

*TUSCARORA SCHOOL DISTRICT*

# TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES MANUAL



Effective 2014-2015

# OBJECTIVE

The objective of this manual is to have available a set of guidelines covering all areas of student transportation. This set of guidelines will be used to ensure an ongoing transportation system that is safe, economical and consistent throughout the Tuscarora School District.

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## SECTION I: General Information

This section will explain who is eligible for district transportation; administrative line of command; and will outline the Tuscarora School District's transportation system.

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### A. Eligibility

Transportation will be provided to all Tuscarora School District students, kindergarten through grade twelve, as outlined below. Transportation will also be provided for district students enrolled in an approved non-public school who are eligible for transportation based on the same criteria as public school students. Students not eligible for transportation will not be provided bus transportation unless special education or medical reasons warrant.

### B. Transportation Personnel Line of Command

The Transportation Director, who reports directly to the Business Administrator, is responsible for the overall to and from school transportation throughout the School District and for all the Tuscarora School District student transportation.

All contractors are directly responsible to the Transportation Director.

All drivers are responsible to the Transportation Director for all matters required by the Tuscarora School District and responsible to their respective contractor for the various conditions of employment.

Each building principal is responsible for bus discipline issues of their students and will follow the approved busing discipline policy. All transportation inquiries shall start with the Transportation Director.

### C. Outline of Service

#### 1. **Walking Policy**

All students not eligible for bus transportation will be required to walk to and from school. Parents/Guardians are responsible for students required to walk.

##### Exceptions to Walking Policy:

All transportation requests for students not eligible for bus transportation must go to the Transportation office for consideration. Exceptions will only be made for medical and/or educational needs. Medical necessity must be supported by a written request from a physician.

##### Policy for Walking to Bus Stops:

Students may be required to walk up to one and one half-mile (1.5), according to Pennsylvania Department of Education, to get to a bus stop. The decision requiring a student to walk will be determined by the following criteria:

- a. Age of the student
- b. Availability of a safe turnaround
- c. Hazards of the road (hills, curves, etc.)
- d. PA vehicle laws, posted roads and bridges
- e. Efficiency of the bus route

*\*See Section I, number 8, page 5*

## **2. School Bus Turnarounds**

In any situation where a school bus must turn around on private property, it is the responsibility of the property owner to maintain the turnaround. The school bus contractor will determine what is needed for an adequate turnaround. Any time a turnaround becomes inadequate, the students will be asked to walk to the closest safe bus stop.

## **3. Kindergarten Bus Stops**

Kindergarten students will not be permitted to exit the bus at their stop unless a parent/guardian or other authorized individual is present to meet the child. If a responsible adult is not visible from the bus the child will be returned to the school and the parent will be notified to pick up the child at the school.

## **4. Child Care**

Parental requests to pick up or deliver students at child care providers will only be approved if the request does not alter the original bus route and will not increase the bus load to over capacity. The District will accommodate different transportation arrangements for AM and PM but these must be consistent Monday through Friday unless a parental custody situation exists (paperwork must be on file in the transportation department). All requests must be approved by the Transportation Director. If students move into an area which will cause a bus to be overloaded the last non-resident child/children assigned based on a child care provider's location will be removed from the route until the bus is not overloaded. Non-resident students will be selected based on age (oldest first) and siblings (siblings will not be separated). At least five (5) days notice will be given when reassigning non-resident students.

## **5. Non-Public Transportation**

Under Act 372 of 1973, the district is required to provide service to resident students who are lawfully enrolled in any private non-profit school within ten miles of the school district's boundaries.

All requests must be made in writing and acknowledged by the Tuscarora School District before transportation will be provided. Letters should be in the Transportation Office on or before July 31.

## **6. Special Education Transportation**

Separate transportation will be provided to special education students only when requested by the Special Education Supervisor in accordance with the student's Individualized Educational Plan (I.E.P). All requests must be approved by the

Transportation Office before transportation will start. Up to three (3) days may be required to make special transportation arrangements.

## **7. Extra-Curricular Transportation**

All extra-curricular activities requiring transportation must provide an approved Transportation Request form before a vehicle will be reserved. All requests must be presented to the Transportation Director so transportation arrangements can be made. All bus transportation for activities must have at least one school district employee per bus. The district employee will be the responsible person in charge. All vehicles used for student transportation must meet the minimum insurance requirements approved by the Tuscarora School District.

The Tuscarora School District will provide transportation to extracurricular events via school bus or district owned vehicle. When the District provides transportation, only school personnel and chaperones approved by the Principal and/or Athletic Director will be allowed to travel on the bus. Any trips involving students must be approved by the Tuscarora School Board.

