

SAFETY AND STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Policy Code:

6305

Safety is of paramount concern in providing student transportation services. The board recognizes that providing safe transportation requires the cooperation of students, parents, volunteers, personnel, and other governmental agencies. The superintendent or designee and all principals shall make reasonable efforts to inform affected individuals or entities about safety issues and monitor compliance with legal requirements and this policy.

A. STUDENT BEHAVIOR

A safe and orderly environment is critical whenever transporting students. The Code of Student Conduct and board policies on student behavior apply as provided in policy 4300, Student Behavior Policies. All students will receive training on school bus safety as required by law regardless of whether they regularly ride a school bus to and from school.

Violation of any board policy, the Code of Student Conduct, or other school rule governing student behavior on school and activity buses may result in a student's suspension from the bus or other appropriate disciplinary action.

B. SCHOOL AND ACTIVITY BUS SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

The board authorizes the use of video surveillance cameras on all school buses and activity buses for administrative and disciplinary purposes. Every person, including the driver and any passengers, shall be subject to surveillance while on the bus. The superintendent or designee and the principal, through the Code of Student Conduct, shall notify students and parents or guardians at the beginning of every school year about the use of such cameras on all buses operated by the school system. In addition, each bus shall contain a decal or other sign indicating that the bus is equipped with a camera and that all persons on the bus are subject to surveillance.

The digital video recordings generated by the surveillance cameras shall belong solely to the school system. The video recordings shall be used by the school system for administrative and disciplinary purposes only and shall not be disseminated to any other person unless required by law, board policy, or court order. Video recordings from a school or activity bus surveillance camera are confidential and shall be handled in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations and all applicable board policies regarding student records and public records, including policy 4345, Student Discipline Records; policy 4700, Student Records; policy 5070/7350, Public Records – Retention, Release, and Disposition; and policy 5071/7351, Electronically Stored Information Retention.

C. TRANSPORTATION SAFETY ASSISTANTS AND BUS MONITORS

Upon recommendation of a building principal and the superintendent, the board may employ transportation safety assistants to assist bus drivers with the safety, movement, management, and care of students. In addition, the superintendent or designee may appoint a volunteer monitor to assist a bus driver with maintaining order and student safety for any bus assigned to a school. As necessary, the superintendent or designee shall designate in administrative guidelines the responsibilities of school bus transportation safety assistants and bus monitors in accordance with state law.

D. MAINTENANCE

The superintendent or designee and principals shall fulfill all duties prescribed by state law and regulations for maintaining, inspecting, and repairing school buses and other vehicles used to transport students.

E. SAFETY PRACTICES ON SCHOOL BUSES AND ACTIVITY BUSES

In addition to any rules established by the superintendent or designee for the safe operation of the student transportation services, the board expects school employees to observe the following practices.

1. All school bus drivers must utilize the North Carolina crossing signal to communicate to students when it is safe to cross the street to board the bus and when it is safe to cross the street after exiting the bus.
2. The number of students transported on any school bus, activity bus, commercial bus, or contracted vehicle will not exceed the official rated capacity for the specific vehicle being used.
3. All riders must be seated while the vehicle is in motion.
4. No person will be permitted to stand or sit in the aisle or stepwell when the vehicle is in motion.
5. All school bus drivers are expected to use good judgment in determining whether it is safe to operate a school vehicle and to permit students to enter or leave the bus at particular locations.
6. Bus drivers must report immediately any suspected mechanical defects or other unsafe conditions, including road or traffic conditions that affect the safeness of the bus route or bus stops.
7. The board authorizes the use of approved school bus safety devices, including, but not limited to, seat belts and safety harnesses, in accordance with all applicable

federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and guidelines. All students are required to use seat belts when riding on a school bus equipped with that technology. A recommendation to require an individual student's use of any other safety device must be discussed with the student's parent or guardian and approved by the principal, unless otherwise permitted by federal or state law, regulation, or policy.

F. TRAINING

It is the responsibility of the superintendent or designee to see that:

1. students and bus drivers receive training as required by law, including training on the use of the North Carolina crossing signal;
2. students taking trips on activity buses or commercial buses receive safety instruction as needed, including, but not limited to, instruction on and demonstration of emergency exit operation for the vehicle on which they are riding for any specific trip; and
3. records of student training are made as required by the State Board of Education.

G. ACCIDENT REPORTING

The driver of any school bus or other school vehicle must report immediately to the superintendent or designee any accident involving death, injury, or property damage.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-239, -240, -245, -248, -249.1; *Preventive Maintenance and Vehicle Replacement Manual (NC Bus Fleet Manual)*, State Board of Education Policy TRAN-005, available at www.ncbussafety.org/documents/Buses/NCBusFleetManual.pdf; State Board of Education Policies TRAN-006, TRAN-011; *North Carolina School Bus Driver Handout*, Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles, available at <https://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/license-id/driver-licenses/new-drivers/Documents/school-bus-handbook.pdf>

Cross References: Student Behavior Policies (policy 4300), Authority of School Personnel (policy 4301), School Plan for Management of Student Behavior (policy 4302), Disruptive Behavior (policy 4315), Student Discipline Records (policy 4345), Student Records (policy 4700), Public Records – Retention, Release, and Disposition (policy 5070/7350), Electronically Stored Information Retention (policy 5071/7351)

Adopted: March 14, 2016

Revised: May 24, 2017 (legal references only); November 9, 2017; December 13, 2018; June 15, 2020