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;

3. submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);
4. co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and
5. using school or school district property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.

(f) **Standard 6: Remunerative Conduct** - An educator shall maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. soliciting students or parents of students, or school or LUA/school district personnel, to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;
2. accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;
3. tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and
4. coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involves students in an educator's school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association.

(g) **Standard 7: Confidential Information** - An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law;
2. sharing of confidential information restricted by state or federal law;
3. violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items, etc.; and
4. violation of other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.

(h) **Standard 8: Required Reports** - An educator shall file reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. failure to report all requested information on documents required by the Commission when applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission;
2. failure to make a required report of a violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for educators of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner; and

3. failure to make a required report of any violation of state or federal law soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.

(i) **Standard 9: Professional Conduct** - An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to a resignation that would equate to a breach of contract; any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position; or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.

(j) **Standard 10: Testing** - An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. committing any act that breaches Test Security; and
2. compromising the integrity of the assessment.

(4) Reporting

(a) Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of legal requirements and local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct.

Complaints filed with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, or other LUA/school district employee, etc.).

(b) The Commission notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions. In addition, suspensions and revocations are reported to national officials, including the NASDTEC Clearinghouse.

(5) Disciplinary Action

(a) The Georgia Professional Standards Commission is authorized to suspend, revoke, or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder. Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the educator:

1. unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
2. disciplinary action against a certificate on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
3. order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Resources that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. §19-6-28.1 and §19-11-9.3);
4. notification from the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation that the educator is in default and not in satisfactory repayment status on a student loan guaranteed by the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation (O.C.G.A. §20-3-295);
5. suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate

6. violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession (O.C.G.A. §16-13-111); and

7. any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.

(b) An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or, in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics. The superintendent and the educator designated by the superintendent/Local Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification. Should the superintendent's certificate be revoked, suspended, or denied, the Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that the superintendent whose certificate has been revoked, suspended, or denied is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200; 20-2-981 through 20-2-984.5

31) ROUTE BID PROCEDURES

When a route becomes available, the senior driver(s) will be offered the route(s) first before the other drivers.

32) NO TRAVEL RAILROAD CROSSINGS, BRIDGES, AND STREETS

No Travel Railroad Crossing

1. TBA

No Travel Bridges

1. TBA

No Travel Streets

1. TBA

33) Loading and Unloading – Unit 6

OBJECTIVES

The school bus driver should be able to:

- Identify the school bus driver's role in executing their duties and in training students to ensure school bus stop safety.
- Explain the requirements and recommendations for bus stop locations and recognize unsafe stops.
- Describe what Georgia law requires other vehicles to do at school bus stops.
- Explain the School Bus Danger Zone.
- Explain how to correctly load passengers on highways and streets.
- Explain how to correctly unload passengers on highways and streets.
- Explain how to correctly load and unload students at a turnaround stop or in a cul-de-sac.

- Identify the proper and improper use of the eight-way light system.
- Explain how to correctly unload students on school campuses.
- Explain how to correctly load students on school campuses.
- Identify high priority school bus safety student behaviors and relate how teaching and managing those behaviors protect students.
- Recognize how to build relationships of trust, respect, and productive interaction to help keep students safe.
- Explain how to interact with parents at school bus stops.

TOPICS

1. Introduction
2. Requirements/Recommendations for Bus Stop Locations
3. Sharing the Road with School Buses
4. The School Bus Danger Zone
5. Loading Students on Highways and Streets
6. Unloading Students on Highways and Streets
7. How to Load and Unload at a Turnaround or in a Cul-de-sac
8. When Not to Use the Eight-Way Light System
9. Unloading Students on the School Campus
10. Loading Students on the School Campus
11. Keeping Students Safe by Building Effective Relationships
12. Interacting with Parents at the School Bus Stop

1. INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies have revealed that there is no safer way to transport a child than on a school bus. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has stated:

- American students are nearly eight times safer riding in a school bus than with their own parents and guardians in cars. The fatality rate for school buses is only 0.2 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) compared to 1.5 fatalities per 100 million VMT for cars.

Georgia's school buses transport over 1,000,000 students each morning and again each afternoon as they travel the equivalent of more than 30 trips around the earth daily. Although fatal crashes involving Georgia

school bus occupants are extremely rare events, student fatalities and serious injuries continue to occur at Georgia school bus stops.

These occurrences are caused by a variety of circumstances and errors on the part of the student, the school bus driver and the passing motorist. These heartbreaking events point out the need for school bus drivers to properly execute their duties and to train and manage students in safe behaviors at school bus stops. The importance of this unit must be stressed if there is to be a reduced potential of similar tragedies ever happening again.

INSTRUCTION SUGGESTIONS

POINTS TO STRESS: Most bus related deaths and injuries occur at the school bus stop. Without question, passenger loading and unloading are the most dangerous duties you have as a school bus driver. Therefore, as a professional school bus driver, your GREATEST responsibility is to safeguard the students entrusted to your care as they wait for and get on and off your bus.

Sadly, recent history reveals that over half the bus stop fatalities in Georgia have been the result of students being struck by the school bus. In these accidents, there were errors by either, or both, the student and the school bus driver.

In the remaining fatalities, the student was struck by the other vehicle. Unfortunately, vehicles on occasion will run the school bus stop arm. If the students who ride our Georgia school buses are to be safe, emphasis must be placed on the required student and school bus driver safe behaviors.

2. REQUIREMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STOP LOCATIONS

Supervisors, routing software, etc. may establish the location of school bus stops, but bus drivers will see and experience the real school bus stop. It is the duty of the bus driver to understand what is required for a safe bus stop and to communicate to the office when there is an issue:

- Motorists need a reasonable amount of time to see you at a bus stop and safely come to a stop. It is recommended that a school bus stop not be established unless a stopped school bus can be seen for at least 300 feet by vehicles approaching or overtaking the school bus. Extra attention should be given to relocating stops near hills and curves.
- The roadside, at the point of a school bus stop, must have sufficient room so that students are able to wait safely off the roadway. It is recommended that students wait 12 feet off the roadway, away from trees and other obstacles that could block a motorist's view of them.
- A bus stop should not be located within 30 feet of an intersection where traffic is controlled by a flashing beacon, stop sign, traffic control signal or police officer. You want motorists to be able to see your eight-ways. You also do not want to confuse motorists who are at or who are approaching an intersection with a traffic control device. The traffic control device and the school bus signals can be giving directions that are contradicting to motorists if the bus stop is too near the traffic control device.

- Stops should not be located so as to force students to cross multi-lanes of traffic (more than two lanes). Bus stops on roadways with a center turn lane or bus stops located in a deceleration or acceleration lane should be treated as a NO CROSS stop.
- Placement of bus stops should also allow the bus to be positioned fully in the far-right lane to load and unload. This includes deceleration lanes and turn lanes at the entrance to apartments, subdivisions, etc.
- Bus stops should allow you to stop the bus short of the stop, so that your bus position dictates a student's walk path where they are coming towards you or going away from you in your full direct view.
- Stops should not be located directly within a cul-de-sac. Buses having to back while turning around in this area are a danger to students.
- It is recommended that stops be located no closer together than one-tenth of a mile.
- If you are unsure about the safety of a school bus stop, see your supervisor and offer suggestions to help correct the problem.

INSTRUCTION SUGGESTIONS

Illustrate, describe and give examples of unsafe stops. Instruct trainees on bus stop and route change procedures. Stress that a car's vantage point is lower than that of a bus which can decrease the motorist's ability to see you and safely come to a stop.

3. SHARING THE ROAD WITH SCHOOL BUSES

In most cases, all drivers are required to stop when meeting or overtaking a stopped school bus that has its red lights flashing and its stop arm extended when loading or unloading passengers. The only exception to this rule is when highways are separated in the center by a dirt, grass or concrete median. In this situation, only vehicles following or traveling alongside a school bus in the same direction must stop.

A warning that a bus stop is about to take place will always be given with the flashing amber lights on the front and rear of the school bus. Upon seeing these flashing amber lights, vehicles approaching the school bus from both the front and rear should immediately slow down and prepare to stop. All drivers must pay special attention to children, be focused and exercise caution when in the vicinity of a school bus stop, as student riders can sometimes be unpredictable. Once the bus is fully stopped, the flashing red lights will activate and the stop arm will deploy. Vehicles must stop and should remain stopped until all loading students are aboard in the morning or all unloading passengers have cleared 12 feet off the roadway in the afternoon. Motorists should proceed with caution, only after passengers have cleared the roadway, the stop arm is cancelled and the flashing red lights are deactivated.

What is the Law?

TWO LANE Vehicles traveling in both directions **MUST STOP**.

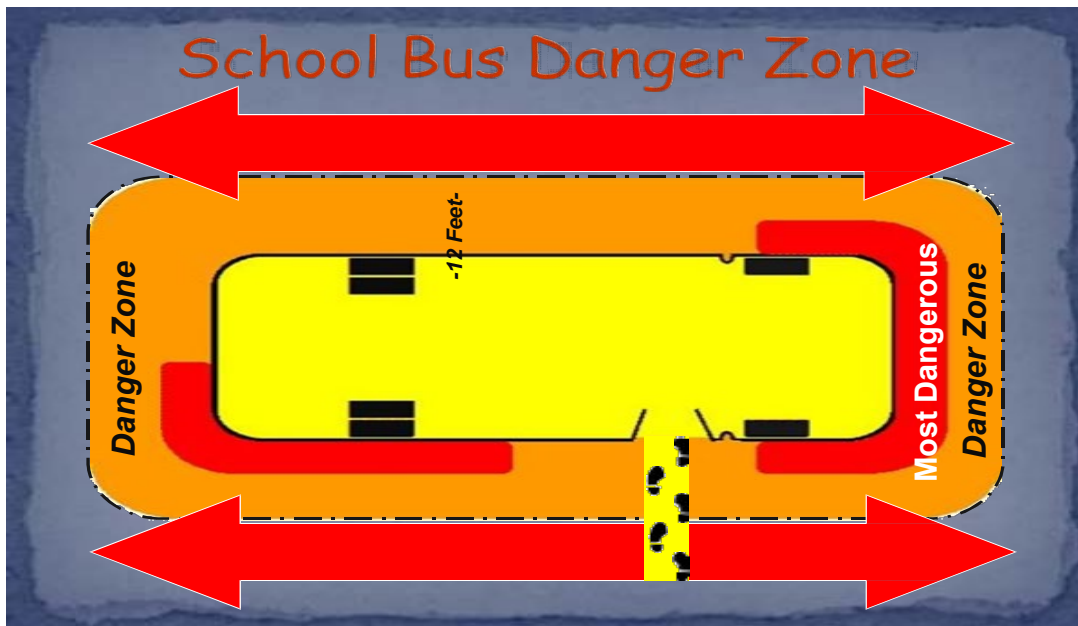
MULTI-LANE Paved Across Vehicles traveling in both directions **MUST STOP**.

DIVIDED HIGHWAY With dirt, grass or barrier median – Vehicles behind **MUST STOP**. Vehicles traveling in opposite direction must use caution.

