

WEST COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PLAN FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

This Transportation Safety Plan contains procedures for school personnel to follow to ensure the safe transport of pupils and is in compliance with Education Code Section 39831.3. It must be physically present at each site where school transportation is provided and available for inspection by any member of the California Highway Patrol.

HOME-TO-SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER

West County Transportation Agency is a public, Joint Powers Agreement or Agency formed by your school district or contracted by your district to provide safe, child-centered, economical and coordinated school transportation service for you. The information in the following paragraphs is intended to assist school personnel in their task of providing safe transportation.

Students shall receive a packet of school transportation safety and ridership information at least once when they are enrolled in school (Education Code Section 39831.5). The parent packet of school bus safety information is included in this plan, is updated annually, and must be included in the districts back to school parent information. A district may supplement this information based on additional procedures adopted locally, but may not remove anything. If there are additional procedures, the District shall share that information with WCTA.

BUS ROUTES

Regular home-to-school bus route schedules are posted on our website at www.schoolbusing.org several weeks prior to the beginning of the school year in August. Although bus routes and stops change infrequently, occasionally notices are sent to schools or given directly to students. Any questions regarding any revised bus schedules should be directed to the Routing Department at West County Transportation Agency. Routes are identified by a number and will be located next to the entrance door on each bus. Students need to have a designated school bus stop, and any student who wishes to ride another bus or travel to a different bus stop must have a signed permission note from a parent and be approved by the school site. Students without such a note will be allowed to leave the bus at their regular stop only, or will be returned to school. If there is not a bus stop located in close proximity to a student's home, one may be established by calling West County Transportation Agency Supervisor of Dispatch and Routing at 707-206-9988 and approval from the District Superintendent or designee.

Students newly enrolling in school shall be assigned a bus stop by a School or Agency official. Special education students are assigned their bus stop location when service is requested. WCTA staff will notify the family of the bus stop location before service begins. Regular education students are issued a bus pass that identifies the student and ridership eligibility. The bus pass shall be carried with the student at all times. Bus stop times may

slightly change or vary depending on ridership changes made in the first couple of weeks of school. Drivers make a point to notify students and parents of any changes. Buses never leave the bus stop location prior to the posted time.

School staff should assist student bus riders particularly the first couple of weeks of school by reviewing the bus they are to board at the end of the day, identifying that on a temporary name tag, and walking out with students to the buses.

DETERMINING IF A PUPIL REQUIRES ESCORT

The driver, in conjunction with the Transportation Agency, the School Site, and the student's input shall determine if escort is required at a particular bus stop in compliance with Section 22112 of the California Vehicle Code. Particularly with new students registering in a school, with whom the Transportation Agency may not have exact address information or home location, the driver shall get verification of their address from the Dispatcher or School Office, and may have to rely on the student input for clarification. Every stop requiring an escort will be clearly marked on the route sheet.

WALKING TO AND FROM SCHOOL BUS STOPS

Students should be very careful when walking to and from school bus stops. Parents should accompany young children to the bus stop and assist in keeping order while waiting for the bus. Children should be instructed to keep on sidewalks or on the shoulder, and far away from the main traveled portion of the roadway. Children should pay close attention to traffic, weather conditions, and visibility conditions. Visible clothing, or clothing and backpacks with reflective material should be worn at all times. Children should remain orderly at all times and refrain from boisterous conduct or horseplay while walking to and from the school bus stop. Children should not engage in conversation with strangers or accept rides from passing motorists. When walking to or from a bus stop, children should face traffic.