## **8. Route Preparation**

- a. The Transportation Director is responsible for preparing the routes during the summer months. Bus stop assignments cannot be customized to meet every individual need and still be part of an efficient and economical transportation system.
  - The following considerations are made in preparing each route:
    - The district is required by the State to create bus stops within one and one half miles (1 ½) for elementary students and two (2) miles for middle and high school students. This stop is measured from their residence. Driveways and privately owned roads are not calculated in that mileage. The district will strive to keep those stops around half a mile (.5) where possible.
    - All stops must maintain the PA Department of Transportation's rule that a bus must have 300-150 feet for amber light activation.
    - Bus stops will be kept to a minimum, consolidating wherever possible, while keeping safety factors of the stop location, road and volume of traffic in mind.
    - Efficiency will be maintained by keeping the number of miles to a minimum. Bus loads will be maintained to the highest capacity whenever possible.
  - The district cannot consider factors that are associated with individual family or parental situations. Such concerns are expected to be resolved by the family or parent/guardian, not the school district. Examples:
    - Parent/Guardian not being able to see child walking to bus stop and/or waiting at bus stop.

- Neighborhood feuds or conflicts with nearby residents.
  - Unrestrained pets in neighborhood.
  - Individual family circumstances.
- b. All route changes must be approved by the Transportation Director. No driver shall be permitted to change a route without authorization. Drivers are permitted route deviations for emergencies such as accidents, road closures, hazardous conditions, etc.
- c. If overloading requires students to be transferred from one bus to another, transferring students will be selected based on age (oldest first) and siblings (siblings will not be separated).

## **9. New Students**

All new students requesting transportation or any students changing transportation must get approval from the Transportation Director. New students and transportation changes require up to two (2) business days. The Transportation Director will inform the bus contractor of additions and deletions to the roster. The driver is responsible for keeping an accurate up-to-date route sheet and bus roster in the bus at all times.

## **10. School Closing, Delayed Start and Early Dismissal**

- a. Whenever a decision is made for a delayed start or a school closing the decision will be made no later than 6:00 a.m.; the message out by 6:15 a.m. Parents are advised to listen to the local radio (FM: 95.1, 94.3, 96.7, 90.5, 104.7, 92.1, 101.5; AM: 800, 1410) or TV reports (NBC TV25) when inclement weather is present. Support Staff, Faculty and Students will receive an automated message by phone when able. The delayed starting time will permit school district officials to better evaluate roads and weather conditions when the forecast is uncertain.
- b. When a delayed start is initiated all starting times will be delayed by two hours.
- c. All early dismissals must allow for at least one hour prior to the closing for driver notification and pick-up time. Parents again are advised to listen to local radio or TV reports for all early dismissals.
- d. When transportation is delayed or closed due to bad weather, for Tuscarora School District, this also includes all transportation including to non-public and special education classes.

## **11. District Owned Vehicles**

District owned vehicles will comply with all applicable federal and state laws, particularly with regard to the maximum passenger load. Staff personnel desiring to use a school vehicle must submit a Transportation Request form. Normally, the vans will be used for transporting students versus transporting staff personnel. The Transportation Director will be responsible for scheduling and maintenance of the vans. School District personnel who drive the vans will be responsible for observing all state and local vehicle laws and for driving in a safe and prudent manner. They will be responsible for ensuring

all passengers wear seat belts, for stopping at all railroad tracks prior to crossing and for removal of all trash from the vehicle upon return to the school. Students who commit disciplinary infractions while on a van or while attending an event at another location will be subject to the same corrective measures as are in effect while on Tuscarora School District property.

## **SECTION II: ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

The following section is a listing of rules, regulations, and procedures for drivers and students. With driver commitment and parent support of this policy a safe, economical transportation system will continue as the safest means of transporting our children.

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### **A. Drivers**

This section will cover this most important area of transportation concerning the responsibilities of the driver. It is the responsibility of each driver to know and understand all Federal, State and Local laws governing student transportation safe driving. The safety of each student will always be our number one concern.