4. THE SCHOOL BUS DANGER ZONE

In order for school bus drivers to safely load and unload students, they must recognize that there is an area around a stopped school bus that is very dangerous. This is the area near the bus where the bus driver might not see students or where cars might be moving when student riders are getting on and off the school bus. Bus drivers must ensure proper execution of procedures any time students are loading or unloading. Additionally, it is essential that bus drivers use both direct vision and properly adjusted mirrors to see students in the danger zone. The Danger Zone is:

- The TWELVE FOOT area that surrounds a stopped school bus.
- Especially the most dangerous areas which are around the left and right front tires, the front door and the right rear tires where it is difficult for the bus driver to see students with their direct vision. These areas are where the school bus poses a great threat to student's riders.
- Additionally, students are at risk to passing motorists on both the left and right sides of the stopped school bus.



High Priority Safe Student Behaviors in the Danger Zone

When in or near the Danger Zone, students should:

- Stay away from the dangerous areas where it is difficult for the bus driver to see them with their

direct vision.

Near the right and left front tires

Near the right rear tire

Near the front door

- Make sure they are always able to see the driver when outside the school bus.
- NEVER return to the bus for something left behind or dropped without getting the bus driver's attention.

Leave any object and move to a point, out of the danger zone.

Then get the driver's attention by putting hands and arms above their head and waving.

Wait for the driver to see them and give instructions before returning to the bus or before picking up anything dropped near the bus. If they do not get the driver's attention, they should not attempt to retrieve the item.

- Be aware of the danger of passing cars that do not stop like they should.

The danger may be from cars passing from the rear on the left side of the bus or from cars passing from all directions on both the left and right side of the bus.

- Always be alert and focused when in the Danger Zone.

INSTRUCTION SUGGESTIONS

Utilize a school bus and mark the 12-foot danger zone with cones in order for drivers to visualize the danger zones. Have drivers sit in the seat of a school bus and place items/individuals in different areas of the danger zone to demonstrate how easy it is to lose sight of an object in the danger zone. Have drivers demonstrate what a student should do if they drop something or leave something on the bus.

5. LOADING STUDENTS ON HIGHWAYS AND STREETS

Any vehicle that is stopped on the highway presents a great hazard. A stopped school bus with a load of students, students waiting at the bus stop, students loading/unloading the bus, as well as other vehicles on the roadway are all exposed to increased danger at this time.

When approaching the bus stop and when loading students, school bus drivers must recognize that total focus is required as they execute their bus driver safety procedures. Additionally, there must be equal focus on teaching and managing essential safe student behaviors as students wait for and board the bus. These actions will reduce the possibility of a school bus stop tragedy occurring in your school district.

- When approaching a designated stop, start slowing down in preparation for the stop while scanning for safety issues and any unusual circumstances.
- Apply brakes early and hard enough to light up the brake lights so that the vehicles following will have a warning that you are about to stop.
- Activate the eight-way amber warning lights at least 200 feet in advance of the stop.
- ALWAYS activate the eight-way ambers, even if no one is present at the bus stop. A student might be out of your view and they could appear at the last minute. For a safe stop, you need motorists alerted with your ambers, that a bus stop is about to take place.
- Check all mirrors for traffic. A constant visual search around the bus is necessary to alert the driver of any changes in traffic. Mirror checks are critical. You should continuously use both your direct vision and mirrors to identify hazards.
- Approach students with extreme care giving due consideration to the surface of the roadway. Be continually aware of conditions so that necessary adjustments in speed and position can be made as early as possible.
- Do not pull any closer than 12 feet from waiting students. If they rush the bus, stop as quickly as you safely can.
- If no one is present at the bus stop, you must ALWAYS come to a full stop, set the parking brake, shift to neutral, activate the red eight-ways, extend the stop arm, open the door, and look for any late arriving students.
- Stop the bus smoothly and with one stop. Position your bus in the far-right lane so no motorist can pass by on the right. This includes deceleration lanes and turn lanes at the entrance to apartments, subdivisions, etc.
- Be sure to position the bus short of the stop so students are kept away from the danger zone and you see them coming towards you from the front of the bus.
- Once stopped, Georgia Law requires bus drivers to first apply the parking brake. Second, for added safety, it is recommended to then place the transmission in neutral. This process is critical at all stops, no matter how many students may be at the stop.
- Only after you have come to a complete stop, activate the red eight-way lights, stop arm, crossing gate, and open the service door.
- Counsel students not to move towards the bus until after the eight-way red lights are flashing and no vehicles are moving. For crossing students, count them, establish eye contact and use your hand signal to cross them, once all approaching traffic has stopped.
- As students are loading, continuously use both your direct vision and mirrors to identify any moving traffic.
- Drivers should never use a cell phone, the 2-way radio, interior PA system or allow themselves to be distracted by addressing student concerns when loading students. Your total focus must be on loading the students.
- Count and re-count students and make sure all students who were waiting have safely boarded. If count is lost or you cannot account for all students, do not move the bus. If necessary, shut off the bus, secure it, and check underneath before moving the bus.
- It is only after all students are safely inside the bus that the red eight-way lights, crossing gate and

stop arm are cancelled and the door closed. School buses should not be in motion with the stop arm displayed or the service door open.

- To prevent accidental bus movement, first, with your foot on the brake, put the gear shift in drive and second, release the parking brake.
- The bus should not move forward until all mirrors are checked for traffic and for late arriving students in the danger zone. A bus should never start to move until the door is closed so the mirrors on the right will show the area toward the back wheels.
- Even after the bus starts moving, check the mirrors again for late arriving students or anyone chasing after the bus.
- When possible, students should be seated before cancelling the red eight-way lights, stop arm, crossing gate and closing the door.

High Priority Safe Student Behaviors at the Bus Stop

It is your responsibility to execute the many school bus driver duties involved with the operation of the bus while at a school bus stop. Additionally, you must also play an important role in teaching safe behaviors and in managing those safe student behaviors at bus stops and when getting on and off the bus.