GENERAL RULES OF CONDUCT AT SCHOOL BUS LOADING ZONES

Students should wait in an orderly fashion while at the bus stop in the morning. They should be at the bus stop at least five minutes prior to the posted stop time. Students should be at least twelve feet back from the main traveled portion of the roadway and visible to the driver. Pushing, shoving or horseplay is not allowed at the bus stop. Students should be mindful of the bus stop location. Many are in driveways and on private property. Students are not allowed to throw rocks or other objects, play around, cause excessive noise, touch or tamper with private property or vehicles nearby. Once the bus arrives students shall wait for the driver to come to a complete stop and the door of the bus to open before they begin to move forward to the bus. Students should board the bus one-at-a-time, using the available hand-rails, and move quickly to an open seat. If a student drops papers or other objects while boarding the bus he/she should get the attention of the driver. **NEVER GO UNDER OR NEAR THE BUS TO RETRIEVE PAPERS OR OTHER OBJECTS.** The driver may not be able to see you!

In the afternoon, students should wait at school according to the established pre-bus-loading procedure at the school. Teachers or aides on duty at the bus loading area shall maintain order over students, keep the students well away from the location where the buses pull up, and orderly release or escort the students to their buses. Teachers or aides on duty must remain at the bus loading zone until all buses have departed. Drivers may need their help for disciplinary matters or to take students back to the office. Ensure that no students get close to buses, touch them, and in no case may a student go under the bus.

When students depart from school on the bus and they are arriving at their bus stop, they must remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop, the brakes are set, and the door is open before they stand up to exit the bus. Students should have all of their clothes and supplies together in preparation for their bus stop. Students should use handrails when leaving the bus and shall walk away from the bus to the shoulder or sidewalk and walk directly home. If a student drops papers or other objects while he/she is leaving the bus, please get the attention of the driver. NEVER GO UNDER OR NEAR THE BUS TO RETRIEVE PAPERS OR OTHER OBJECTS. The driver may not be able to see you.

SCHOOL BUS DANGER ZONES

The areas closest to the perimeter of the bus are called the danger zones. Students are directed to be no closer than twelve feet to the bus, except when loading and unloading. The vast majority of school bus accidents and injury to students occur outside of the bus in this danger zone. If a student drops papers, lunch boxes or other objects while loading or unloading from the bus the student must get the attention of the driver. NEVER GO UNDER OR NEAR THE BUS TO RETRIEVE PAPERS OR OTHER OBJECTS. The driver may not be able to see you!

SAFE RIDING PRACTICES

In compliance with Education Code Section 39831.5, students annually receive instruction on proper loading and unloading procedures including escorting by the driver, proper passenger conduct, bus evacuation, location of emergency exits and emergency equipment. Instruction may also include responsibilities of passengers seated next to an emergency exit.

Prior to departure on any school activity trip, all pupils riding on a school bus or a school pupil activity bus (SPAB) shall receive safety instruction which includes, but is not limited to, location of emergency exits, and location and use of emergency equipment.

In addition to the expectations spelled out to students in the above, drivers orient students to rules and expectations their first days of each school year. Rules are posted in the buses. Consequences for poor behavior and rewards for good behavior are discussed. Classroom behavior is expected on all school buses. Students must remain seated at all times, keep all body parts inside the windows of the bus, not eat, drink or smoke on the bus, keep noise down, not allowed to “roughhouse” on the bus, and must follow all directions of the driver.

BUS PASSES

Every student participating in the General Education program must have a current school year's bus pass in order to board and ride the bus. Buses and bus passes are equipped with RFID hardware and scanning on and off the bus are required by each student. Students will be allowed to ride the bus during the first month of school without a pass while their application is being processed

MUST BE MET POLICY (Special Education & Kindergarten Students Only)

All Special Ed students must be met by an adult at the drop off bus stop unless the school site has forwarded a Bus Service Request (BSR) form indicating self-release. Kindergarten students must be met by an adult. If the student must be met by an adult and the designated person is not at the bus stop to meet the bus, the student will be returned to school. No exceptions

RED LIGHT CROSSINGS

When a student needs to cross the road and the stop is designated as an escorted crossing, the driver sets the parking brake, secures the bus, turns on the red lights, takes the key, opens the door and exits the bus with a hand held stop sign to escort the student across the road. The student should follow all of the directions of the driver, and not cross the road until the driver verbally tells the student to proceed. This crossing maneuver is considered most dangerous and students must be aware, alert and follow directions of the driver.