#### **1. Qualifications**

- a. Must be at least 18 years of age.
- b. Possess a valid Pennsylvania Commercial Operator's license.
- c. Certified by the Department of Transportation as a school bus driver, license stamped with a Class B.
- d. Possess a health certificate (yearly).
- e. Possess a driver training certificate (every four years).
- f. Possess a clear criminal record, child abuse, FBI and all other required clearances.
- g. All drivers may be required to attend driver training required by the Tuscarora School District.
- h. Each driver is responsible for knowing all sections of the Department of Transportation's School Bus Operator's Manual before driving.
- i. Submit to pre-employment and random drug and alcohol testing per State/Federal regulations. Drivers are responsible to report any traffic citation, or any charges brought against them for any reason to their contractor immediately. This includes any civil, criminal charge, lawsuit, or felony misdemeanor that may affect your employment.

## **2. Record Keeping**

- a. Each driver will maintain an updated roster sheet and seating chart to be carried on the bus at all times.
- b. All reports required by the School District shall be turned in on time.

## **3. General Driving Rules**

- a. Each driver is responsible for obeying all laws that pertain to the transportation of students.
- b. Drivers will follow his/her route slips relating to assigned stops and are not to deviate from the stops without permission unless an emergency situation occurs.
- c. Drivers are to honor any request made verbally or in writing by any administrator unless the request would lead to a direct violation of a State Law; in such case notify the administrator of the problem. If a driver feels a request is out of line, he/she should carry it out if at all possible, and then make a report to the Director of Transportation. If the driver is still not satisfied they may put their concern in writing to the Superintendent.
- d. Students shall be taken on and discharged from the bus only at designated stops. No students shall be permitted to get on or off the bus while it is in motion. No school bus operator shall start his/her bus or signal the driver of any vehicle who has stopped to proceed until after each child who may have alighted there from shall have reached a place of safety.
- e. No person other than school student, assigned teacher, or other school official shall be permitted to ride in the bus without prior approval of the Transportation Director.
- f. All school bus drivers of the Tuscarora School District are to be at the controls of their assigned bus and directly supervise all children during the entire time said students enter the bus until they leave the bus and shall assume complete responsibility for the safety and welfare of all students under said bus driver's supervision.
- g. The Board of School Directors delegate discretionary authority to school bus drivers to deviate from their established bus run(s) in the event of emergencies that may impair the safety of passengers and/or the safe operation of the bus due to extremely adverse environmental conditions, physical obstructions and/or serious mechanical malfunctions. In the event of serious misbehavior the driver shall return the student and bus to the school from which it departed. Bus drivers must justify and show good cause for his/her action.
- h. Students shall not be discharged prior to their designated arrival time *at the school*.



- i. Drivers shall not pick up nor let students get off the bus at any other approved bus stop than their own, unless the student has a bus pass from a school official.
- j. Smoking and/or tobacco products are not permitted on the bus.
- k. Never exceed posted truck speed limit in a school bus carrying children.
- l. No bus shall exceed 15 mph on District property or in a designated school zone.
- m. Under no circumstances should the brakes be used to jerk, or stop the bus quickly, unless it is an emergency.
- o. Any injuries to students while on or around the bus shall be reported to the Principal.

#### **4. Loading and Unloading**

- a. Students are expected to be waiting at the bus stop approximately five minutes prior to the bus arrival. Drivers are required to slow down at each approved stop on their route. On bad weather days, drivers are encouraged to stop at all regular bus stops.
- b. When the bus has stopped, with the red lights flashing, the driver shall signal the waiting students to board only after making sure all traffic is under control. The driver shall not start moving until all passengers are seated. The driver shall be careful of latecomers before proceeding.
- c. Students shall be discharged only at their designated bus stop unless approved in writing by an administrator. When possible, parent/guardian requests for deviations from the student's normal busing arrangements should be in writing.
- d. Before discharging students, make sure all traffic has stopped and is under control.
- e. Instruct students to walk in front of the bus when unloading. They should cross at a distance where they are completely visible and should reach a point of safety before proceeding.
- f. If for some reason the driver is unable to return the student to the proper discharge point, the student shall be transported to a stop nearest the regular stop, or back to the school. Drivers should use their best judgment.
- g. Drivers shall not allow parents to take students off of the bus unless at the regular stop, under emergency circumstances, or with an administrator's approval. All students must be accounted for by administration before being released to guardian from the scene of an accident.

## **5. Vehicles**

- a. Drivers shall complete a pre and post-trip inspection of their vehicle for each trip taken. The inspection shall focus on the lighting system, brakes, windshield wipers, tires and any others areas required by the contractor.
- b. Any problems found during the pre and post-trip inspection should be reported immediately to the contractor. If such problems effect the safe operation of the bus, it shall not be used to transport students until the problem is fixed or a replacement bus is used.
- c. If mechanical problems are encountered during a route, the bus shall be stopped in a safe place and the contractor called to fix or replace the bus.
- d. Bus interiors shall be checked after each run for damage. All litter shall be cleaned out at this time.
- e. Buses are not to be refueled with students aboard.