These are the high priority student safe behaviors for waiting at the school bus stop and for loading the school bus on the roadway. They must be taught, enforced and re-enforced by the school bus driver at every stop, each and every day. When students execute these behaviors, they act as a safety net that protects the student in the event that you or a motorist makes a mistake. These safe behaviors when not followed have resulted in student fatalities, injuries and near misses in Georgia.

School bus stop safe student behaviors include:

- Get up and get ready on time. Arrive at the bus stop five minutes before the bus is scheduled to come.
- Have all items in their book bag before leaving home to avoid dropping anything.
- Wait at the bus stop in a safe place, 12 feet away from the road.
- Stay on their side of the road until the bus comes.
- Wait in an orderly group. Form an orderly line as the bus approaches, with the first student in line standing 12 feet away from traffic.
- Keep electronic equipment packed away when preparing to board. Never use an electronic device or wear ear buds when boarding.
- Return home and get help or phone for assistance if they miss the bus.
NEVER chase after the bus.
NEVER walk to another bus stop.
NEVER allow parents to drive them to another bus stop. The bus driver will not be expecting them

High Priority Safe Student Behaviors for Loading

When loading the school bus on the roadway, students should:

- For students who **DO NOT** have to cross the road to GET ON the bus –
 - Stay 12 feet off the road and wait for the bus to stop.
 - Look to be sure all cars have stopped before walking towards the bus.
 - Look for moving cars as they walk forward.
- For students who **DO** have to cross the road to GET ON the bus –
 - Wait 12 feet off the road and wait for the bus to stop and for the driver’s signal for when it is safe to cross from where they are standing.
 - Look for moving cars as they walk to the edge of the road.
 - Stop at the edge of the road and look both ways to be sure that any moving cars come to a stop.
 - Look both ways for moving cars while walking straight across the road.
 - Cross 12 feet in front of the bus.
- Make sure they can see the bus driver, so the bus driver can see them.
- Leave any item if dropped and move to a point out of the 12-foot Danger Zone. Do not retrieve anything without first getting the attention of the bus driver by waving hands above their head and then receiving instruction from the bus driver.
- Stay away from the front and rear bus tires.
- Look for moving cars, when getting on the bus.
- Listen for the danger signal (blowing of the bus horn). Immediately look for and avoid the danger of passing cars that did not stop, if you hear the bus horn blow.
- When entering the bus, use the handrail for safety.
- Once seated, sit the safe way, facing forward with your back against the back of the seat and your bottom against the bottom of the seat. Be sure your bottom is not hanging off the seat. If there is not room for you in a seat, then sit somewhere else where there is room. Place your book bag in your lap.

INSTRUCTION SUGGESTIONS

Point out to bus drivers that loading and unloading is the time when most injuries and fatalities occur. Stress to the drivers that they should never run early and keep a regular schedule. Stress and teach the required appropriate standard bus driver hand signal used in your school system for crossing students.

6. UNLOADING STUDENTS ON HIGHWAYS AND STREETS

The following required school bus driver duties define their role in keeping students safe when unloading on the roadway.

- When approaching the designated stop, start slowing down in preparation for the stop while scanning for safety issues and any unusual circumstances.
- Apply brakes early and hard enough to light up the brake lights so that vehicles following will have a warning that you are about to stop.
- Activate the amber warning lights at least 200 feet in advance of the stop.

- Check all mirrors for traffic. A constant visual search around the bus is necessary to alert the driver of any changes in traffic. Mirror checks are critical. You should continuously use both your direct vision and mirrors to identify hazards.
- Stop the bus smoothly and with one stop. Position your bus in the far-right lane so no motorist can pass by on the right. This includes deceleration lanes and turn lanes at the entrance to apartments, subdivisions, etc.
- Where the bus is stopped determines the path students will walk when unloading. You want students walking away from the front of the bus, out of the danger zone and easily visible to you.
- Once fully stopped, set the parking brake first, and then it is recommended to place the gearshift in neutral.
- Activate your red eight-way lights, stop arm and crossing gate to alert motorists to stop. How you do this depends on the bus you are driving (Instructor/Trainer will know what types of buses are in the fleet):
 - Partially open your manual door to activate the red eight-way lights, the stop arm and crossing gate.
 - With most automatic doors, opening the door is required to activate the red eight-way lights, the stop arm and crossing gate.
 - With multi-position automatic doors, you will activate the red eight-way lights, stop arm and crossing gate independent of and without opening the door.
- Passengers are to remain seated until the bus has come to a complete stop.
- Drivers and students should understand that the unloading process begins **ONLY** when all vehicles are stopped and it is safe to proceed. You **MUST** keep the exiting students safely on the bus and train them not to depart until you have instructed them to do so. Moving vehicles pose a threat to students who are outside the bus so you must ensure that students remain on the school bus (where they are safest) until all such threats are eliminated.
- Use your direct vision and your mirrors to check traffic to the front and from behind and **NEVER** allow a student down the steps if a vehicle is still moving. How you achieve this depends on the bus you are driving (Instructor/Trainer will know what types of buses are in the fleet):
 - Open the manual door fully and give the okay, only when vehicles from both directions have completely stopped.
 - With most automatic doors, the door will be open and the driver will need to train students that an open door does not mean it is safe to exit. They will exit **ONLY** after all approaching traffic has come to a complete stop and you give the okay.
 - With multi-position automatic doors, the driver will open the door and give students the okay once they see all approaching traffic around the bus has stopped.
- Drivers should instruct all students to pause at the bottom step and look to be sure there is no moving traffic on that side of the school bus (especially to their right).
- Count all passengers as they leave.
- For students who have to cross, move them as a group. They should cross approximately 12 feet in front of the stopped bus and walk in a straight line. Continue to use your mirrors and direct vision to check for approaching vehicles.
- Establish eye contact with crossing students both at the end of the crossing gate and again at the

center of the road, giving two separate hand signals when it is safe for them to cross.