CLOTHING HAZARDS

In the past, there have been several serious student injuries or fatalities in other states due to clothing or backpacks that have drawstrings. The drawstrings have gotten caught in handrails on the bus, without the driver's knowledge. Please inspect the children's clothing or backpacks to ensure there are not drawstrings or other hanging objects that could get caught in the handrail or the door.

FIELD TRIPS

When planning a field trip, the school has several options. They may use a school bus, a school pupil activity bus (SPAB) operated by a charter bus company, use school owned automobiles or vans, use public transit or use parent-owned vehicles.

SCHOOL BUSES

School buses are the most highly regulated student transportation vehicles and school bus drivers are the most highly trained drivers in California. On any school field trip, whether on a bus or not, teachers shall have a roster of all students on the trip, an itinerary of the trip and should carry a supplemental first aid kit appropriate for the trip destination and activity intended. Teachers or coaches should plan all stops in conjunction with the transportation provider and should not allow students to eat while the vehicles are moving.

SPAB BUSES

School Pupil Activity Buses are operated by a Charter Party Carrier (for-hire charter bus operator). SPAB buses need to be certified by the CHP Motor Carrier Inspector within the past 13 months and must have a certificate on board that is signed and dated by the inspector. The driver must also have received some special training and must have at least a Class B license and a Special Driver Certificate valid for driving a SPAB bus. When you book a SPAB bus you must specify such and a school official shall inspect the bus certification and driver certification upon arrival at the school to pick up the group.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

If the group intends to use public transit for their trip, the school should call the transit agency prior to the trip to ensure they are prepared for the group and to inquire regarding any special requirements for student groups.

SCHOOL VEHICLES

If school vehicles are to be used, they must be consistent with the law (may not seat more than nine students and the driver and constructed so as not to hold more than that) and have a properly licensed driver who is an employee of the District. All passengers must be seat-belted while in the vehicle. It is ideal if such drivers received training in defensive driving, first aid practices, and have the vehicle included in a regular preventive maintenance program. The district should enroll the driver in the DMV Pull Notice program so the district receives notification of any accident, moving violation, driver safety points, or suspensions of the driver's license. It would be recommended that district employees that drive students in district vehicles also participate in a drug and alcohol testing program similar to school bus drivers.

PARENT VEHICLES

The use of parent vehicles for field trips shall strictly adhere to District Policy. All parents shall show proof of appropriate insurance. In no case shall a vehicle be used that is designed for more than nine passengers and the driver. In no case shall more than nine passengers plus the driver be seated in a parent vehicle. Parents should be fingerprinted and background checked as volunteers. This is the most dangerous mode of transportation for district field trips. The district will have no knowledge of a parent's vehicle and its relative mechanical safety. Licensed high school students that are participating in school activities should never drive other high school students in their own vehicles or in district vehicles to or from school activities, practices or games off-site.

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK FOR STUDENTS AFTER EACH RUN AND ROUTE

At the conclusion of each bus run, when the driver believes that all students have exited the bus, the driver shall, as soon as possible, find a safe location to park the bus, secure it and walk through the passenger compartment to ensure that no student is aboard. At the end of each route (a route consists of several runs) when the driver returns to the bus yard, every driver shall again walk through the driver compartment and disarm the child safety alert system. A “child safety alert system” is a device located at the interior rear of a vehicle that requires the driver to either manually contact or scan the device before exiting the vehicle, thereby prompting the driver to inspect the entirety of the interior of the vehicle before exiting.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS OR CIRCUMSTANCES

If you encounter a student transportation safety situation that is not covered in this plan or seems unique, please contact West County Transportation Agency for direction or the School Pupil Safety Officer of the California Highway Patrol for direction.