## **6. Student Discipline**

- a. Each driver is responsible for maintaining discipline on the bus. The driver has similar authority in the vehicle as the teacher has in the classroom.
- b. The driver should:
  1. Be friendly and cheerful
  2. Be businesslike and patient
  3. Be firm but fair
  4. Be consistent with policies
  5. Be honest
  6. Make no promises or threats you cannot carry out
  7. Avoid favoritism
  8. Stop the bus on the side of the road to reprimand a pupil. Never put any pupil off a school bus while it is in route unless they are endangering the safety of the bus. Call the State Police immediately. If a student is removed for the safety of others, notify the contractor and Principal/Transportation Director as soon as possible. A written report must be submitted to the Principal within 24 hours.
  9. Use the discipline reports provided to refer students for disciplinary action.

## **7. Accident Procedure**

- a. In the event of an accident the driver shall follow these steps, if possible.
  1. If the bus is drivable move it off the road (State Law).
  2. Set parking brake and turn off ignition.
  3. Keep all students in the bus, unless conditions warrant their removal.
  4. Check for injured pupils and administer first aid if necessary.
  5. Contact the State Police and Contractor for assistance. If you cannot get through, ask a passerby to get assistance. As a last resort only, send two responsible students to the nearest phone.
  6. Protect the scene and students from further accidents and injuries.
  7. Do not discuss the facts of the accident with anyone other than the police or school officials.
  8. Keep a record of all injured students.
- b. **Post-Accident Procedure**
  1. All accidents will be reviewed by the School Police with a report submitted to the Superintendent and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation within five (5) days of the accident. If the driver is found to be at fault, a review will be made by the Contractor, Transportation Director, Business Administrator and Superintendent to determine the driver's future employment.
  2. Drivers are subject to urinalysis drug testing for all accidents involving loss of life or a moving violation.

## **8. Emergencies and Evacuation Drills**

Drivers are responsible for evacuating their passengers in the event of an emergency.

- a. When to evacuate:
  1. Fire
  2. Unsafe Position of the bus (curve, hill, tracks, etc.)
  3. Tornado
- b. Procedures
  1. During an evacuation students should be removed to a safe location at least one hundred (100) feet or more from the bus.

2. During a tornado all students should be removed to a safe location when a tornado is sighted. The safest location would be in a sturdy building or in an open area, in a depression or ditch with all students lying face down.
3. In any emergency situation, the driver must remain calm and use common sense in making decisions. Always keep the students' safety in mind.

c. Evacuation Drills

Bus drivers are required to exercise two emergency evacuation drills each year. The purpose of these drills is to prepare each student in case of an emergency.

1. Each student is to cooperate fully with the driver's instructions.
2. Rear and side doors are to be used only during an emergency or emergency drill. If they are used, older, stronger students should be designated to assist small students to evacuate the bus safely.

## B. Students

Student transportation is a **privilege**, the following outlines what is expected of students who ride vehicles provided by the Tuscarora School District. Abuse of these rules will result in the loss of District transportation or assignment of Community Service.

### 1. **Behavior on School Buses/Vans**

Cameras (audio and video) are installed on the buses for your child's protection. Because improper behavior jeopardizes the safety of all passengers the following regulations will be strictly enforced:

- a. Students must be on time, plan to be at the bus stop 5 minutes before the bus arrives. The bus will not wait for those who are tardy. Being on time keeps the bus on schedule.
- b. Students must board and leave the bus at their regular stop location, unless written permission from the principal has been received by the bus driver. Students that board at a stop not assigned to them, without written permission from administration will receive a referral. Bus passes protect our students and drivers.
- c. Throwing objects of any kind on or around the bus is dangerous and will not be permitted. This behavior is subject to charges under the law.
- d. The driver has the right to assign seats. Students may be required to sit three (3) to a seat. Students shall remain seated at all times while the bus is in motion. Keep the aisle clear; all items must fit on one's lap.
- e. Talking is permitted in a low conversational voice. This allows the driver to hear if someone needs help or emergency vehicles.
- f. Students shall not use obscene or profane language in or around the school bus.