- Ensure that non-crossing students exit and do not re-enter the 12-foot danger zone. Count students again as they move away from the bus. Your school bus is THE GREATEST DANGER to student riders. Historically over 30% of student fatalities occurred when struck by their school bus as they were crossing in the afternoon! If count is lost or you cannot account for all students, do not move the bus. If necessary, shut off the bus, secure it and check underneath before moving the bus.
- Drivers should never use a cell phone, the 2-way radio, interior PA system or allow themselves to be distracted by addressing student concerns when unloading students. Never let distractions stop you from safely accounting for each child who exits. Your total focus must be on unloading the students.
- The flashing red eight-way lights, stop arm and crossing gate must remain activated until ALL students have reached a safe place, 12 feet off the road.
- If you see an approaching vehicle that is a danger to students, your warning signal is to immediately blow the bus horn.
- Keep looking to make sure no children return near the bus as you deactivate the red eight- way lights, stop arm, crossing gate and close the door.
- With your foot on the brake, first put the gear shift in drive, and then release the parking brake.
- There is a minimum of four mirrors that need to be checked for students before moving – the wide-angle mirror on the left, the left cross-view mirror, the right cross-view mirror and the wide-angle mirror on the right. Be sure to check right side mirrors for students who do not cross the street.
- Ensure that the last student down the steps has no item (draw string, book bag or other loose item) caught in the handrail or door. Be sure to do one last check of the right-side mirrors after you have closed the door to see if anyone is still near the bus.
- You should never permit a child to cross the road behind the bus or to get mail from their mailbox. You want them safely 12 feet off the roadway before pulling away.
- As you are leaving the stop, continue to check for anyone who might have reentered the danger zone.

High Priority Safe Student Behaviors for Unloading

Once again it is not adequate for you to just perfectly execute your many school bus driver duties involved with the operation of the bus. You must also play the essential role of teaching safe behaviors and in managing those safe student behaviors at bus stops and when getting on and off the bus.

These are the high priority student safe behaviors for unloading from the school bus on a roadway. They must be taught, enforced and re-enforced by you, the school bus driver at every stop, each and every day. When students execute these behaviors, they act as a safety net that protects the student in the event that you or a motorist makes a mistake. When these safe behaviors have not been followed, they have resulted in student fatalities, injuries, and near misses in Georgia.

When unloading from the bus on the roadway, students should:

- Exit the bus only at their assigned stop.
- Remain seated until the bus comes to a full stop.

- Put away any electronic equipment before standing to exit the bus. Never use an electronic device or wear ear buds until they are safely 12 feet off the roadway.
- When going home wait in the bus aisle for the driver to tell them it is okay to begin to leave the bus.
- When exiting the bus, use the handrail. Make sure book bag straps, purses, clothing drawstrings, etc. do not get caught on the handrail or in the door.
- When going home, look for moving cars in all directions, especially to their right, before stepping off the bus.
- (For students who DO NOT have to cross the road AFTER GETTING OFF the bus) –
 - Look for cars in both directions as they walk straight away from the bus, in full view of the driver.
 - Keep walking until they are out of the Danger Zone, 12 feet away from the bus.
- (For students who DO have to cross the road AFTER GETTING OFF the bus) –
 - Walk straight away from the right front of the bus, in the bus driver's full view.
 - Always be able to see the bus driver (so the driver can see them).
 - Wait for the driver's signal that it is safe to cross two different times
 - a.) At the end of the crossing gate (don't short cut too close to end of gate)
 - b.) At the center of the road
 - Look for cars to their left and right while walking directly across and exiting 12 feet off the road.
 - NEVER cross behind the bus.
- Leave any item if dropped or left on the bus and move to a point out of the 12-foot Danger Zone. Do not retrieve anything without first getting the attention of the bus driver by waving hands above the head and then receiving instruction from the bus driver.
- Stay away from the front and rear bus tires.
- Listen for the danger signal (blowing of the bus horn). Immediately look for and avoid the danger of passing cars that did not stop, if you hear the bus horn blow.
- Never get mail from a roadside mailbox. If a car is coming and loses control, it might run off the road.

INSTRUCTION SUGGESTIONS

Stress that over 30% of Georgia student fatalities have historically resulted from a student in the danger zone being struck by their school bus in the AFTERNOON. Stress to the driver that it is imperative that they be able to account for every student who gets off the bus before proceeding to the next stop. Stress to drivers the importance of not letting students down the steps if there is still moving traffic.

7. HOW TO LOAD AND UNLOAD AT A TURNAROUND OR IN A CUL-DE-SAC

Always look for an alternative to a turnaround at an intersection along the roadway. Avoid backing if at all possible. Placing stops at a turnaround is not recommended, however, drivers may have some of these stops assigned on their routes. If so, you should NEVER back with students on the ground.

- At a turn around on a roadway, students should be loaded before backing. It is important to load students before backing because the driver's vision to the rear of the bus is restricted, and it is

possible that a student could be hit or run over.

- After loading students on a roadway, the driver should then execute a backing maneuver into a driveway or intersecting street. It is recommended that backing be performed so the driver does not have to back out into traffic. The driver or local school system should get permission to use a private driveway.
- When unloading students at a turnaround on the roadway, the driver should execute the turnaround backing maneuver before letting any student off the bus.

School buses routinely use cul-de-sacs in neighborhoods to turn around, but placement of bus stops within the cul-de-sac should be avoided. Sometimes backing in a cul-de-sac is required and if a bus stop is in the area, students could be in danger.

INSTRUCTION SUGGESTIONS

Stress to bus drivers that they should NEVER back with students on the ground. Stress the importance of eliminating backing at a school bus stop whenever possible.

8. WHEN NOT TO USE THE EIGHT-WAY LIGHT SYSTEM

Motorists must recognize that use of the eight-way lights means a bus stop is taking place.

- They are not to be used on school property or while loading and unloading off the roadway.
- They are not to be used in driveways.
- They are not to be used while backing.
- They are not to be used while making turns or turnarounds.
- They are not to be used while stopping at railroad crossings.
- They are not to be used for fog or inclement weather when not loading or unloading students.
- They are not to be used to assist another bus driver who is loading or unloading passengers.
- They are not to be used to assist another bus driver to enter traffic.
- They are not to be used to assist non-bus passenger pedestrians in crossing the street. In summary, the ONLY time a driver should use the eight-way light system is to pick up or discharge students on the roadway.

INSTRUCTION SUGGESTIONS

Bus drivers should understand that the motoring public should not be confused by using the eight-way light system incorrectly.

9. UNLOADING STUDENTS ON THE SCHOOL CAMPUS

There are many pedestrian safety issues and vehicle traffic operations safety concerns that are present at a school campus in the morning. Bus drivers must exercise great care when entering, parking, unloading, interacting with parent vehicles and interacting with pedestrians on a school campus.

- If possible, parent traffic and bus traffic should be separated. Use caution in this very congested

area and never exceed 5 MPH.

- Approach the unloading area carefully.
- Every effort should be made to route buses in a counterclockwise direction at the unloading point. This should be done so that the exit door will be on the right next to the school, and the students will not have to cross a traffic zone or between vehicles.
- A school staff member should supervise students as they exit the bus to ensure students enter the school in a quick and orderly manner. This person should have two-way communication with the school office.
- Buses should unload only in designated areas in a single line and where, if possible, no other automobile traffic is present.
- It is recommended that buses be parked so that in case of an emergency, students can exit through the rear door without obstruction by another parked bus.
- Set the brake and shift to neutral.
- Turn off engine. Do not let the bus idle while unloading.
- Open door and instruct the students to use the handrail.
- If you require an administrator to assist with students, notify the bus duty school staff member supervising the unloading process who, if necessary, will notify the school office. The bus driver must never leave children unsupervised on the bus.
- Once the last students exit, make sure that all who went down the steps are clear of the bus.
- Get out of the seat and walk to the back of the bus looking for sleeping children, valuables and vandalism.
- Assume your driving position, buckle up, check mirrors and prepare to leave.
- Make a final check for stragglers before starting.
- Wait until the bus in front of you leaves, and then you may signal and leave. Do not pass a bus in a loading zone unless you are directed to do so by a school administrator or by the driver, and then do so very carefully.
- Backing on school grounds should be discouraged. If backing is necessary, have an administrator, teacher or another school bus driver to assist you as a spotter.
- Make sure as you are exiting the school campus you do so slowly and cautiously watching for students and other hazards. Your speed should not exceed 5 MPH.
- Make sure you leave adequate amount of space between you and the bus in front of you, and be prepared to make a quick stop.
- Stop before entering the roadway from the school campus. Carefully look for and yield to traffic.

High Priority Safe Student Behaviors for Unloading at School

What are the safe student behaviors that you must teach, manage and enforce that will protect students when unloading the bus at school? These are the high priority student safe behaviors for unloading on the school campus:

- Have all items in your book bag so you don't drop anything.

- Make sure book bag straps, purses, clothing drawstrings, etc. do not get caught on the handrail or in the door.
- Walk (don't run) straight towards the school.
- Stay away from the bus, so they can be seen by the driver.
- Leave any item if dropped or left on the bus and move to a point out of the 12-foot Danger Zone. Do not retrieve anything without first getting the attention of the bus driver by waving hands above the head and then receiving instruction from the bus driver.
- Keep walking until they get out of the danger zone, 12 feet away from the bus.
- Never walk or run between parked cars and buses.

INSTRUCTION SUGGESTIONS

Describe any unusual issues when unloading at individual schools. Stress reduced speed on the campus. Stress bus driver patience if vehicles are restricting access. If unsure if a bus will fit – wait for the vehicle to move.

10. LOADING STUDENTS ON THE SCHOOL CAMPUS

Pedestrian safety issues and vehicle traffic operation safety concerns increase in the afternoon since all vehicular and pedestrian traffic occurs in about the same time frame. Bus drivers cannot be in a hurry or become distracted during this critical time.

- If possible, parent traffic and bus traffic should be separated. Use caution in this very congested area and never exceed 5 MPH.
- Approach the loading area carefully.
- When possible, you should arrive at the school and be positioned at the loading area before school is dismissed. Approach the loading area at 2 to 3 MPH. If students are at the loading area when the bus arrives, extreme caution must be used. If your bus arrives late, some schools will want a bus duty supervisory staff member to direct the bus to the loading zone.
- Park in the designated loading area.
- Each school must provide adequate supervision of students as they are loading buses. There must be staff members positioned in a manner that provides immediate supervision in case of an emergency or in the case of the need for preventive intervention in order to ensure student safety. If possible, those supervising bus loading should have two-way radio communication.
- It is recommended that buses be parked so that in case of an emergency, students can exit through the rear door without obstruction by another parked bus.
- Set the brake and shift to neutral.
- Turn off the engine. Do not let the bus idle while loading.
- If you have just completed delivering a load of PM students from another school, get out of the seat and walk to the back of the bus looking for sleeping children, valuables and vandalism.
- Remove the ignition key if leaving the bus. If you do leave, be sure you are back
- BEFORE the first student arrives.
- The driver should be on the bus or at the entrance of the bus before students begin boarding. You

should be able to identify all students that enter your bus. If not, question why the student is on your bus.