- g. Students shall not engage in pushing, fighting or other unruly behavior in or around the bus.
- h. No student shall disobey, abuse, or show disrespect for the driver. The driver should be shown the same respect as a teacher.
- i. Students shall keep hands, head, and arms inside the bus at all times. Windows shall remain closed unless the driver gives permission to lower them.
- j. Students shall not deface or damage any part of the vehicles. Damage will be paid for by the individual. Tampering with or destroying bus equipment is a very serious infraction and must be treated as such.
- k. There shall be no smoking, tobacco products or lighted flames at any time in or around the bus.
- l. There shall be no drinking any liquid or eating of food unless permitted as a special privilege by the driver.
- m. There shall be no littering from the vehicle or in the vehicle. The bus is to be as clean at the end of the run as the beginning of the run.
- n. Students will keep all pencils and other sharp objects in pockets, purses or book bags. No glass objects shall be transported on the bus.
- o. Using sprays, perfumes or chemical-based items of any kind are prohibited.

## **2. Discipline Policy**

- a. All rules and regulations concerning student behavior should be well known and clearly understood by the administration, teachers, parents, bus drivers and students.
- b. Students transported by the Tuscarora School District are under the authority of and responsible to the driver of the vehicle.
- c. A driver cannot require a student to leave the bus before such student has reached his/her destination *UNLESS* the behavior of a student endangers the safety of other students or the bus driver. If such an emergency arises, the driver is to pull their vehicle out of the line of traffic, call the State Police to remove that particular student from the bus. As soon as possible, the driver will call the Contractor, Principal and/or Transportation Director and inform him/her of the incident. A written report must be submitted to the Principal within 24 hours. A parent, student, Principal and Transportation Director Conference is required before the student can be reinstated.
- d. If a student is suspended/expelled from the bus, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to transport him/her to/from school. Once a driver has received notification of suspension/expulsion of a student they shall not transport the student. The student is not permitted to enter any vehicle controlled by the Tuscarora School District during the suspension.

- e. Consequences for student violating bus rules will be as follows:

**1st offense:** Principal judgment and parent notification.

**2nd offense:** Principal judgment, written notification to the parent.

**3rd offense:** Will be referred to the Central Office with recommendation for suspension/expulsion from the bus 1-5 days.

**4th offense:** Will be referred to the Central Office with recommendation for suspension/expulsion from the bus 6-10 days.

**5th offense:** May result in long term suspension from the bus including withdrawal of bus privileges for a period between 11 days and the balance of the school year.

In unique cases when transportation suspension is not an option, the student may be required to complete Community Service assignments during recess or study hall.

\*Although this normal procedure shall be followed in most cases, it is conceivable that a situation might develop of such magnitude that would make it necessary to eliminate Steps 1 and 2 and immediately deprive the pupil of his/her right to this transportation.

### 3. Bus Stops

- a. Students shall be at the bus stop five minutes prior to the bus arrival. Students are required to get on at the stop assigned to them by the district. If a student gets on at a stop not assigned to them without written approval from the building principal, they will receive a referral.
- b. Students waiting at bus stops shall wait at a safe distance from the road.
- c. Students should remain at assigned stops *paying special attention to the rights of property owners. Parents are responsible for students at the bus stop.*
- d. As the bus stops and the red lights activated, the students shall board the bus only when given the proper signal by the driver.
- e. When leaving the bus, the students shall go directly to the side of the road where they live or have to walk, keeping a safe distance (12 feet) from the bus.
- f. Students loading or unloading at their school shall go directly to their building or bus.
- g. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to transport any student who misses their bus.

#### **4. Extra-Curricular Trips**

The above regulations also apply to all school-sponsored trips.

#### **5. Problems**

Students having issues in any area of transportation should report these problems to the:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Bus Driver-Student should make the driver aware of the issue.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> School Principal- All concerns require a written statement.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Transportation Director- All concerns require a written statement.
- 4<sup>th</sup> If one feels the issue has not been resolved one may send a written letter of concern to the Superintendent of Schools.

\*Allow five (5) school days for the issue to be resolved at each of the following steps -2, 3, 4.

James Buchanan High School  
4773 Ft. Loudon Road  
Mercersburg, PA 17236

Mountain View Elementary School  
2311 Lemar Road  
Mercersburg, PA 17236

James Buchanan Middle School  
5191 Ft Loudon Road  
Mercersburg, PA 17236

St. Thomas Elementary School  
70 School House Road  
St. Thomas, PA 17252

Mercersburg Elementary School  
30 S Park Avenue  
Mercersburg, PA 17236

Transportation Director and  
Superintendent are available at the  
following address:

Montgomery Elementary School  
9138 Ft Loudon Road  
Mercersburg, PA 17236

Tuscarora School District  
Central Administrative Office  
100 West Seminary Street  
Mercersburg, PA 17236