- Instruct students to board in an orderly fashion, use the handrail and to be seated immediately after boarding.
- Assume your driving position, buckle up, check mirrors and prepare to leave.
- Make a final check for stragglers before starting.
- If students on your bus are disorderly, do not depart until you gain control. If you require an administrator to assist with students, notify the bus duty school staff member supervising the loading process who, in turn, will notify the school office. The bus driver must never leave children unsupervised on the bus.
- When students are loaded and bus doors are closed, supervisory school staff members must clear bus lanes of all students before buses proceed to exit the campus.
- One school official should be stationed in front of the buses. This person should communicate with those clearing the bus lanes and motion to the lead bus driver when it is safe to exit the campus. Bus drivers are not to move until this person gives the signal.
- If there are second loads coming into the school, school officials must supervise students to ensure the bus is completely stopped and the door is opened before students are allowed to move toward the bus. The school official is responsible for maintaining an orderly loading process.
- Wait until the bus in front of you leaves, and then you may signal and leave. Do not pass a bus in a loading zone unless you are directed to do so by a school administrator or by the driver, and then do so very carefully.
- Backing on school grounds should be discouraged. If backing is necessary, have an administrator, teacher or another school bus driver to assist you as a spotter.
- Make sure as you are exiting the school you do so slowly and cautiously watching for students and other hazards. Never exceed 5 MPH.
- Make sure you leave adequate amount of space between you and the bus in front of you and be prepared to make a quick stop.
- Stop before entering the roadway from the school campus. Carefully look for and yield to traffic.

High Priority Safe Student Behaviors for Loading at School

Your role in teaching and managing the safe behavior of students while they load and unload on the school campus is critical to their safety. Just like the execution of safe behaviors at bus stops, what students do when get on and off the bus at the school can act as a safety net that protects them. These are the high priority student safe behaviors for loading on the school campus:

- Have all items in your book bag before you leave the classroom so you don't drop anything.
- Walk straight towards the bus door and be sure the driver can see you.
- Leave any item if dropped near the bus and move to a point out of the 12-foot Danger Zone. Do not retrieve anything without first getting the attention of and then receiving instruction from the bus driver.
- Stay away from the front and rear bus tires and promptly board the bus.

- Never chase after a moving bus. Once the buses start moving – students should stop moving.

INSTRUCTION SUGGESTIONS

Describe school district procedures and any unusual afternoon loading issues at individual schools. Discuss how bus drivers are given a signal that it is okay to depart the schools.

11. KEEPING STUDENTS SAFE BY BUILDING EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

As a school bus driver, one of the most important duties you have is to teach and persuade students that execution of desired safe behaviors at school bus stops is essential. You have now learned what students are to do when at the school bus stop, when loading and when unloading. So, the big question becomes, how do you get them to cooperate and carry out these essential required behaviors so they remain safe?

Some school bus drivers might think, “I’m the authority figure on the bus, and all I have to do is to tell students what to do and they will all obey”. There will certainly be times on your bus where your use of authority is necessary, but required student safe behaviors at bus stops can best be achieved through the building of a relationship of trust and respect with them.

Understanding and using proven interpersonal skills with your students can dramatically increase your chances of success in achieving safe student behaviors at school bus stops. Building effective relationships includes everything from communication and listening skills to attitude, body language, tone of voice and how you present yourself to others. Use these simple guiding principles in building a good relationship with student riders so they willfully comply with your safety instruction. Your goal is compliance because they respect and listen to you and want to do the safest thing.

- **Put on a happy face.** Smile often and have an upbeat attitude. When you are having a bad day, do not pull others down with you.
- **Show that you care.** When it comes to praise, do not hold back. If a student has done something you appreciate, no matter how small, thank them for it. Identify at least one trait you value in each of your student riders, and let them know about it. By showing others how much you care about them, you will encourage them to do the same in return and give you their best.
- **Show your genuine interest.** Get to know your students’ names and get to know them, personally, as well. Recognize events in their day, from a birthday, to a band performance, to a ball game. If possible, look them in the eye when you speak to them.
- **Be an active listener.** Being an active listener shows that you intend to both hear and recognize a student's view. Using your own words, repeat what the speaker has said. By doing this, you will know that you have processed their words, and they will realize that your answers have been genuinely thought out. Everyone will feel more connected to you, knowing that you are an active listener, and you will develop a better understanding of them.
- **Promote fairness and consistency.** Help to create and promote a consistent and cooperative environment on your school bus. Show fairness to everyone. One person's opinion is not more important than another's. What is right today is right tomorrow. If you follow this advice, your

students will come to identify you as someone who can be trusted.

- **Settle disputes.** You want to become the person someone can turn to when disputes arise on your school bus. Identify and resolve conflict. Not only will your bus be a happier and safer place, but you will come to be known as a leader.
- **Be a great communicator.** In addition to being an active listener, you need to be a great communicator. Do not blurt out the first thing that comes to mind. Instead, think carefully about the words you use, so you communicate clearly and there will be no confusion. If you tend to speak out any ill-considered thought that crosses your mind, people will not put great value in what you have to say.
- **Make them laugh.** Do not take yourself too seriously. If you have a great sense of humor, use it, as long as you avoid inappropriate jokes and do not make light of serious situations. Humor can be a great way to break down barriers and get others on board with what you need them to do.
- **Put yourself in their shoes.** A compassionate person can understand how another person feels, and compassion is an important quality when working with others. Always consider circumstances from another person's viewpoint. What may seem like the obvious, correct answer to you could have entirely different implications when seen from another perspective.
- **Don't be a grumpy whiner.** If you are known as being grumpy and a complainer your negativity can push others away from you. Be professional and in the moment. The job at hand is a job of focus.

INSTRUCTION SUGGESTIONS

Stress that without having built a relationship of trust and respect, it is very difficult to keep students safe at the bus stop, when loading and when unloading. Stress that parent support is often determined by the relationship a school bus driver has developed.

12. INTERACTING WITH PARENTS AT THE SCHOOL BUS STOP

Communicate and build a relationship with your parents from the onset of the school year and get them to partner with you on what their student rider should be doing. Parents will be tempted to talk with you at a school bus stop. They may want to talk about a concern, a request or just to exchange pleasantries. The effect is the same. Conversation at a bus stop can distract you from the most important job you have – focusing on students as they load and unload.

You have two necessary outcomes when communicating with a parent at a school bus stop:

- Do not allow yourself to become distracted by the parent. Take care of the students who are loading or unloading first and then shift your attention to the parent.
 - If this is something that can be resolved quickly at the school bus stop, then do so and safely proceed.
 - If resolution requires more time than you have while stopped in the roadway, you want to quickly communicate:
 - a) Acknowledge concerns by saying things like, If I understand correctly, you are concerned about . . . If you determine that the concern is valid, it is appropriate to say, I can certainly understand why you feel the way you do.

- b) Share that you understand their concern is important – I know this is important to you....
- c) Convey that you want to properly address the concern – and I want to give it the attention it deserves.
- d) Refer them to the appropriate resource for resolution – but I need to continue on my route. It is best for you to contact the school or transportation department, etc. so they can take as much time as is needed to properly address your concern. I'm sorry, but I must continue my route.
- If the situation is tense, or the parent is angry, conduct yourself in a manner that will reduce the tension.
 - Stay calm. Calm is strength and anger is weakness (calmness decreases anger; anger increases anger). Listen to WHAT they are saying, not HOW they are saying it.
 - Resist interrupting unless you see that the concern cannot be resolved while at the school bus stop. Never interrupt so that you can make a point. This is easy to say, but difficult to do!
 - Resist being defensive. Restate the concern factually so the parent knows that you understand the issue. Avoid immediate explanations. They can be perceived as arguing or escaping the issue that the person is concerned about. Putting some time between the request and your response will assure the parent that you have fully considered the matter.
 - Show respect for the individual. They are partners in the process and deserve to have their concerns addressed. After all, it is THEIR child. If you treat people with respect, they often will treat you the same way.

If faced with an individual attempting to board your school bus you should always advise the individual that minor children are present and ask the person disrupting the operation of the bus to please leave/not enter the school bus. For assurance that enforcement can be administered, under Georgia Law 20-2-1182, instructing the individual that minor children are present and to not board or to leave your school bus could make a difference when it comes to judgment against the individual.

20-2-1181. Disrupting public school; penalty. It shall be unlawful for any person to disrupt or interfere with the operation of any public school, public school bus, or public-school bus stop as designated by local school boards of education. Any person violating this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature.

20-2-1182. Persons other than students who insult or abuse school teachers in presence of pupils may be ordered to leave school premises. Any parent, guardian, or person other than a student at the public school in question who has been advised that minor children are present and who continues to upbraid, insult, or abuse any public-school teacher, public school administrator, or public-school bus driver in the presence and hearing of a pupil while on the premises of any public school or public-school bus may be ordered by any of the above-designated school personnel to leave the school premises or school bus, and upon failure to do so such person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$500.00.

INSTRUCTION SUGGESTIONS

Discuss with trainees the method your school system wants them to use in providing parents important contact information (Examples - 3x5 index cards with contact information, supervisor's business card, director's business card; etc.). Provide instruction on the best way for parents to communicate concerns to the driver or to the department (a written note to the driver, email one of the contacts provided, etc.). The bus stop is not the safe, private or most effective environment to address student concerns. Stress what parent interaction is or is not appropriate at a school bus stop. Stress that by interacting and communicating properly, the bus driver can guide a confrontation to a satisfactory resolution.

2D. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Reasons for Immediate Recommendation for Suspension/Termination from his/her job.

- Loss or suspension of Driver's License
- Abandonment of route or "No Call, No Show" includes, but is not limited to, not showing up for route but also taking off without permission. When a driver takes off without permission, that time will be considered leave without pay.
- Failure to report a Conviction of DUI (Personal Vehicle or Commercial Vehicle)
- Testing Positive for Drugs or Alcohol. Any driver who has been contacted by the Transportation Department for a random drug and/or alcohol test must go to the facility for testing. Failure to go is considered a refusal and driver will be terminated.
- A physical fight with another driver or drivers.
- Refusal to transport students, either your own or someone else's, when directed by the Director, Driver Trainer, or Dispatcher. (Insubordination)
- Speeding ticket or any violation you are found guilty of while operating a school bus or failure to follow State laws for pupil transportation.
- Allowing an unauthorized person to ride on your school bus. Unauthorized Parking Location.
- Found guilty of inappropriate contact with a student. This includes physical, verbal, sexual, texts, or electronic.
- Failure to follow other rules and procedures as outlined in the Driver Manual. Three (3) at fault accidents while operating a school bus in a twelve (12) month period.
- Failure to report an accident involving a board of education vehicle.
- Failure to check your bus after every route/trip to ensure there are no children left on the bus.

Offenses not listed above will be handled as follows:

- 1st Offense: Incident Report
- 2nd Offense: Letter of Instruction
- 3rd Offense: Letter of suspension without pay
- 4th Offense: Termination

3D. APPROVED FUELING SITES FOR APPLING COUNTY BUSES

Appling County Bus Shop